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A Study of Civic Education in Secondary Schools in France from the Perspective of Teachers*

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Abstract

This study intends to investigate civic education in French secondary schools. It was designed as a qualitative research study. Participants were identified through purposive selection. Nine history and geography teachers working in secondary schools in different cities across France responsible for civic education were interviewed. The study data were collected in the academic year 2021/2022, and the data were analyzed using content analysis. The study found that civic education aims to educate secular individuals who know themselves, respect others, protect the social order, think critically, are aware of their rights and responsibilities, have internalized the principles and values of the Republic, and have a culture of citizenship. For civic education, the type of instruction, preferred teaching methods and techniques, family, and teachers were found to be effective. In addition, schools were found to have a variety of extracurricular activities, such as the election of student delegates that promote a sense of democracy and responsibility. Participants also commented that they measured and evaluated civic education in a more performance-based manner and believed that civic education should be taught as a separate course.

Keywords: France, Citizenship, Morality, Civic Education

1. Introduction

In analyzing the historical process of civic education in France, the French Revolution (1789) is assumed to be the basis for developments in civic education. Since the French Revolution, civic education has generally aimed to educate citizens as envisioned by the new regime (Galichet, 2005). With this goal, the idea that education should have a political output has been solidified. With the goal of ensuring national unity, the concepts of “citizenship - patriotism – nationalism” were incorporated into education. Moreover, after the French

* This study is derived from a part of the study named "The Study of the Citizenship Education in Secondary Schools in France" prepared at Marmara University Institute of Educational Sciences, Department of Social Studies Education. The study was carried out by İlyas KARA. Advisors: Prof. Dr. Cemil ÖZTÜRK, Assoc. Dr. Ahmet KATILMIŞ.

Revolution, the goal of education was to destroy the political values of the old regime (Grandner, 2021). In this process, the Republicans struggled to break the hold of the old regime and the Church on education. On November 17, 1794, the Republicans published a circular towards secular civic education, opposing the Church's idea that religious instruction was the best way to educate good citizens. In this circular, which emphasized the practical aspects of civic education in addition to theoretical knowledge, students were expected to visit places such as factories and hospitals, and to help military families and the elderly (Galichet, 2005).

In France, secular civic education became more effective during the First Empire. Civic education received an important boost with the official entry into force of the law on March 28, 1882. Between 1882 and 1914, 137 guides were published, and the “free, secular, and compulsory school” that developed under the leadership of Jules Ferry in the 1880s led to a substantial increase in the enrollment rate of school-age children. In the wake of “school mobilization,” especially after the separation of church and state in 1905, the enrollment rate increased even further. Moreover, during this period, the influence of the clergy on education in general and civic education in particular was significantly reduced, and children received an education based on the values of the secular republic. Moreover, the influence of religion on civic education continued until 1914, albeit partially. After that time, the understanding of “secular morality” was further strengthened and a moral education was sought that focused on exalting the values of work, diligence, honesty, family, and patriotism (Grandner, 2021). However, economic prosperity and social peace achieved in the 1960s led to less importance being placed on civic education. In the 1980s, especially due to the social problems related to immigration, the increase in crime and violence, civic education regained importance and a new search for the content of civic education began (Audigier, 1999). In this context, with the emergence of new schools, goals such as mutual respect, rejection of violence, tolerance, and acceptance of the rules of social life have come to the forefront of civic education. The idea that citizens have the ability to live together despite their differences was emphasized and a new “Frenchness” was sought representing a cultural mosaic. In the books and citizenship education documents written to achieve this goal, nationalist concepts were not included as much as before and more emphasis was placed on the rules governing social life, rights and responsibilities (Galichet, 2005). In addition, new regulations have been made in the axis of secularism debates in France. In this context, in 2012, Vincent Peillon, then Minister of National Education, shared a report with the public emphasizing the importance of secular moral education. In line with this report, the “Law on Programming and Change for the Re-establishment of the Republican School” was adopted on July 8, 2013 and entered into force in September 2015 (Grandner, 2021). In order to better convey the principles and values of the Republic to new generations, a “great school mobilization” was launched. The courses “civic education” taught until then in primary and secondary schools and “citizenship, law and social education” taught in high schools were replaced by the course “education for morality and citizenship (EMC). In addition, for the “baccalaureat”, the high school graduation exam, students became responsible for moral and civic education subjects. Today, the curriculum of the moral and civic education course, taught by classroom teachers in primary schools, history-geography teachers in secondary schools, and any of the teachers (mostly history-geography teachers) in high schools, was last updated in 2018 (Grandner, 2021).

In the literature review, we found that a number of studies had been conducted on civic education in France. We came across studies on the comparison of civic education in England and France (Kiwani & Kiwani, 2005), teacher practices and the image of the discipline in history, geography and citizenship education courses in secondary school (French Ministry of National Education, 2007), developing theories and practices related to citizenship education in France and England (Grandner, 2021; Starkey, 2010), the place of family in citizenship education (U. D. A. F. - Union Départementale des Associations Familiales de la Lozère, 2011), the role of the teacher in citizenship education in secondary schools in China and France (Qin, 2012), the role of the teacher in education and democracy (Thésée, Carr & Potwora, 2015), curricula and the values of the republic (Colas Degenne, 2015), civic education of children aged 8-12 in France (Alais, Bozec, & Cham, 2016), and policies related to civic education at school, school practices and their effects on students (Bozec, 2016), civic education in schools in Europe (European Commission, 2017), morality and civic education in Francophone countries (Poirier, 2017), morality and civic education in French educational institutions (Husser, 2017), historical development of morality and civic education (Richard, 2019), civic education in South Korea and France (Kim, 2020), representations and practices of civic education in the classroom in France (Dejemeppe, 2019). A review

of these studies shows that only two studies on civic education were conducted after the curriculum change in 2018 (Dejemeppe, 2019; Kim, 2020) and that no study on civic education in French secondary schools was conducted using a sample of teachers. This study is considered important as it will help to fill this gap in the field. We aimed at identifying teachers' opinions about civic education in French secondary schools. Accordingly, the study's research questions were:

1. What qualities should students acquire through civic education?
2. What factors are effective in achieving the goals of civic education?
3. What activities are conducted outside the classroom as part of civic education?
4. What needs to be done to make civic education more effective?

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

This study, conducted to examine civic education in secondary schools in France, was a qualitative study. Qualitative research, which allows for the uncovering of unique or idiosyncratic individual experiences and opinions through the use of data collection techniques such as observation, interview, and document analysis (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Merriam, 2009; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013), was preferred because of the desire to analyze participants' thoughts on civic education in depth.

2.2 Participants

Participants were identified through purposive sampling. In this context, 9 moral and civic education teachers working in different cities in France were identified. Code names were used in the study to avoid giving the real names of the participants. In this context, participants were given code names as in T1-T9. Demographic information of the participants is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic information of the participants

Teacher Code	City	Gender	Age	Seniority Year	Education Level	Branch	Nationality
T1	Strasbourg	Male	33	7	Master	History Geography	French -Greek
T2	Colmar	Male	48	23	Master	History Geography	French - Turkish
T3	Lyon	Female	34	11	Master	History Geography	French
T4	Bezanson	Female	41	17	Master	History Geography	French - Turkish
T5	Neufchâtel en Bray	Male	49	22	PhD	History Geography	French
T6	Bezanson	Male	32	6	Master	History Geography	French
T7	Paris	Woman	35	9	Master	History Geography	French
T8	Colmar	Woman	49	24	PhD	History Geography	French
T9	Evreux	Male	61	34	Master	History Geography	French

2.3 Data Collection Tools and Data Analysis

A semi-structured interview form was used as a data collection tool. Expert opinion was taken during the development of the form, and then it was piloted. In the study, a semi-structured interview form was used to access incisive data within the scope of the research objectives.

The interviews to collect research data were conducted on a voluntary basis and the participants were told that their real names would not be mentioned anywhere in the research. The interviews were conducted face-to-face at the school where the participants worked, and the shortest interview lasted 25 minutes and the longest interview 35 minutes. The interviews were recorded with a tape recorder and then the interview records were transcribed. Each interview transcript transferred to Word was presented to the participants to give them the opportunity to make corrections and additions, and after the participant's approval was obtained, the data analysis process started. In the analysis process, participants were given code names as in T1-T9 and code names were used in direct quotations.

The research data were subjected to content analysis, which involves a systematic process in which the researcher seeks answers to why and how questions (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002; Wolcott, 1994; Yıldırım, Şimşek, 2013). In this context, each interview was analyzed in detail, line by line. Similarities and differences between the data were identified. Based on the similarities and differences identified, categories were created. During the analysis process, the opinions of a different researcher were also taken. In order to strengthen the reliability of the research, direct quotations from the participants were included in the findings.

3. Results

3.1 Findings on the qualities desired to be gained through civic education

The first research question of this study was to determine which qualities students try to acquire through civic education. In this context, the themes and codes obtained by analyzing the data obtained from the interviews with the participants are given in Figure 1:

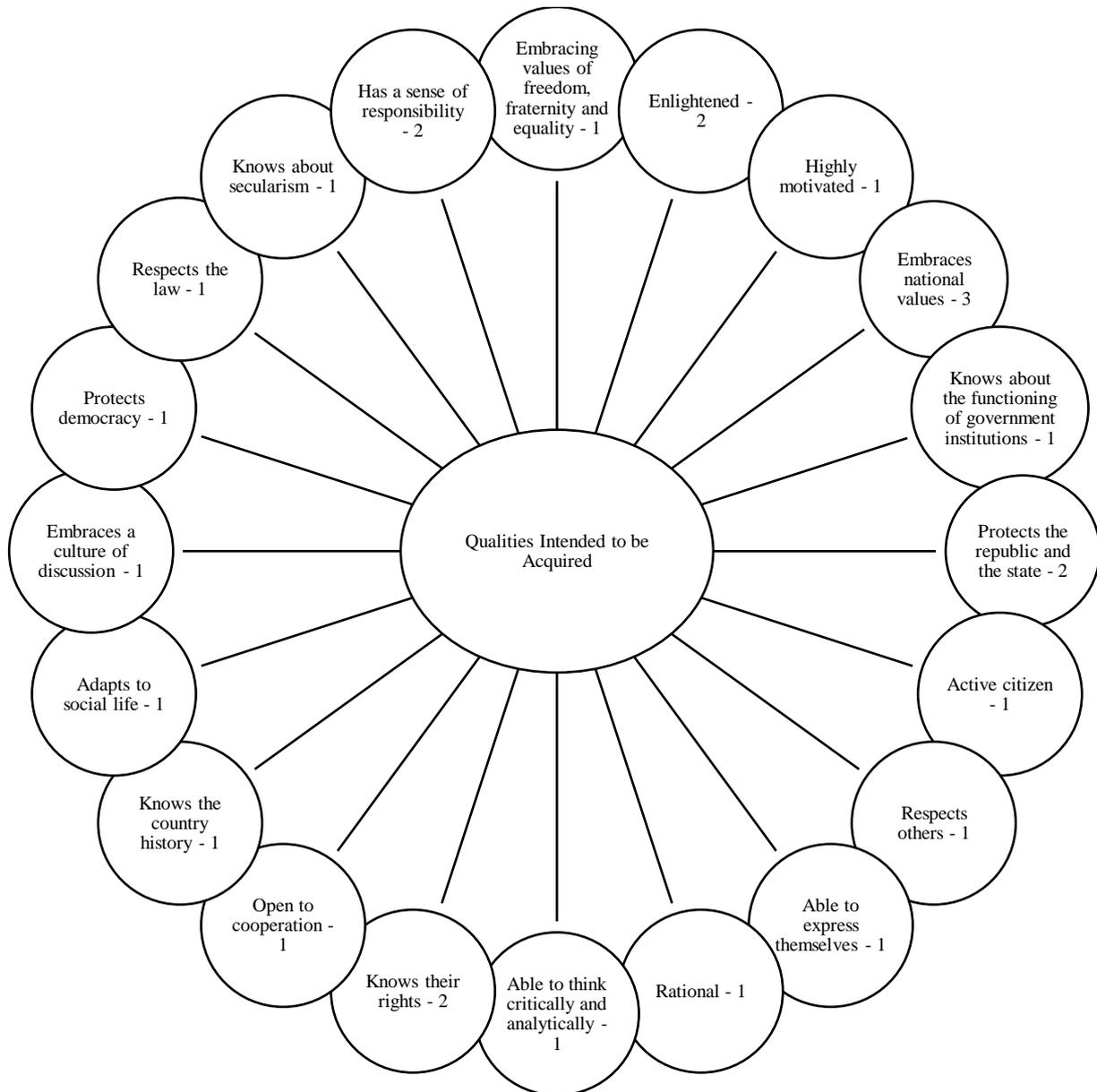


Figure 1: Qualities desired to be acquired through civic education

As seen in Figure 1, the participants focused especially on the national dimension and aimed to help students acquire national values through civic education. In addition, their civic education aimed to provide students with the following values: protecting the republic and the state, internalizing the principles and values of the French Republic, knowing their rights, being responsible, internalizing the values of “freedom, fraternity and equality”, knowing the functioning of governmental institutions, being active, respecting others, thinking critically and analytically, knowing the history of the country they live in, being in harmony with the society they live in, being open to cooperation, nourishing a culture of discussion, protecting democracy, respecting the laws, expressing themselves, caring about secularism, being enlightened and rational. In this context, T9, said “[With civic education, it is aimed to raise citizens who understand the legitimacy and importance of rational laws, who are tolerant and open to different opinions, who understand the importance of secularism, who are secular, who can express themselves verbally.” with reference to the idea of raising citizens who are respectful to laws, tolerant, understand the importance of secularism, and can express themselves freely. Participant T1 stated that civic education courses should be seen as an assimilation apparatus, who said the following emphasizing the importance of secularism: “Civic education classes should not be seen as a means of Frenchizing foreigners and making them love France. This issue is actually about secularism. For most of today's French citizens, secularism is a sensitive issue. Therefore, attention should be paid to secularism in civic education lessons.”

We determined that the acquisition of republican values was an important goal in civic education. Accordingly, we found that the participants emphasized that secularism, democracy culture, sense of responsibility and the values of the republic should be acquired through civic education. Direct quotations:

T3: *“The French Republic is indivisible, secular, democratic and social. For this reason, secondary schools in France have an important role in disseminating these concepts among citizens. Morality and civic education aim to raise responsible citizens who know their rights, defend their rights when necessary and know their responsibilities. To raise individuals who have internalized democracy, vote and participate. In order to protect the basic principles and values of the Republic, it is important that citizens become enlightened and turn into critical thinking individuals. Therefore, this is also aimed at in secondary schools.”*

T5: *“The aim of ethics and civic education courses is to raise citizens who are enlightened, responsible, ensure the continuity of democracy, vote and internalize the values of the republic.”*

We found that in civic education, students are educated as individuals who know and are aware of the laws, their rights and duties, are tolerant, can think critically, are equipped with the values of the Republic and have knowledge about their country. Direct quotations:

T6: *“The general concept is responsibility. As a teacher of civic education, I want civic education to help students develop critical thinking skills and help them become responsible citizens.”*

T7: *“We want to raise citizens who know their citizenship rights and responsibilities through ethics and civic education courses. We want to raise a model of a good citizen who is sensitive to their rights and can defend their rights, who has knowledge about the country, and who votes.”*

3.2 Findings on the factors that are effective in civic education

The second research question aimed to determine the factors effective in civic education in schools. By analyzing the data collected, we found that the participants emphasized the effective elements inside and outside the school. The themes and sub-themes obtained in this framework are given in Table 2:

Table 2: Effective elements in civic education

Theme	Subtheme	Participant
In-School	Methods and techniques used in the course	T1,T3,T5,T6,T8,T9
	Teacher	T4,T5,T7,T8
	Student qualifications	T5,T2,T8
	Class size	T1,T3,T5,T9
	Out of School	Family
Out of School	Activities of other public institutions outside the school	T1,T3,T5,T9
	Social media	T2,T4,T7,T9
	Social environment	T3,T7,T6

As can be understood from the findings given in Table 2, the participants cited the method and technique preferred by the teacher in the teaching of the course, the teacher of the course, the individual characteristics of the student and the class size as in-school factors effective in civic education. As factors outside the school, they stated that family, activities of other public institutions outside the school, social media and social environment were effective in civic education.

Regarding the subject, T8 thinks that the teacher inside the school and the family outside the school are effective in citizenship education. An example of the statement taken directly from the interview transcript of T8 is as follows: *"Students know what it stands for and what it means, and they see it as useful because they will vote in elections later in their civic life. The factor that influences civic education outside of school is generally what parents tell them, the importance the family attaches to politics. As teachers do, families can also raise their children's awareness about elections."* T7 stated that teachers and families were very important in civic education: *"The most important in-school factor affecting civic education is the teacher. Extracurricular factors are very diverse. Family also matters. Where the family stands socio-culturally."* T5 stated that teachers were very effective in civic education, but due to the reasons arising from the structure of the program, teachers cannot give the necessary importance to civic education: *"Teachers are one of the most effective factors. For the two subjects, history and geography and ethics and civic education, the weekly teaching time is 3 hours in total. However, the teacher decides how much of these three hours to allocate to each subject. Sometimes teachers do little or no moral and civic education. They mostly teach history-geography."* One of the factors directly affecting the quality of citizenship education is the teaching method and technique preferred by the teacher during the lesson. In this regard, T4 stated, *"I think that debates organized during lessons are a good way to enable students to see different points of view on the same subject, to get ideas and to express their own views in front of others, even to defend their ideas, point of view."*

Some participants stated that the family, the sociocultural environment in which the student lives and student qualities were effective in civic education. In this context, T5 made the following statements emphasizing that family characteristics and social ties affect civic education: *"Factors outside the school that affect civic education: families educating their children in line with their own citizenship profiles, political or associational loyalties."* In this context, T2 said [With civic education] *the importance that the family attaches to education and their interest in the education of the student is extremely important."* while T3 said the following: *"Of course, the family is also very important in civic education. Democratic practices within the family are important for children to internalize democracy. The family, the social environment of the student, and even the management style of the city and town where the student lives are factors outside the school that affect civic education."* T5 emphasized that the individual characteristics of the student were effective in civic education *"I think one of the in-school factors affecting morality and civic education is the student factor. The student's origin, capacity and interest in the lesson are important."* T7, who thinks that the effect of social media on citizenship education is increasing day by day said, *"Media is also effective on civic education. Social media is also becoming more effective day by day"*. On the other hand, by analyzing the interview data, we determined that some participants thought that the activities of some public institutions were effective in civic education. Emphasizing this point, T5 said: *"... municipalities are also one of the out-of-school factors that are effective in civic education. Because municipalities often have a policy that supports young people. For example, there is a municipal youth council. Also, some departments have this type of youth association. This is the case in Seine-Maritime. Two students elected in each secondary school represent their school in the departmental council."* On the same note, T1 said *"...Also other public institutions should take part in civic education. Because this is not a job that can only be done by the school. It is the duty of every institution to give a culture of citizenship."* whereas T9 said, *"I think all public institutions should take responsibility in civic education." This is not only the school's task."*

3.3 Findings on extracurricular activities within the scope of civic education

The third research question of this study was to reveal what extracurricular activities are carried out in schools within the scope of civic education. The findings obtained by analyzing the data collected in this context were given in Figure 2:

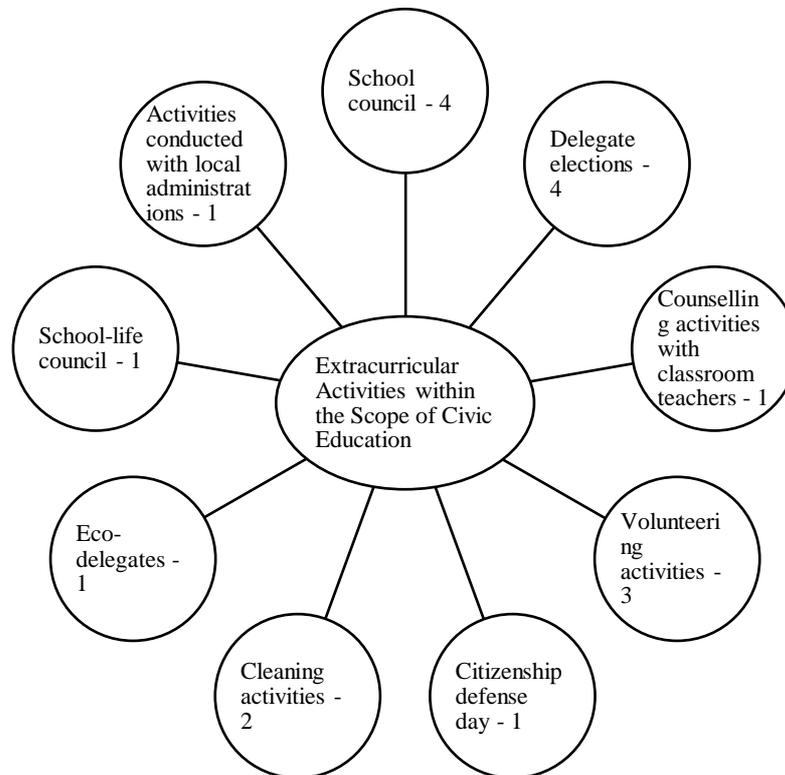


Figure 2: Extracurricular activities conducted within the scope of civic education

Based on the findings in Figure 2, we can state that elections, especially school council and delegate elections, one of the most important indicators of the culture of democracy, are very important in citizenship education in French secondary schools. Participants said:

T8: *"The first thing that may come to mind is the election of delegates at the beginning of the year, which is effective for students to best understand the role delegated to delegates and the importance of an election. The two delegates, together with their alternates (if there are no original delegates), represent their class at the school council, which meets three times a year. In the same way, the two delegates elect the school delegates who form the administrative council".*

T5: *"...the school council is made up of student volunteers and makes suggestions to the school administration to improve students' school life (such as creating a clubhouse, organizing festivals, and forming clubs). These elections and councils have a positive impact for outgoing students."*

T2: *"Class president elections are held for students to understand the functioning of democracy. Counselors take this seriously. For example, I attach great importance to this. I conduct it officially and in accordance with the procedures as if it were a real election."*

T2 emphasized that some of the activities carried out in cooperation with local governments contributed to the acquisition of citizenship skills by the students.: "[Students] are involved in various activities with municipalities in order to comprehend the importance of municipalism and participation in municipalism. Even student councils and youth councils are established in municipalities. Here, young people understand municipalism better." T8, stated that "eco-delegates" in high schools contributed to the development of environmental awareness with the following statements: *"...there are eco-delegates to increase respect and sensitivity towards the environment. But at the moment, eco-delegates only exist in high schools."*

T7,said the following emphasizing that the activity called "citizenship defense day", which is held before the age of 18 and every French citizen has to participate, is effective in civic education:

"One of the extracurricular activities within the scope of civic education is the one-day citizenship defense day, which is held before the age of 18 and every French citizen has to participate. One cannot get a driver's license or take exams without attending this one-day training. In this one day, French institutions and the French defense system are introduced."

Some participants thought that social clubs, sports activities and elective courses implemented in French secondary schools, which enable students to practice some citizenship skills and in which participation is voluntary, contribute positively to civic education. Direct quotations from participants:

T3: *"In addition, students can voluntarily participate in various activities for up to two hours a week. These activities, sporting activities and elective courses contribute to civic education. But social clubs can be increased and made more systematic. I think extracurricular activities are useful in the context of civic education. In this way, students can transform their knowledge about citizenship education into practice".*

T4: *"In addition, students sometimes participate in various projects and activities voluntarily. Such activities are of course important for students to grow up as responsible and active citizens."*

3.4 Suggestions for Civic Education

The fourth research question of the study was to determine what they think should be done to make civic education in French secondary schools more effective. The findings obtained for this research question are given in Figure 3.

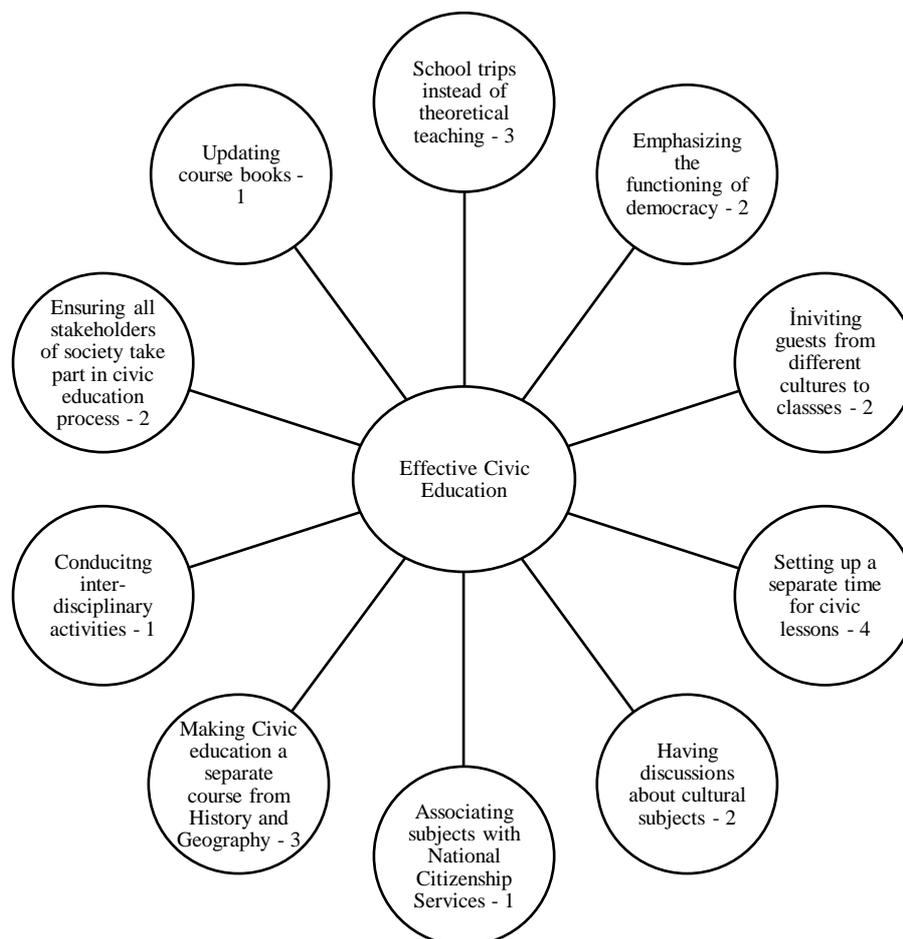


Figure 3. Suggestions for Effective Civic Education

In French secondary schools, ethics and civic education, history and geography are taught in the same lesson time. Participants think that this negatively affects the realization of the objectives of civic education. The participants stated that since teachers spend more time on history and geography subjects, moral and civic education subjects are relegated to a secondary position. They also stated that in order to overcome this, the weekly three lesson hours for the course should be increased. T7 said: "... We should increase the lesson hours. ..." while T4 said "...I think it would be useful to increase the course hours or to make it a completely independent course." T5 said:

"It is necessary to completely separate history-geography and civic education courses in terms of weekly class hours." Civic education should be completely independent of this subject. Civic education should be one hour a week, history one hour and geography one hour. For this purpose, the history-geography curriculum can be lightened and the civic education curriculum can be intensified. The time allocated for civic education can be increased."

In order to provide an effective civic education, T7 said "... textbooks should be updated", while T5, T9, T4 and T1 emphasized that civic education should be given as a separate course.

T7 stated that in order to achieve the desired goals in civic education, the curriculum should be followed, especially local administrators and council members should come together with students in the classrooms, students should be provided with the opportunity to develop projects within the scope of citizenship education, and whether the achievements within the scope of citizenship education are realized or not should be seriously measured and evaluated at the end of high school. T7 said:

"Teachers should have less freedom in the subjects taught in the classroom and should strictly follow the curriculum carefully prepared by the Ministry of National Education. The civic education that students receive from the first grade of primary school until the end of high school should be evaluated with a serious exam at the end of high school. Textbooks must be updated. We need to increase class hours. It can be made mandatory for local elected officials such as governors, MPs, regional councilors, mayors to visit the classroom. We can ask students to carry out a long-term citizen project. We can organize field trips."

Some participants thought that France's multicultural characteristic could be utilized for an effective civic education. It was noted that they felt that bringing artists, administrators, or other professionals from different cultures together with students in classrooms would give students the opportunity to learn about different cultures. T5 and T8 said the following:

T5: *"...It would be very effective to introduce different cultural elements in the lessons and even to bring in administrators, artists and guests from other professions with different cultural characteristics. In this way, students will better understand that differences are a richness. ..."*

T8: *"... In addition, guest students from other countries can be invited. They can be hosted for a week. Then our students can go to other countries. In this way, students get to know and respect different cultures. Because France is a very cosmopolitan country and we should prepare students in this direction."*

T6 and T8 emphasized that discussions are important for effective civic education. The participants thought that discussions to be held in the classroom would enable students to acquire the culture of discussion from an early age and especially the discussions to be held on cultural issues would enable students to see cultural differences as a richness. T8 said:

T8: *"... There should be a lot of discussion in the civic education course. Students should embrace the culture of discussion at a young age. Especially discussions about different*

cultures, civilizations and nations should be made and students should be made to understand that these are a source of richness. ...”

Some participants thought that the lessons to be taught in out-of-school learning environments would contribute positively to the realization of the objectives of civic education, but they also thought that out-of-school learning environments could not be utilized sufficiently due to economic reasons. The participants also stated that communicating with well-known people to get them invited to the classes would provide students with important experiences in terms of citizenship. Direct quotations:

T2: *“It is necessary to change the status of civic education as a purely in-school activity. It is necessary to do activities and projects outside school. For example, students can visit the Palace of Versailles in Paris. This requires time and budget.”*

T8: *“I think communicating with others through discussions, trips, invitations are a good way to enrich students.” But it is the expenses when one talks about trips! The biggest problem for national education in France is that the resources allocated to such projects are decreasing year by year. I think it would also be useful to increase the class hours.”*

T4 stated that students cannot gain the desired knowledge, attitudes, values and behaviors only in civic education courses. T4 stated that in order to achieve the desired goals in civic education, it is necessary to address citizenship issues in all courses, to see social activities as an opportunity for civic education, and that all stakeholders should take responsibility for civic education. T4 and T3 said:

T4: *“Raising citizens is not only the task of moral and civic education courses. In order for children to learn to respect and accept themselves, there is a need for regular work in all disciplines at school and also outside of school, in the family, in extracurricular activities.”*

T3: *“... Individuals cannot be good citizens only through civic education. All stakeholders of the society should take part.”*

Through the analysis of the research data, we had some participants stating that for effective civic education, the functioning, authorities and responsibilities of democratic institutions should be emphasized in the lessons, and the responsibilities of individuals in a democracy, especially the importance of participation in elections, should be emphasized. T1 said:

T1: *“In my opinion, the functioning of democracy should be explained frequently in the lessons. It is most important to explain the functioning of French institutions (department, region, government, governorship...) well. Because students need to know the powers and roles of these institutions. Students should also understand the importance of democracy for these institutions. Because in France, citizens are voting less and less during elections and the participation rate is decreasing. Therefore, civic education should be organized accordingly. Maybe if future generations better understand their role in the governance of the country, this situation can be improved. ...”*

4. Discussion

This study was conducted to gather the opinions of French secondary school teachers who teach moral and civic education. Within the scope of this study, which was designed to help students acquire civic qualities, it was determined which qualities were tried to be acquired. It was concluded that the primary goal of the program was to produce patriotic and enlightened individuals who were responsible and motivated to protect the republic and the state. These individuals should also be knowledgeable about their rights and how government works, and be engaged in civic life. Finally, they should have a well-developed culture of discussion and be open to cooperation with others. Based on this result, the new curriculum, which started to be implemented in 2018 in French secondary schools, and the previously implemented curriculum are similar in terms of the qualities desired to be acquired by students through civic education. Because the desired qualities determined in this study

and the results from studies conducted during the implementation of the previous curricula support each other (French Ministry of National Education, 2007; Bozec, 2016 and Poirier 2017). Curricula are updated all over the world by taking into account current needs, which also applies to France. When we take into account the current findings, there is not a very serious change in terms of the qualities that students are expected to acquire within civic education. We can argue that the reason for this is that national values, democracy culture and especially the secular state order are very important in France. France has a very cosmopolitan structure. This is seen as one of the reasons for the importance attached to the culture of democracy in French society. This is because societies that have internalized the culture of democracy do not see the differences they harbor as a threat but as a richness. Therefore, it is important for the peace and future of the society that every individual living in France has a certain democratic culture (Charbonneau, 2005). Likewise, in this country where many people of different religions live, secularism is one of the concepts that French society emphasizes the most. Because secularism guarantees that all citizens, regardless of their religion, are equal before public institutions (Dufour, 2005). In this context, the most inclusive discourse for French society is the principles and values of the French Republic. It is one of the main duties of every public institution to rally the entire French society around the principles and values of the French Republic and to make all citizens adopt these principles and values (Boudon, 2014; Schnapper, 2017). Because the most important thing that can be said about a country that has incorporated more than one culture is that it is a rich country where different religions, ethnic origins, different groups and values can live together (Tokmak, Yılmaz and Şeker 2019).

For the second research question, some factors classified as in-school and out-of-school factors were effective in civic education. In this framework, the method and technique preferred by the teacher in the teaching of the course, the teacher of the course, the individual characteristics of the student, the class size, the family, the activities of other public institutions outside the school, social media and the social environment were effective in civic education. Some other studies have also reached the conclusion that these factors are effective in achieving the objectives targeted within civic education. In this context, the methods and techniques to ensure the effectiveness of civic education in France and student achievement and teachers play an important role especially in democracy education and raising good citizens (Qin, 2012), associational activities in which students participate positively affect students' citizenship skills (French National Assembly Committee for the Evaluation and Control of Public Policies, 2021), democracy and civic education is a common product of curriculum, teacher, institutional culture, family, environment and country policy (Thésée, Carr & Potwora, 2015). Considering these results and the related literature on the factors affecting civic education, the knowledge and awareness levels of the participants teaching citizenship in French secondary schools are quite good regarding the factors affecting civic education. In addition, it is frequently emphasized in the literature that many factors are effective in civic education. One of the most important factors is the teacher. Because the teacher is the implementer of the program and the person who plans the lesson. The teaching method and technique preferred by the teacher during the lesson and the attitude of the teacher are factors that determine the effectiveness of civic education. Similarly, the physical conditions of the classroom and class size are factors that determine the teaching process (Osler, 2008). In addition to the teacher factor, the family factor is also effective in civic education. Because the individual receives his/her first education in the family and is influenced by the family in many respects in the following process. In this context, the family's view of the concept of citizenship, the perception of citizenship, and the behaviors of family members directly affect the citizenship education of young individuals (Heater, 2004). From a broader perspective, the social environment also has an important role in civic education. Especially in cosmopolitan countries where the level of development varies from city to city and even from region to region within the same city, the social environment is another determining factor in civic education among young individuals (Kiwan, 2008). As in every field, social media is one of the most important factors in civic education and students' perception of citizenship (Levinson, 2014).

For the third research question, practices outside the classroom for civic education were identified. Activities such as class and school delegate elections, school council elections, volunteering activities, cleaning activities, guidance activities with classroom teachers, citizenship defense day, eco-delegate practice, school life council and activities carried out in cooperation with local governments were carried out outside the classroom, which enabled students to practice their knowledge, values and behaviors related to civic education. Participants also stated that these activities positively affected students' participation in social life as active citizens. This result

coincides with the principles of civic education in French secondary schools. Because in the curricula and legislation prepared for citizenship education in France, it is stated that it is necessary to create opportunities for students to participate in classroom, school and social life. In particular, the importance of students' participation in delegate elections, various council and commission elections is emphasized (European Commission, 2017; Bozec, 2016; Conseil National d'Évaluation du Système Scolaire [CNESCO], 2016; French National Assembly Committee for the Evaluation and Control of Public Policies, 2021; Poirier, 2017).

For the fourth research question, some conclusions were reached about what the participants think about how to improve civic education in secondary schools. We concluded that teaching civic education as a stand-alone course, making use of out-of-school learning environments, inviting local administrators to come together with students in classrooms, addressing citizenship issues in all courses, increasing the weight of the ethics and citizenship education course in national exams (BAC and Brevet), and strictly following the curriculum prepared by the ministry for the course would contribute positively to the realization of the objectives of the civic course. These results support the results of the studies conducted by Alais, Bozec, and Cham (2016) and Husser (2017).

To summarize, in this study, conducted to reveal the opinions of the teachers who teach civic education in French secondary schools, we found that the participants did not establish a relationship between citizenship education and the European Union. When we consider that the participants are teaching in France, one of the important states of the European Union, we can state that the reasons for this situation should be revealed in a separate study. In addition, we concluded that the participants were aware of the importance of civic education for democratic societies. For this reason, revealing the reasons for this situation may contribute to the development of teacher education programs related to civic education.

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