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Research articles

Measuring competences for democratic culture: teaching human rights through religious education

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Abstract

This paper aims to present research on measuring competences for democratic culture. It describes the development of a multiple-item scale that measures competences in teaching democratic citizenship and human rights through religious education. A principal component analysis based on the 135 items of the Council of Europe's Reference framework of competences for democratic culture was carried out in two phases, in order to construct and refine the scale. The result was a 52-item scale divided into six components. This was tested for its reliability, factor structure and validity; firstly on a sample of 123, and secondly on a sample of 403 secondary RE teachers (2018-19). The research scrutinises the concept of democratic competences as being the ability to mobilise and deploy relevant values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and/or understanding. It concludes that these competences are more complex structures than has been assumed.

Keywords

Democratic culture scale, education for democratic citizenship, scale development, religious education teachers, human rights education

Introduction

In a world that is increasingly socially, economically and environmentally interdependent and where COVID-19 has significantly weakened the political, financial and social capacities of nation-states and nation-unions, it is incumbent on democratic education and religious education (RE) to develop the consciousness of a diverse and, at the same time, shared world (Heater, 2004, pp. 240-246). This paper focuses on an education that moves forward from just teaching citizenship to one where, within the curriculum, democracy is taught and learned (Biesta & Lawy, 2006; Dewey, [1916] 2002). In this way, schools and humanities subjects can develop young people's capabilities and facilitate critical thinking, world citizenship, and imaginative understanding (Nussbaum, 2006). And RE, as a humanities subject, can contribute to the development of liberal, open-minded and respectful mindsets by studying world religions and worldviews from different points of view (Jackson, 2014; Heilbronn, 2021, pp.27-30).

The paper focuses on RE teachers, the measurement of their 'competences for democratic culture' (CDC), and how these impact on teaching and learning democracy within the curriculum. The faith and beliefs of RE teachers, as well as their secular and non-religious positions, seem to play a role in how 'otherness' is experienced in the classroom; it is important that these teachers examine themselves and their own stereotypes and prejudices (Everington, 2013; Lundie & Conroy, 2015; Franken & Loobuyck, 2016; Kittelmann Flensner, 2018; Vince, 2020; Mpisi, Groenewald, & Barnett, 2020; Nixon, Smith, & Fraser-Pearce, 2021). Religion and diversity in schools and classrooms, as well as dialogue between different standpoints and the dialogical approach to RE, are at the core of European research (Skeie, 2009; Erricker, 2010, pp. 94-121; Norman & Gallagher, 2011; Barnes, 2012; Weisse, Amirpur, Körs, & Vieregge, 2014; Klutz, 2016; Shanneik, 2016; Arweck, 2017; Schreiner, 2018; Ipgrave, Knauth, Körs, Vieregge, & von der Lippe, 2018; Franken, 2017; 2021). There is a radically growing diversity in the populations of most European countries and a need, firstly, to become acquainted with and learn respect for 'otherness' and, secondly, to take part in a dialogue where the plurality of cultures, experiences, actions and faiths is positively addressed (Ipgrave, 2001; 2004; O'Grady & Jackson, 2020). The 'Religion in Education. A contribution to Dialogue or a factor of Conflict in transforming societies of European Countries' (REDCo) study stresses that '…most [young people] were convinced that respecting the religion of others is a way to cope with differences' (Valk, 2009, p. 425), and that RE classrooms can provide the 'safe space' to discuss such topics (Leganger-Krogstad, 2003), even though in some cases understanding may be difficult (Conroy, Wenell, & Lundie, 2013, pp. 119-124; Weisse, 2011). Moreover, the relation of RE to citizenship is highlighted in numerous pieces of research (Conroy, Wenell, & Lundie, 2013, pp. 117-140; Østberg, 2013; Kjelden, 2016). Stern, in an analysis of research on RE and human rights, values and citizenship, concludes that 'RE needs all the researchers it

can get in the classroom' (Stern, 2006, p. 94).

Council of Europe's reference framework of competences for democratic culture and teaching professionalism

In the European context, it is recognised that education plays the essential role in building the world in which future generations will live. This acknowledgement is the key foundation of the Council of Europe's 'Reference framework of competences for democratic culture' (RFCDC) (Council of Europe, 2018a;b;c) and the starting point for current research within the RE community.

The Council of Europe has focused on human rights, democracy, and the rule of law in maintaining and fostering the political systems of the member countries as well as promoting citizenship education. In Recommendation CM/Rec (2007)6 a vision of education is defined by four main aims:

- Preparation for the labour market
- Preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies
- Personal development
- The development and maintenance of a broad, advanced knowledge base. (Council of Europe, 2007)

These aims literally visualise the development of a rapidly changing world where citizens live independent and active lives. On this basis, approaches and materials such as education for democratic citizenship (EDC) and human rights education (HRE) have been developed. In 2010, the 'Charter on EDC/HRE' depicted the central concepts and areas where EDC/HRE should be implemented. The aim of democratic citizenship is defined as follows:

> To empower them to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and to play an active part in democratic life, with a view to the promotion and protection of democracy and the rule of law. (Council of Europe, 2010)

Furthermore, the aim of human rights education is defined as:

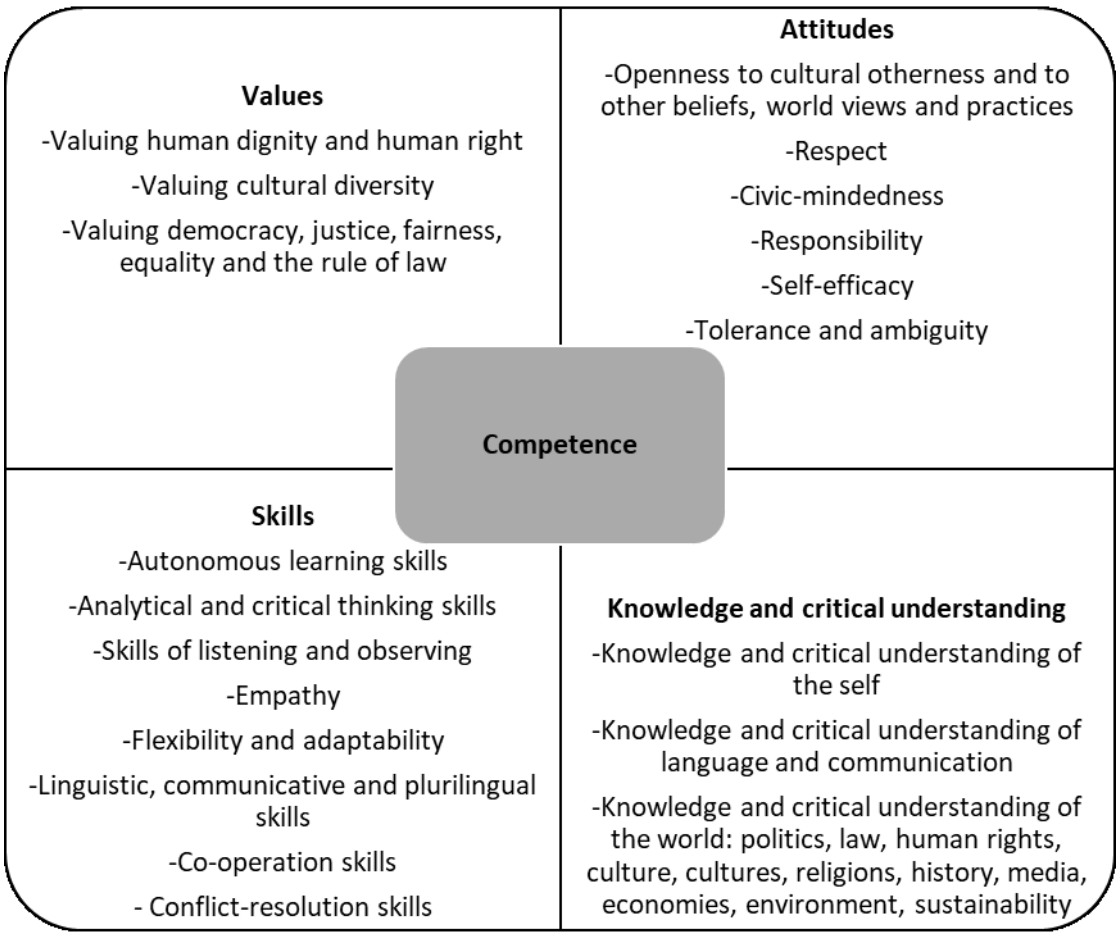
> To empower learners to contribute to the building and defence of a universal culture of human rights in society, with a view to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. (Council of Europe, 2010)

It is clear that these aims address the competences, knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that citizens need to develop and acquire in order to actively participate in democratic processes.

When RE interconnects with democratic citizenship (DC) the same competences can be taught. This means that teachers must possess the competences (Council of Europe, 2008, Jackson, 2014) to teach students to act as democratic and intercultural citizens (Council of Europe, 2010, p. 38) (Figure 1). Competences are defined as:

> abilities to mobilise and deploy relevant values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and/or understanding, in order to respond appropriately and effectively to the demands, challenges and opportunities that are presented by a given type of context. (Council of Europe, 2018a p.32)

Figure 1: The 20 competences of the model.



The 20 competences are subdivided into four groups: 1. Values; 2. Attitudes; 3. Skills; 4. Knowledge and critical understanding.

Values are deemed to be general beliefs about life goals which, as principles, guide individuals. They give qualitative meaning to their actions and offer standards or criteria for evaluating and justifying them. They are psychological resources that enable individuals to manage democratic and intercultural situations.

Attitudes are defined as beliefs or opinions, emotions or feelings, evaluations, and tendencies to behave towards someone or something (e.g., a person or an issue).

Skills are defined as capacities to accomplish complex procedures of thinking or behaving in order to achieve simple or difficult set targets.

Knowledge, finally, consists of facts or ideas acquired by individuals which enable them to give comprehensive and appreciative meanings to their experiences—here, in the context of democratic processes (Council of Europe, 2018a, pp. 38-52).

Of course:

> The Model proposes that, within the context of democratic culture and intercultural dialogue, an individual is deemed to be acting competently when he or she meets the demands, challenges and opportunities that are presented by democratic and intercultural situations appropriately and effectively by mobilising and deploying some or all of these 20 competences. (Council of Europe, 2018a, p. 38)

The aim is that the publication be used by national educational systems: to evaluate existing courses or study programmes; to design and develop curricula and pedagogies; and, of most interest in the current study, to develop assessments of teachers' competencies. Clusters of descriptors are provided by the RFCDC for teachers' self-reflection and self-assessment. They are proposed as: statements that describe observable behaviours which indicate that the person concerned has achieved a certain level of proficiency with regard to a competence. (Council of Europe, 2018a, p. 59)

The 135 key descriptors are the result of a procedure in which 3,094 educators from across Europe participated. 2,085 draft descriptors were firstly produced, which became 447 after feedback, rating tasks, validation tasks and scaling tasks. The 135 most useful were then identified. The participants followed specific criteria to devise the descriptors and then to evaluate them:

1. Wording (as learning outcomes), 2. Brevity (<25 words), 3. Positivity, 4. Clarity, 5. Independence (of all the other descriptors), and 6. Definiteness. The descriptors are scaled to three levels of proficiency: 1. Basic, 2. Intermediate, 3. Advanced. They were then published by using these categories.

Researchers have questioned the conception of the four groups of 20 competences. In a recent article, Jónsson and Rodriguez (2019) suggest a different conceptualisation. Their study builds on the Aristotelian concept of democratic competences as virtues, and on the Deweyan conception of democracy and what it means for a citizen to live in a democracy and lead a

democratic life. While pointing out that the RFCDC (2018) provides a brief discussion of the concept of democracy, the authors then provide a theorising of democratic capacities involving three specific conditions: 1. Political conditions; 2. Moral conditions; 3. Conditions of individualisation (p. 4). Thus, they define seven complex competences instead of four 'simple' ones; 1. Discursive competence, 2. Competence for conflict resolution, 3. Competence for critical re-evaluation, 4. Competence for communal living. 5. Competence for resilience, 6. Competence for forming a conception of a good life, and 7. Competence for respecting the natural boundaries of human living. They argue that the 20 competences of the RFCDC:

> are so general and basic that they should figure in any complex competence such as the seven we defined…although some of the simple competences are more central for certain complex competences… However, none of the simple ones will be completely absent (whatever that might mean) from any of the complex ones. (Jónsson & Rodriguez, 2019, p. 11)

In fact, the democratic competences are complex structural concerns in a social context (Biesta & Lawy, 2006) rather than individuals' skills and capabilities to behave in one particular way. When the competences are so general, and figure in so many aspects of individuals' lives and learning processes, the majority of educators may claim to be working towards one, or more, or all of them; teachers follow the curriculum in the classroom and claim that they work on the competence of listening and observing. That does not mean that there is no value in listing 20 competences. On the contrary, they provide the basis of the democratic competences which must always be conceptualised and analysed by using the 135 descriptors. These can lead to more complex but recognisable competences. The descriptors are provided to help to operationalise the competences in terms of the observable behaviours of democratic culture (Council of Europe, 2018a, p. 59).

Although a number of researchers challenge the efficacy and the morality of educating 'good citizens' in schools (Merry, 2020; Francis & Mills, 2012; Eksner & Nur Chemma, 2017; Gillborn, 2006; Apple, 2013), education is literally the crucial component in democratic empowerment. Thus, properly educated and trained teachers are necessary since it is their practice that can promote democratic culture, as the EDC/HRE Charter states: Teaching and learning practices and activities should follow and promote democratic and human rights values and principles (Council of Europe, 2010).

This requires competent teaching professionals, educated and politically astute, who can develop the CDC themselves and, at the same time, be ready to tackle a range of challenges in their communities, schools, and classrooms. It is these individuals who have the task of educating children to be socially active and responsible citizens (Sachs, 2003, p. 154; Salema,

2005; Brett, Mompoint-Gaillard, & Salema, 2009; European Commission, 2017; Nieuwelink, Dekker, & ten Dam, 2019). It is known that the powerful relationships which result from the interactions in the community between students and educators can transform disadvantaged students and schools. The transformative dynamic of student-educator interactions is visible when educators have already been transformed by education and training in reflection, openness, flexibility, adaptability, civic mindedness, empathy, and tolerance of ambiguity (Council of Europe, 2018b; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2016; Barrett, Byram, Lázár, Mompoint-Gaillard, & Philippou, 2014). Educators learn to challenge dominant notions of education and curricula with active and democratic ones (Garratt & Piper, 2012), and they learn to contextualise notions of democracy and human rights in different cultural and political contexts (Zembylas, Charalambous, Charalambous, & Lesta, 2017). Thus, the school, the curriculum and teaching can form democratic citizens (Print & Lange, 2012; Council of Europe, 2016) as long as educators are active professionals who embody democratic culture. This means that the epicentre of the transformation process within education is the transformation of educators. These teachers are called to re-orientate their work under a transformative-intercultural-inclusive-democratic framework, one based on the values of equity, inclusion, solidarity, justice, autonomy, critical understanding, communication, emancipation and, above all, humanism.

It is apparent from the above that it is of the upmost importance for RE teachers to possess a critical perception, a 'knowledge and critical understanding of the self' and 'knowledge and critical understanding of the world'. These competences can be described in terms of observable behaviours: a) critically examining values and beliefs; b) critically examining prejudices and stereotypes, as well as everything behind them; c) critically examining the deeper causes of human rights violations, such as the role played by stereotypes and prejudices in human rights abuses; and d), recognising the religious symbols, religious rituals, and religious uses of language (Council of Europe, 2018). The examination of the interconnections between beliefs and religion with stereotypes and prejudices but, above all, with human rights, highlights the essential commitment of different dimensions of self—'rational, affective, somatic, spiritual, and sociocultural' (Tolliver & Tisdell, 2006, p.39). The logical dimension of self is a presupposition for a critical understanding of the self and the world to manage the internal interplay between the personal religious beliefs, conditions of education and different social contexts, as well as the external interplay between the interests of stakeholders (state, local authorities, religious communities, etc.) (Christopher, 2020; Jackson & Everington, 2016). This external interplay changes as the politicisation and secularisation of RE has a different impact in different contexts (Zembylas, Loukaidis, & Antoniou, 2019). To conclude, the issue is that both contemporary conditions and educational demands require RE teachers who are competent to transmit democratic culture. This

inevitably means a change of paradigm for most of them, and it is well known that teachers resist changes of paradigm (Zimmerman, 2006; Clement, 2014; Hargreaves, 2004; Mutch, 2012; Zembylas, 2003).

Even though this is the case, RE teachers individually initiate processes of (self-) reflection and (self-) evaluation when research puts them in a position of responsibility for educating students about, through and for, human rights (Burridge, et al., 2013; Tibbitts, 2002; Jennings, 2006; Robinson, Phillips, & Quennerstedt, 2020). Teaching 'manifests itself as a gift that occurs beyond learning' (Biesta, 2020, p. 39). Therefore, there is an urgent need for a scale that can challenge teachers to reflect on and evaluate their values, attitudes, skills, and the critical understanding required for democratic culture. Such a scale, based on particular descriptors of competences, will also measure their CDC. This is the starting point of the current research. The development of a tool to measure CDC, however, construes 'competences' as not just 'performative virtues or instrumental character traits', but also as Aristotelian virtues with a moral dimension (Jónsson & Rodriguez, 2019). These virtues are also interconnected with religious and non-religious beliefs, and this is vital for the development of RE teachers' competences. This is particularly the case in Greece, where secondary RE teachers are all graduates from two Schools of (Orthodox) Theology who have not even received limited (2-5 courses) pre-service teacher education. In Greece RE is a compulsory subject in primary and secondary education for ten years. Under the Constitution (Art. 16) it remains mono-religious, although world religions and worldviews are also taught (2/10 years). Since 2011 there has been an ongoing debate about the content of RE and its pedagogy and the High Court's decisions (2016-19) have brought about changes to more confessional approaches (Koukounaras Liagkis, 2015; 2019; 2021).

Methodology

Aim

Our research is based on the 135 descriptors of the competencies for democratic culture, as defined by the Council of Europe (2018b). The core concept is that since the descriptors are observable democratic behaviours they can be a concise, reliable and meaningful instrument to indicate the degree to which a culture is democratic. Thus, the aim of this research is to develop a scale that measures CDC in education and in educators. It also has possible applications, since educators' competences can be the basis for the development of a democratic culture in schools and, most importantly, for the education of democratic citizens. It is of upmost international importance that schools be laboratories of democracy which prepare coming generations of citizens with democratic pedagogies that are implemented by equipped educators. Although the teaching of religions and worldviews (Jackson, 2014) is a controversial issue (Koukounaras Liagkis, 2019), knowledge and respect for religions is a

necessary element of democratic culture. That is why the research sample consisted of religious education teachers. Religion and RE are still on the curriculum in most European countries, and so RE teachers have an important role to play: their life-experiences, outlooks and teaching practices seem to influence the development of their students' characters (Arthur, Moulin-Stozek, Metcalfe, & Moller, 2019).

Materials and methods

In order to ensure that the development of the scale is valid and reliable and to scrutinise the components/categories, the research was carried out in two stages. In the first stage, 123 secondary RE teachers from all around Greece were called upon to assess their attitudes to the 135 items of the competences for democratic culture, as defined by the Council of Europe. To do so, an electronic questionnaire was distributed between February 2019 to May 2019. All questions were based on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 referred to 'never' and 5 referred to 'always'. The items were initially categorised into four components (values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and understanding) according to RFCDC (Council of Europe, 2018a; 2018b). Based on the conceptualisation of Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1988), the four categories were scrutinised to a degree in order to refine the 135 items instrument by analysing the data. An initial components analysis was carried out and, in order to ensure the extracted components' reliability, Cronbach's alpha was used.

In the second stage of the research, there were responses from 403 randomly selected RE teachers from all around Greece, between September 2019 and May 2020. This sample is considered sufficient, since in similar studies where the aim is to develop and evaluate a scale for measuring attitudes and opinions, desired samples range from 200 to 400 people (Churchill Jr, Ford, & Walker Jr, 1974; Saxe & Weitz, 1982; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988).

In both stages, the collected data was analysed using SPSS V.26 and inductive statistical methods, including principal components analysis and reliability analysis.

Results

First stage

The collected data was initially analysed using principal components analysis. This aims to reduce the number of variables to a few specific components that correspond to new variables and thus explain a large part of the variation in the data. Varimax rotation, which minimises the number of items that have high loadings and makes the extracted components more interpretable, was used in the analysis. The correlation coefficients and the partial correlation coefficients were calculated. The relative sizes of the correlation coefficients were then compared with the partial correlation coefficients. The measure that gives the value of this comparison is the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin, where values higher than 0.750 are considered to be

satisfactory. Indeed, for the questions examined using the above method, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value is equal to 0.835. Another way to evaluate the suitability of the model is the Bartlett test of sphericity. The test rejects the null hypothesis (sig. = 0.000), which means that the statistical significance of the statistical chi-square indicates that the variables are correlated with each other and therefore the components analysis model is appropriate.

Table 1: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's test results concerning the first stage of the research.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.835
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity sig.	0.000

Having ensured that the model was a satisfactory fit, the next step was to identify the number of the extracted components. Based on the Kaiser rule, six components were identified (Kaufman & Dunlap, 2000).

Next, the items were categorised into the extracted components. To do this, the items' loadings are used. More specifically, if an item's loading modulus is higher than 0.5, this item can be categorised into a specific component. If the loading of an item is higher than 0.5 in two or more components, then it is categorised into the component with its highest loading. In our extracted model, the loading moduli of 83 items were lower than 0.5, which meant that they could be excluded from the analysis. Thus, 52 items were categorised into six components. The extracted components are provided below, while the items are provided in Appendix 1.

- Component 1: democratic values
- Component 2: respect for the other
- Component 3: intercultural awareness
- Component 4: communication skills and emotional intelligence
- Component 5: critical perception
- Component 6: political understanding

The six components contain behaviours of thinking, reflecting, and acting. The first one, 'democratic values', refers to a set of values that enables individuals as citizens to value human rights, pluralism, and the rule of law. It is a common and basic conceptual basis of the democratic ethos for a democratic community whose members have a deep feeling that all, individually and collectively, are responsible for justice which is beyond the law to impose. It involves thinking and reflecting.

'Respect for the other' is more a matter of reflecting on and acting out of respect of other people and their beliefs in order to live peacefully and honestly in a community with others, regardless of that community's diversity. This is the standard of a community not just of individuals but of personhoods who maintain their identities by accepting the cosmopolitan-dialogical self (Habermas, 1990). This is clearly of great importance for RE teachers.

'Intercultural awareness' is also important for RE teachers. It is about thinking and reflecting on personal and cultural conceptions and acting within a continual self-conception. It is a matter of whether and to what extent individuals perceive their tradition/religion as the only central one of their realities or whether they experience their own beliefs and behaviour as one reality among other sustainable possibilities (Bennett, 2004, pp. 62-63).

'Communication skills and emotional intelligence' focus on the components of communication skills in a democratic and intercultural context. Skills such as empathy, active listening, self-control, resilience, conflict resolution (at the level of interaction relationships), the ability to know and understand oneself and to know and understand language and communication (on an individual and intra-person level) are required in order for individuals to achieve self-awareness, and therefore to communicate and behave democratically (Deardorff, 2009, p. 479).

'Critical perception' concerns oneself, others, and the whole world. It refers to how individuals identify their own and others' behaviour, feelings and actions. It is also a matter of questioning what is right and wrong and recognising what motivates one's own and others' actions. It also involves an everyday willingness to think, reflect and act critically within a reasonable plurality (Rawls, 2001), and this is the reason why, for RE teachers, this component is more than just a stipulation for the other components. It is a premise on which the others can be developed.

'Political understanding' is individuals' ability to analyse and interpret the social reality of their own lives and of their communities and therefore to take action. It is about empowering individuals to have a cognitive and intuitive understanding of politics and its power in their lives, as well as to grapple with the interconnection between private and public life.

In order to ensure the scale's reliability, the Cronbach's alpha was calculated. Based on Churchill's analysis (Churchill Jr, Ford, & Walker Jr, 1974), the desired value of the coefficient is between 0.75 and 0.9. In the following table we see that the Cronbach's alpha values for all the extracted components are between the desired values.

Table 2: Cronbach's alpha values concerning the first stage of the research.

	Items	Cronbach's alpha
Component 1	8	0.817
Component 2	7	0.856
Component 3	12	0.858
Component 4	10	0.852
Component 5	11	0.888
Component 6	4	0.857

Second stage

In this stage of the research 403 responses to the final scale were analysed. Initially, a principal components analysis was carried out. As in the first stage of the research, the model was evaluated using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. Based on the data provided in the following table, the components analysis model is appropriate.

Table 3: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's test results concerning the second stage of the research.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.812
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity sig.	0.000

Having ensured the model was a good fit, the principal components analysis was carried out. Based on the results of this analysis, the results of the first stage of the research were confirmed.

In order to ensure the scale's reliability, the Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the new sample as well. In the following table we see that the Cronbach's alpha value for all extracted components is between the desired values.

Table 4: Cronbach's reliability factor results.

	Items	Cronbach's alpha
Component 1	8	0.717
Component 2	7	0.756
Component 3	12	0.858
Component 4	10	0.867
Component 5	11	0.857
Component 6	4	0.814

It is apparent that a concise, reliable and meaningful 'Scale for measurement of competences for democratic culture' was developed and tested in two large samples to help educators to recognise for themselves which qualities and competences are practiced, and which descriptors are implemented.

Discussion and conclusion

The study presents a 'Scale for measurement of competences for democratic culture' (SMCDC) which has been effectively tested on a representative sample (N=526) of a total population of 3,000 secondary RE teachers in Greece. The development of the scale was based on the Council of Europe's RFCDC—its twenty competences and their 135 descriptors. From the first phase of the study the four categories of the RFCDC (values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding) were questioned, in line with other research (Jónsson and Rodriguez, 2019). The analysis of the data indicated six components. Each one of these represents a specific dimension of democratic competence in terms of knowledge, attitudes, values and skills. Both phases of the research show that the scale is reliable and that all its parts maintain an interactive, interconnected, inter-complementary relationship, and holistically compose a set of democratic competences of a democratic, intercultural nature. They therefore engender a reflective, active and thoughtfully critical citizen.

That means that the scale can be used in educational contexts to measure educators' CDC when they are called to teach DC as an educational aim or as part of the subject curriculum. It is apparent that in order to confirm the scale's reliability, further research should be carried out that builds upon the findings of this article. Future studies can focus on RE teachers from other countries or other religious contexts, or on teachers of other subjects (e.g., science or social studies) in different national and educational systems. Future research on a multi-cultural/religious sample is needed since the sample of this study is mono-religious (Orthodox).

The literature and the development of the six new components of the competences/categories of democratic culture highlight that it is individuals, particularly the teachers and their conceptions, that determine the competences that RFCDC attempts to describe.

There is an interconnection between beliefs and religion with stereotypes and prejudices and this is connected the individuals' attitudes towards human rights. That interplay highlights the essential commitment of different dimensions of the 'rational, affective, somatic, spiritual, and sociocultural' self (Tolliver & Tisdell, 2006). The rational dimension of self is a presupposition of critical understanding of the self and the world to manage the internal interplay between personal religious beliefs, conditions of education and different social

contexts as well as the external interplay between the interests of stakeholders (state, local authorities, religious communities, etc.) (Christopher, 2020; Jackson & Everington, 2016). This external interplay changes, according to the degree of politicisation and secularisation of RE in different contexts (Zembylas, Loukaidis, & Antoniou, 2019). In conclusion, the issue for RE teachers is that contemporary conditions and educational demands, require well-equipped CDC teachers to teach EDC/HRE through RE, and this inevitably means a change of paradigm for most of them. Self-development and professional development related to RFCDC are needed to confirm research evidence that the humanities can develop the critical thinking and imaginative understanding that will enable young people to be citizens of the world (Nussbaum, 2006). To this end, this study marks a step forward by providing an instrument tested on RE teachers (it is seldom that a tool for all teachers is tested on RE teachers) and measures the impact of their competence in teaching and learning democracy within the curriculum. This does not concern the competences of the RE teachers (this is dealt with in the second part of the research) but the development of a scale to measure CDC. This scale can be used on RE teachers not only because they teach a subject that concerns religious and non-religious convictions but because they are also pedagogues in the state education system who can develop students' competences and culture. The literature highlights this need, since populations in most European countries are increasingly diverse. Human rights and democracy can be taught by RE teachers as long as religion has an importance in political, social and national contexts and, above all, impacts on the lives and behaviour of many people. The Council of Europe's RFCDC and its background documents (Recommendations, projects and literature) created the environment in which the first stage could be safely developed. Of course, concepts such as the four categories of competences or definitions of values or other terms are contested and should always be clearly stated. Therefore, this research focused on developing a set of components/categories of competences that represent CDC.

Thus, first and foremost, the scale and the procedure scrutinised the concept of democratic competences and the way in which they the RFCDC conceives them (2018a). Although competences in RFCDC are defined as 'abilities to mobilise and deploy relevant values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and/or understanding' (Council of Europe, 2018a, p.32), it seems that, after the analysis, the competences are more complex structures. On the one hand, they are constituent elements of an Aristotelian ethos pre-existing or even shaped through the development of democratic competences. On the other, they are complex and flexible predispositions-for-action—as Biesta (2014) redefines Dewey 'habits'. As Jónsson and Rodriguez (2019, p.13) point out, 'attitudes, skills and knowledge do not make a person better or more democratic unless the values, attitudes, and knowledge from which the person acts are already good or conducive to democracy'. Moreover, the individual's ethos can be founded on a democratic ethos which comprises the competences for democratic culture,

which are both moral and performative virtues. Learning is, therefore, the axis that relates the two ethe, since both are the results of knowing—which means thinking, reflecting, and acting (Dewey, [1916] 2002). For this, it is crucial to have the CDC scale for individuals' (self-) reflection and (self-) evaluation as a component of change and transformation, especially for those who teach democratic culture and religion.

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Appendix: Measurement of competences for democratic culture of religious education teachers

Responses were invited to each item on a 5-point scale from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.

A. Democratic values
   1. I always appreciate the quality of my work
   2. I pay attention to the gestures and body language of others so that I can understand the meaning of what they are saying
   3. I always listen carefully in order to decipher the meaning and intentions of my interlocutor
   4. I pay attention to what the others mean, but they do not say
   5. I notice that people from different cultural backgrounds react differently to the same situation
   6. I try to better understand my friends, trying to imagine things from their own perspective
   7. I can accurately understand the feelings of others, even when they do not show them
   8. I adapt to new situations, using a new skill
   9. I mediate linguistically in intercultural compromises by translating, interpreting, or explaining
   10. I regularly take communication initiatives to help resolve interpersonal disputes

B. Respect for the other
   11. I believe that intercultural dialogue must be used in order to be able to recognise our different identities and cultural affiliations
   12. I am interested in learning about other people's beliefs, values, traditions, and worldviews

13. I am curious about the beliefs and interpretations of other cultural orientations and relationships
14. I am positive about the opportunity to get to know other cultures
15. I always seek and welcome opportunities to meet people with different values, cultures, and behaviours
16. I really seek to get in touch with other people in order to get to know their culture
17. I am always willing to work and cooperate with others
18. I always listen carefully to different points of view
19. I always listen carefully to other people
20. I accept that my worldview is just a worldview among many others
21. I believe that history is often presented and taught through an ethnocentric perspective
22. I enjoy the challenge of dealing with ambiguous problems

C. Intercultural awareness
    23. I explicitly respect all people as equal
    24. I treat everyone with respect regardless of their culture
    25. I explicitly respect people who have a different socio-economic status than me
    26. I explicitly respect every religious differentiation
    27. I explicitly respect people who have different political views than me
    28. When I make someone upset, I apologize
    29. I explicitly accept the relationship between human rights, democracy, peace, and security in a globalised world
D. Communication skills and emotional intelligence
    30. Human rights should be always protected and respected
    31. All public services must respect, protect and enforce human rights
    32. The laws must comply with international human rights, rules and standards
    33. We must be tolerant of the different beliefs that other people have in society
    34. Schools must teach their students democracy and how to behave as democratic citizens
    35. All citizens must be treated equally and impartially by the law
    36. The laws must be applied impartially in every case
    37. The people in charge of the legislature must be subject to the law and constitutional control
E. Critical perception
    38. I describe the effects of propaganda on the modern world
    39. I explain the ways in which people can be protected from propaganda
    40. I describe the various ways in which citizens can influence policy
    41. I am essentially interested in the development of the human rights framework and the ongoing development of human rights in different parts of the world
F. Political understanding
    42. I describe my motivations
    43. I describe the ways in which my thoughts and feelings affect my behaviour
    44. I critically examine my values and beliefs
    45. I critically examine myself from different perspectives.

46. I critically examine my prejudices and stereotypes, as well as everything behind them
47. I critically examine my feelings and emotions in a wide range of situations
48. I explain how tone of voice, eye contact, and body language can help communication
49. When I work in a team, I inform the other members about any relevant or useful information
50. I encourage the parties involved to listen carefully to each other and share the issues and problems that concern them
51. I critically examine the deeper causes of human rights violations, such as the role played by stereotypes and prejudices in human rights abuses
52. I recognise the religious symbols, religious rituals, and religious uses of language