

# Teachers' views on political subjects in the social studies curriculum<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

The education system, which the ruling power uses to ensure that its ideology is adopted while creating the goals of the education system, is intertwined with politics due to its nature. In this respect, it is impossible to consider education separately from politics. Social studies education comes to the fore as the field where ideology is given to individuals intensively. Hence, it is important to examine the social studies Curriculum and reveal the current condition of the Curriculum for acquiring political skills. The opinions of teachers, who are the Curriculum's implementers, about the Curriculum, its implementation, or the elimination of the Curriculum's deficiencies, if any, and supporting the Curriculum with new ideas are important. The current study was regarded as important to determine the views of the Curriculum implementers concerning the current condition of the social studies Curriculum and its improvement if needed. The basic interpretative qualitative research approach was employed to determine the views of social studies teachers on political subjects in the social studies Curriculum. The study group of the present research consists of 20 social studies teachers working in public schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education in the central district of Adiyaman province. A standardized open-ended interview form was used to collect data from teachers in the study. The data acquired at the end of the data collection process were analyzed by adopting the inductive analysis approach. To this end, the data obtained were analyzed in accordance with the inductive analysis approach and concept coding method, categories were created, and themes were reached from the categories. According to the findings, the majority of the social studies teachers participating in the study stated that the subjects of political literacy were not suitable for the level of students. While justifying this, they indicated that politics was not suitable for the age level of students, society was not ready for this, or concepts in the politics-related Curriculum were abstract. It should be specified that teacher statements are actually the result of a social reflection. It can be said that the reason why politics is generally viewed negatively is the political-based events that took place in Turkey in the past.

## 1 Introduction

In the broadest sense, politics is the activity that people carry out to make, protect, and change the general rules that govern their lives. Politics is connected in a complex way with the phenomena of conflict and cooperation. On the one hand, the presence of competing ideas, divergent desires, competing needs, and conflicting interests leads to the fact that people do not

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agree on the rules to which they are jointly subject; on the other hand, people know that they have to work together or cooperate to impact these rules or ensure that they remain in force (Heywood, 2015:24). The word 'politics,' which is used in the same sense as the word 'siyaset' in Turkish, is its equivalent in Western languages. The origin of politics is the same as the words 'polis' used for city-states in ancient Greece; 'polites' used for citizens; 'politeia' used in the meaning of the state structure; 'politica' meaning things regarding citizenship rights and 'politike' meaning the art of politics, and politics means state-related activities (Dursun, 2006).

Institutions, processes, and laws related to the administration of the state are the subject of political science. Political science examines how people govern themselves. The structure of the state and the duties and responsibilities of public officials constitute the field of interest of this science (Dönmez & Yazıcı, 2015). Political science, whose borders have not been drawn with sharp lines and whose 'topography' has not been fully extracted, is a social science that covers a very wide area and is still developing (Kapani, 2007). Political science, which is a discipline of social studies, is the science of institutions related to political authority and behaviors that play a role in the formation and operation of institutions. Political science, as a science, has brought a realistic perspective to the state and political subjects (Doğanay, 2005).

Political knowledge provides individuals with a way to the political environment, debates, and the ability to tolerate divergent views. It is necessary to reveal how to increase political knowledge in schools and how this knowledge will improve individuals (Betty, 2006). The primary aim of political education should be to improve political literacy. The ultimate goal of political literacy is to prepare citizens for an active and committed role in a participatory democracy. In this respect, political literacy is defined as 'acquiring the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes' (Rennick, 1993).

Important questions that can be asked as students construct their information about humanity, the world (geography), and the past (history) are also about politics. This way enables students to construct their information by making sense of society from a broader perspective. In this way, students can put together pieces of society. Otherwise, it can be stated that they will be unaware of the political system that holds society together.

Political science constitutes a significant need for social studies to achieve their goals. At this point, the terms state, government, authority, republic, constitution, law, political system, political institutions, democracy, social control, absolutism, power, citizenship, public opinion, etc., are among the basic concepts of political science, are important. In addition to learning these terms and concepts, it can be said that other teachings of political science also take an important place in social studies teaching. It is obvious that the social studies course wants to raise students not as passive citizens but as active, interrogating, sensitive, unyielding citizens capable of producing solutions. The basic condition of being an active citizen is knowing your rights and responsibilities. Political science also contributes significantly to learning rights and responsibilities (Tarhan, 2015).

Basic information and concepts, such as the state, government, republic, constitution, law, etc. that students will encounter throughout their lives are present in political science. Considering the main purpose of social studies teaching, it is to ensure that students have the skills to find solutions to the problems they encounter or may encounter in their daily lives. In this respect, political science can respond to the needs of social studies. Furthermore, the skills of raising active and sensitive citizens, among the aims of the social studies course, are possible with the contributions of political science (Dönmez & Yazıcı, 2015, p. 17).

The realization of the political aims of social studies can be achieved with political literacy. In this context, it is essential to define political literacy. When the literature is reviewed, it is seen that Krosnick (1990) defined political literacy as the state of having political information, while Fyfe defined political literacy as acquiring knowledge, skills, and values to support effective and conscious decisions in democratic participation (Fyfe, 2007). Political literacy is defined as individuals' knowing the political process and political subjects and their comprehension by individuals to fulfill their roles as effective citizens (Gençtürk & Karatekin, 2013). Political literacy involves making it easier for the individual to understand the political system and understanding the necessary tools and links in the political process rather than assimilating political information. A person who knows how decisions are taken, how resources are obtained, and how problems are solved is politically literate (Faiz & Dönmez, 2019). Political literacy refers to the individual's understanding of the political system and taking action rather than passively assimilating political information (Köksal & Erol, 2021). İnan's (2021) statements concerning political literacy and the characteristics of political literacy, 'Political literacy describes basic knowledge and some skills and abilities enabling individuals to evaluate political administration,' are important. It has been stated that being politically literate means a person has the knowledge and tools to participate in administration and politics. Political literacy has been expressed as a form of literacy that requires many specific abilities, such as taking part in making decisions in society and being able to communicate effectively with others about political issues (Dağ & Köçer, 2019).

In line with the General Objectives and Basic Principles of Turkish National Education expressed in Basic Law of National Education No. 1739, the specific objectives related to political literacy and expressed in the Social Studies Curriculum are as follows;

1. As citizens of the Republic of Turkey, they should grow up as citizens who love their homeland and nation, know and use their rights, fulfill their responsibilities, and have national consciousness,
2. They should understand the role of Atatürk's principles and reforms in the social, cultural, and economic development of the Republic of Turkey and be willing to keep alive democratic, secular, national, and contemporary values,
3. They should be able to use basic communication skills and basic concepts and methods of social studies to regulate social relations and solve the problems they encounter,
4. They should believe in the importance of participation and express opinions for the solution of personal and social problems,
5. They should comprehend the historical processes of the concepts of human rights, national sovereignty, democracy, secularism, and republic and their impacts on today's Turkey and organize their lives according to democratic rules,
6. They should exhibit sensitivity to issues that concern their country and the world (Ministry of National Education, 2022).

Turkish education system aims to raise individuals who have the knowledge, skills, and behaviors integrated into competencies. The Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF) defines the politics-related key competencies in the following way:

**Social and civic competencies:** These competencies involve personal, interpersonal, and intercultural competencies, which will enable individuals to participate effectively and constructively in the differentiated society and working life and cover all forms of behavior, enabling them to be equipped with features to resolve conflicts when necessary. Citizenship-related competence equips individuals to participate fully in civic life based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and commitment to democratic and active participation (MoNE, 2022).

The Social Studies Curriculum aims to ensure that skills and values are acquired. Skills that are expressed in the objectives and can be associated with politics within the scope of this course in line with the 'Turkish Qualifications Framework' can be listed as critical thinking, political literacy, problem-solving, social participation, communication, cooperation, and innovative thinking. Values can be indicated as equality, freedom, respect, independence, peace, responsibility, sensitivity, patriotism, and honesty (MoNE, 2022).

The social studies curriculum focuses on the concept of active citizenship within the framework of sociology, political science, and law, the active citizenship learning domain. It is important that students know how groups, institutions, and social organizations are formed, know the mechanisms that affect and control them, how they impact and control individuals and culture, and how they maintain and change their existence. In light of the information acquired on this subject, students should be able to answer the questions, 'What is the role of groups, institutions, and social organizations in our society and other societies? How do groups, institutions, and social organizations impact me? How do groups, institutions, and social organizations change? What is my role in these changes?' They comprehend the existence of organized state power as the most significant assurance of the problems that may arise in social life. By understanding how social problems are solved and how order is provided, they realize how individual rights and social order are protected in governments where the source of sovereignty is based on the nation. They comprehend which democratic ways are available to influence the administration by learning the ways of participating in social services and various official activities.

The education system, which the ruling power uses to ensure that its ideology is adopted while creating the goals of the education system, is intertwined with politics due to its nature. In this respect, it is impossible to consider education separately from politics. Social studies education comes to the fore as the field where ideology is given to individuals intensively. Hence, it is important to examine the social studies Curriculum and reveal the current condition of the Curriculum for acquiring political skills. The opinions of teachers, who are the Curriculum's implementers, about the Curriculum, its implementation, or the elimination of the Curriculum's deficiencies, if any, and supporting the Curriculum with new ideas are important. The current study was regarded as important to determine the views of the Curriculum implementers concerning the current condition of the social studies Curriculum and its improvement if needed. To this end, the main problem and detailed sub-problems were presented to determine the views of teachers on political literacy in the social studies Curriculum.

### **1.1 Problem statement**

It was determined by the question, 'What are teachers' views on political subjects in the social studies Curriculum?'

### **1.2 Sub-problems**

In line with the purpose of the study, the sub-problems to be addressed in the present research are listed below as follows:

1. What are social studies teachers' views on the suitability of political literacy subjects for the level of students?
2. What are social studies teachers' views on the impact of political subjects in the Social Studies Curriculum on acquiring political literacy skills?
3. What are social studies teachers' views on including political literacy skills in the Social Studies Curriculum?

4. What are social studies teachers' views on what they do to support the Curriculum in order to acquire political literacy skills?
5. What are social studies teachers' views on what can be done apart from the activities and practices included in the Curriculum for acquiring political literacy skills?
6. What are social studies teachers' views on what political literacy and citizenship knowledge have in common?

## **2 Method**

This section includes the research design, study group, data collection tool, data collection, and data analysis.

### **2.1 Research Design**

The basic interpretative qualitative research method was employed to determine the views of social studies teachers on political subjects in the social studies Curriculum. Basic interpretive qualitative research exemplifies all the characteristics of qualitative research. The researcher deals with understanding how participants make sense of a situation or phenomenon. In this approach, the strategy is inductive, and the result is descriptive. While a basic interpretive qualitative study is conducted, it is attempted to explore and understand a phenomenon, a process, the perspectives and world views of the relevant people, or a combination of these. Data are collected through interviews, observations, or document analysis. These data are analyzed inductively to identify recurring patterns or common themes. A rich, descriptive explanation of the findings is presented and discussed using references to the literature framing the study at the first stage (Merriam, 2002).

### **2.2 Research group**

The study group of the current research comprises 20 social studies teachers working in public schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education in the central district of Adıyaman province within the scope of a convenience sample. The teachers were coded as 'T1, T2...T19, T20.'

### **2.3 Data collection**

In the study, interviews were conducted with teachers to collect data on them. Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) indicated that the purpose of the interview method was to learn what is in people's minds, what they think, or how they feel about something. A standardized open-ended interview form was used to collect data from teachers in the study. The most important feature of standardized open-ended interview forms is that the same questions appear in the same order in all interview forms. Thus, the answers given by respondents to the questions can be easily compared (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). The statements in the standardized open-ended interview form were first submitted to the opinion of two faculty members working in the field of social studies to evaluate them in terms of their meaning, scope, comprehensibility, and clarity. In line with the literature review and the opinions of field experts, a standardized open-ended interview form consisting of 6 questions was prepared and implemented to determine the views of teachers on political subjects. Prior to the implementation, the teachers were informed about the study, and their confidence in the study was ensured. It was aimed to ensure that they gave sincere answers to the questions by trying to make them feel confident in the study. The interview forms, which were reproduced in a sufficient number by the researcher, were applied to the teachers. During the interview, the teachers were given sufficient time to obtain the maximum answers to the questions, and this time differed for each participant.

## 2.4 Data analysis

The process was described in detail in terms of the study's reliability. The data acquired at the end of the data collection process were analyzed by adopting the inductive analysis approach. There is a movement from the parts to the whole in the inductive analysis approach. To this end, the data obtained were analyzed in accordance with the inductive analysis approach and the concept coding method (Saldana, 2016), categories were created, and themes were reached from the categories.

Since using multiple researchers in creating categories and themes is an important step in terms of reliability (Patton, 2014), the analysis process was performed separately by two people, the results were discussed, and categories and themes were decided.

Studies using qualitative research methods express the detailed introduction of the process as one of the methods to increase the reliability of research (Başkale, 2016). Guba and Lincoln (1982) stated that there should be credibility in qualitative research and specified credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability criteria for trustworthiness.

Methods used to increase credibility include long-term interaction, participant confirmation, and expert review (Başkale, 2016). Participant confirmation expressed as one of the ways to ensure the internal validity of the study was used in the present study. In the study process, there is a possibility that the researcher will reach different results from the collected data due to some subjective assumptions or data misunderstanding. In both cases, a confirmation mechanism to be created with data sources can help understand to what degree the results reached are sufficient to represent the truth (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013; Başkale, 2016). Therefore, after the researcher analyzed what the participants stated in the standardized open-ended interview form, he interviewed the participants again and tried to confirm whether the results obtained reflected the participants' thoughts correctly.

## 3 Findings

This section presents the findings regarding the sub-problems of the research process and the interpretation of these findings.

**Table 1** Findings of the first sub-problem

Themes	Categories	<i>f</i>
Heavy – not suitable for the level of students ( <i>f</i> =10)	Not suitable due to childhood	3
	Concepts are abstract	3
	Society is not ready	1
	Not suitable due to regional differences	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>
Suitable for the level of students ( <i>f</i> =9)	We see it in their behaviors	2
	It includes their daily life	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>

According to the findings, the participants who used the statement, 'Heavy – not suitable for the level of students' (*f*=10) regarding the suitability of political subjects for the level of students justified this as follows, 'Not suitable due to childhood' (*f*=3), 'Concepts are abstract' (*f*=3), 'Society is not ready' (*f*=1), and 'Not suitable due to regional differences' (*f*=1). The participants using the statement, 'Suitable for the level of students' (*f*=9), justified this in the following way, 'We see it in their behaviors' (*f*=2) and 'It includes their daily life' (*f*=2).

The sample statements of social studies teachers regarding the suitability of political subjects for the level of students are presented below;

T2. 'I think it is suitable for the level of students. They can learn and exercise their rights. If our students can come to us and say, 'This is my right,' it means we are on the right track. Or if they can make criticisms of children's rights, we understand that subjects are understandable in line with their benefits.'

T16. 'I think that the general objectives and attainments related to political literacy subjects in the Social Studies course are suitable for the level of students. However, I think many concepts related to politics and democracy are abstract. In my opinion, they should be more understandable by giving examples from daily life and students' environment instead of making students memorize them.'

T5. 'I think it's heavy. Students should spend their childhood years without thinking about politics.'

**Table 2** Findings of the Second Sub-Problem

Themes	Categories	<i>f</i>
It does not ensure skill acquisition ( <i>f</i> =7)	Difference between theory and practice	5
	Politics becomes evident in later years	2
	Not suitable for their levels	2
	Subjects are insufficient	2
	The family affects students' political thoughts	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>
It ensures skill acquisition ( <i>f</i> =7)	Active participation in the elections at school can ensure skill acquisition	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>

According to the findings, the participants who used the statement 'It does not ensure skill acquisition' (*f*=7) regarding the impact of political subjects in the social studies curriculum on acquiring political literacy skills justified their opinion as follows, 'Difference between theory and practice' (*f*=4), 'Politics becomes evident in later years' (*f*=2), 'Not suitable for their levels' (*f*=2), 'Subjects are insufficient' (*f*=2), and 'The family affects students' political thoughts' (*f*=1). The participants using the statement 'It ensures skill acquisition' (*f*=7) justified their opinion in the following way, 'Active participation in the elections at school can ensure skill acquisition' (*f*=2).

The sample statements of social studies teachers concerning the impact of political subjects in the social studies curriculum on acquiring political literacy skills are given below;

T14. 'If political subjects taught in schools and the form applied in real life were parallel to each other, some skill acquisition would be supported in this sense. Inconsistency prevents skill acquisition in that sense.'

T3. 'I don't think (it will ensure skill acquisition) because politics gains meaning after it is clarified in thoughts at a slightly older age. In my opinion, if political subjects are planned as they arise depending on age, region, and place of residence, it will work. Moreover, the student who sees that the political subjects taught in theory and the political figures that the student sees in practice are different naturally falters.'

**Table 3** Findings of the third sub-problem

Themes	Categories	<i>f</i>
Insufficient ( <i>f</i> =9)	Political subjects are included superficially	3
	They are not subjects of students' interest	1
	Activities are insufficient	1
	The field of social studies is wide	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>
Sufficient ( <i>f</i> =9)	They are included in accordance with the level of students	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>

According to the findings, the participants who used the statement 'Not included sufficiently' (f=9) regarding the inclusion of political literacy skills in the social studies curriculum justified their opinion in the following way, 'Political subjects are included superficially' (f=3), 'They are not subjects of students' interest' (f=1), 'Activities are insufficient' (f=1), and 'The field of social studies is wide' (f=1). The participants using the statement 'Included in general' (f=9) justified their opinion as follows, 'They are included in accordance with the level of students' (f=3).

The sample statements of social studies teachers regarding the inclusion of political literacy skills in the social studies curriculum are given below;

T17. 'They are given in a regular and gradual way on the subjects of good citizen under the theme of individual and community in the 5<sup>th</sup> grades, in the units of active citizenship in grades 5-6-7. I think skills are sufficient when attainments are given.'

T2. 'I do not think there is a deficiency in terms of subjects and attainments. However, I don't find the textbooks sufficient for practice. The attainments in the books enable students to understand the current situation, but activities and subjects related to the current situation and how to participate in democracy are not included. Everything is based on abstract information.'

T3. 'Subjects of political literacy are not given enough weight. Actually, I think this is right because they are not at the level to perform in-depth analysis at this age. It is more appropriate if it is superficial.'

**Table 4** Findings Regarding the Fourth Sub-Problem

Themes	<i>f</i>
I carry out practices-activities	9
I direct them to follow the country's agenda	4
I create a discussion environment where they will learn political concepts	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>

According to the findings, social studies teachers used the statements, 'I carry out practices activities (f=9), 'I direct them to follow the country's agenda' (f=4), and 'I create a discussion environment where they will learn political concepts' (f=2) regarding what they do to support the Curriculum in order to acquire political literacy skills.

The sample statements of social studies teachers regarding what they do to support the Curriculum in order to acquire political literacy skills are presented below;

T11. 'I advise students to follow the agenda. I recommend watching the news, reading newspapers, and especially following the discussion Curriculums.'

T16. 'I focus on examples from daily life suitable for the content of the subject taught to political literacy skills in school. I create an in-class discussion environment and inform students about the discussion environment. I suggest that people may have different opinions, and even if we do not adopt these opinions, we should respect and listen to them. I include more democratic practices. For example, we determine the rules to be followed in the classroom together with students and create a classroom constitution. I focus on activities related to the duties and responsibilities of the state and citizens toward each other and our rights and freedoms.'

T7. 'I create a discussion environment on political concepts such as government, political party, parliament, and forms of government.'

**Table 5** Findings Related to the fifth Sub-Problem

Themes	<i>f</i>
Environments, where political skills will be acquired, can be created	3
Social activities can be arranged	3
It should be ensured that the agenda is followed	3
The practice dimension can be included	3
Students can be encouraged to take part in non-governmental organizations	2

Importance can be attached to parent education	1
The curriculum should be rearranged	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>

According to the findings, social studies teachers used the statements, 'Environments, where political skills will be acquired, can be created' (f=3), 'Social activities can be arranged' (f=3), 'It should be ensured that the agenda is followed' (f=3), 'The practice dimension can be included' (f=3), 'Students can be encouraged to take part in non-governmental organizations' (f=2), 'Importance can be attached to parent education' (f=1), and 'The curriculum should be rearranged' (f=1) concerning what can be done apart from the activities and practices included in the Curriculum for acquiring political literacy skills.

The sample statements of social studies teachers regarding what can be done apart from the activities and practices included in the Curriculum for acquiring political literacy skills are given below;

T9. 'Activities can be carried out to ensure that students practically acquire the rights and freedoms in the family, school, and environment triangle. Particular attention should be paid to parent education so that families acquire this awareness.'

T2. 'We can examine the forms of government in different countries and enable students to express their opinions on these issues. Although it is governed by the same form of government, we can explain that there are different practices in the world. We should encourage them to participate in non-governmental organizations, understand and respect people, and we should include practices that can change the world.'

T16. 'Students' interest in social events can be increased. Subjects concerning our country and the world can be discussed in the classroom without imposing any political thought on students. Free discussion environments can be created in classrooms. Activities related to this subject can be increased to assimilate democracy as a behavior and ensure participatory democracy. Subjects regarding political literacy should not be taught on the basis of knowledge and memorization. For example, while explaining the administrative structure of the state, examples of the institutions related to this structure are given. Excursions to these institutions can be organized if necessary. Student clubs can be made more active. A dialogue can be established with non-governmental organizations in their environment.'

**Table 6** Findings Regarding the Sixth Sub-Problem

<b>Themes</b>	<b>f</b>
Both are intertwined	11
Citizenship knowledge affects perspectives on political subjects	5
They support each other	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>

According to the findings obtained, social studies teachers used the following statements, 'Both are intertwined' (f=11), 'Citizenship knowledge affects perspectives on political subjects' (f=5), and 'They support each other' (f=3) concerning what political literacy and citizenship knowledge have in common.

The sample statements of social studies teachers with regard to what political literacy and citizenship knowledge have in common are given below;

T15. 'Citizenship and political literacy are a kind of action running parallel to each other. Conscious individuals and societies are only possible with conscious political literacy.'

T18. 'Individuals who know their citizenship rights and responsibilities become more active in political subjects.'

#### 4 Conclusion

Within the scope of the findings, the majority of the social studies teachers participating in the study stated that the subjects of political literacy were not suitable for the level of students. While justifying this, they indicated that politics was not suitable for the age level of students, society was not ready for this, or concepts in the politics-related Curriculum were abstract. It should be noted that teacher statements are actually the result of a social reflection. It can be said that the politics-based events that took place in Turkey in the past are the reason why politics is generally viewed negatively. Toward the end of the 1960s, university events and youth actions, which started with small-scale protests, grew over time and turned into fights with stones and sticks first and then into armed, bombing conflicts, anarchy, and terrorist incidents, which spread throughout the country and resulted in death. By 1969, under the guidance of left and right violent groups infiltrating university students, the events turned into protesting and changing the social order and political structure. Since these clashes could not be prevented, the Justice Party Government had to resign with the memorandum given by the Turkish Armed Forces on 12 March 1971. The student movements, which were rendered ineffective for a while by the military coup, were experienced again a few years after the coup, with an increased level of violence. The events that took place toward the end of the 1970s were expressed as the '68 Student Incidents' and could be described as political violence at universities that resulted in the same events as the incidents in the previous period and were considered the reason for a military coup again, and the military coup of 12 September 1980 became the last to stop these large-scale violence events in universities. It can be stated that this point of view was formed due to the military coups realized by showing these events as the reasons and the negative perception of individuals who were detained and arrested as a result of the coups. Events that took place in this process have left deep traces in the memory of society. As a result of these events, society distanced itself from politics and made an effort to keep young people away from politics.

In the study by Doğanay, Çuhadar, and Sarı (2007, there may be many possible reasons why preservice teachers are not interested in politics and do not use political participation channels. The problem is actually closely related to the fact that a democratic political culture covering the whole society has not yet been developed. The lack of a participatory democracy understanding among the young and the elderly, the individuals who make up society, prevents ways of participation other than voting, watching the news about politics, and discussing from being perceived as a way of democratic action. On the other hand, the research result indicating that the frequent use of non-traditional means of participation (boycott, manifestation, etc.) by marginalized groups and carrying elements of violence may cause such participation ways to be perceived negatively by the public is similar to the results of this study.

It can be indicated that the number of participants stating that political subjects were suitable for the level of students was close to the number of participants stating that political subjects were not suitable for the level of students. The participants, who stated that politics was suitable for the level of students, said that 'they saw this in students' behavior and political subjects included daily lives' as the reason for this. Considering the teachers' statements regarding this sub-problem, it can be said that the citizenship dimension of students' behaviors was generally paid attention to, and this was confused with political literacy. When studies in the literature on citizenship are reviewed, it can be stated that while the responsibilities of individuals to the state are regarded as more important, the rights dimension of individuals is neglected. It is overlooked that the individual has rights as well as responsibilities to the state, and the use of these rights is required by human nature. It is only possible for individuals to think about and criticize the political

structures in the country with political literacy skills. It can be said that individuals' attitudes and behaviors toward politics should be evaluated differently from the citizenship dimension.

Concerning the impact of political subjects in the social studies curriculum on acquiring political literacy skills, the teachers stated that the Curriculum would not ensure the acquisition of political literacy skills due to reasons such as differences in theory and practice, politics being shaped at higher age stages and politics being not suitable for the level of students, the inadequacy of subjects and the family's impact on students' political thoughts. It can be stated that attention should be paid to the fact that the subjects included in the Curriculum are subjects that can be turned into skills. In Erdoğan's (2003, the Turkish youth 'is suffering from not participating/not being able to participate' in terms of political participation. The statement, 'The Turkish youth with an undoubtedly heterogeneous structure has low participation scores in all conventional and non-conventional participation types, except for voting, which is the traditional form of political participation,' reveals the situation regarding political literacy skills in Turkey. Hence, it is important to transform the Curriculum's content into a skill by considering the current culture of society while creating the Curriculum content on political literacy. It can be said that including teachers, who are the Curriculum's implementers, in the process of creating the Curriculum content will be an important factor in the Curriculum's success.

The study by Doğanay, Çuhadar, and Sarı (2007), shows that university youth actually has the potential for political participation, but there is a lack of environment and knowledge to put it into action. The result indicating that factors such as family pressure and university discipline regulations are not very effective differs from the study.

The participants stating that the Curriculum content would ensure skill acquisition said that elections at school could enable students to acquire this skill. It can be expressed that the acquisition of political literacy skills is not very possible by participating in only one election process in schools since politics has a wide spectrum and is present in every aspect of daily life. In the study of Doğanay, Çuhadar, and Sarı (2007), the statement 'Student council elections are the only legal form of political participation in which university students vote in the university. However, they do not attract students' attention due to reasons such as not being able to have a say in the administration although they are elected' demonstrates that the elections held in educational institutions do not ensure the acquisition of political skills and also reveals the importance of taking the results of the elections into account.

In line with the findings, social studies teachers indicated that political literacy skills were not sufficiently included in the Social Studies Curriculum. The teachers justified this by saying that political subjects were included superficially, political issues were not subjects attracting students' attention, activities related to this skill were not sufficient, and the field of social studies was too broad. The same number of teachers also stated that political literacy skills were generally included. While justifying this, they indicated that political literacy skills were included in accordance with the level of students. Considering the teachers' statements and justifications, it is seen that those who expressed a negative opinion about the Curriculum dimension detailed the reasons. It is seen that those who stated that political literacy skills were sufficiently included provided fewer justifications. Upon examining the Curriculum dimension, it can be said that there are skills related to political literacy, but teachers in both groups did not mention these skills. When the content of the social studies Curriculum is compared with the content of different countries, it is seen that the social studies course in Turkey has more history and geography

content. Considering the social studies course or the equivalent courses in countries such as the US, Germany, France, the UK, and Finland, it is seen that the course content is equipped with the knowledge, skills, and concepts that individuals living in these countries need in their daily lives, instead of a wide range of information. It is observed that there is more content on politics or politics-related subjects, and politics is among the courses that make up the content of the social studies course in some countries.

Social studies teachers said that they carried out practices-activities, guided students to follow the country's agenda, and created a discussion environment where students could learn political concepts to ensure the acquisition of political literacy skills. Teachers did not provide details of the activities they carried out. Politics can be expressed as a skill to be acquired through living. In this respect, it is important for students to carry out practical activities to acquire political literacy skills. Teachers stated that the content of the social studies course was broad. Hence, it can be indicated that teachers will not find sufficient time to acquire political literacy skills. Moreover, it can be said that the family dimension is ignored in teachers' directing students to follow the political agenda. It can be stated that it is not possible since the opportunities for students to do this are limited during the school process, and there is a family obstacle in front of students in the home dimension. The voting age in Turkey was 18 years old in 1924, 22 years old in 1934, 21 years old in 1982, 20 years old in 1987, and 18 years old in 1995. However, the voting age was 30 years old in 1920 and 25 years old in 2006, which was reduced to 18 years old in 2017 (TBMM, 2022). Including young generations in politics in the country has just begun to be accepted. It is possible to say that it will take time for teachers' efforts on this issue to yield results since the social basis for including young generations in politics has just begun to form. It can be stated that the fact that teachers express suggestions for practice and include politics-related institutions in this teaching process regarding the acquisition of political skills is appropriate for the nature of politics. It can be said that the fact that experts pay attention to the opinions of teachers in the process of creating the Curriculum content may be effective in ensuring the acquisition of political skills.

It can be stated that social studies teachers cannot make a clear distinction between citizenship knowledge and political literacy. Most participants regard the two as intertwined or supporting each other. Basically, it can be indicated that citizenship knowledge includes the rights and responsibilities of the individual toward the state, whereas political literacy is the field providing a perspective on the state structure, government system, or structures in which the individual is present.

As a result, it is essential for a democratic society to raise individuals who take responsibility as active individuals in a democratically structured school environment, cooperate to solve the problems encountered, and develop skills in this direction.

Making individuals feel that they are the basic factors that ensure the development and continuity of the state, who can criticize the system, offer suggestions, and actively participate in political life, besides being individuals who only fulfill their duties and responsibilities toward the state and accept only this aspect of citizenship, and ensuring that they acquire skills in this direction can be listed as recommendations.

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