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Identification and Elimination of Misconceptions in Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship Education*

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine the misconceptions that may arise in the training of prospective primary school student teachers regarding Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship Education (HRDCE) and consider how activities that eliminate such misconceptions could be created and applied. This study utilizes a form of action research which was conducted on 31 pre-service primary class teachers. Data was collected through concept definition forms, student diaries, focus group interviews, and activity sheets. The collected data was then analyzed using content analysis. It was concluded from the results obtained from the research findings that most of the students had misconceptions about the basic concepts, but that the activities applied eliminated the misconceptions and improved the learning and teaching process. As it was determined that students were positive about the expressed positive opinions and found the applications efficient, it is recommended that such concept teaching techniques be utilized in the lessons and that lesson plans be prepared following an application-oriented system.

Keywords: Human rights and democratic citizenship education, Action research, Primary school teacher candidates, Misconceptions

About the Article

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Introduction

The purpose of teaching Life Sciences and Human Rights, Citizenship, and Democracy in Social Studies at primary school is for the children to learn how to be citizens in a democratic society, to be aware of and exercise their rights and responsibilities, to assimilate various values and make them part of their lives, and to recognize the relationship networks between societies. However, some of the concepts taught in the process, such as democracy, rights, freedom, equality, justice, citizenship, duty, responsibility, and sovereignty, may be rather abstract for the cognitive development level of these children.

Concepts, which constitute part of the experiences gained in the interaction of emotion, thought, and action between people, can be defined as being various forms of knowledge that enable understanding of the world and the realization of communication between people (Ülgen, 1996). In regard to expecting classroom teachers to be able to teach these concepts, one prerequisite must be that the teachers first fully comprehend the concepts themselves. For this prerequisite to be achieved, any prospective teacher needs to have obtained accurate and scientific knowledge from the courses they take during their undergraduate education, in which the basic concepts in the courses are learnt and missing learning and misconceptions are identified and eliminated.
Conceptual learning is an active cognitive process that occurs not through rote memorization, but by meaningfully integrating information into one's mental schemas. In this process, individuals relate new information to their pre-existing concepts, and meaningful learning takes place through this association (Ausubel, 1968). Bruner (1960) emphasized that concepts are constructed through students' abilities to classify and generalize and highlighted the critical role of discovery learning in conceptual development. However, students' prior knowledge about concepts is often incorrect or incomplete, leading to the formation of misconceptions (Driver, Guesne, & Tiberghien, 1985). According to the theory of conceptual change, individuals reconstruct such misconceptions by comparing them with new information, through a process of cognitive conflict (Vosniadou, 2002; Duit & Treagust, 2003).

According to the literature, classroom teachers generally believe that the acquisition from an early age of abstract concepts such as human rights, citizenship, rights, justice, law, equality, reconciliation, and democracy, will contribute positively to the individual (Akçeşme & Kurtdede Fidan, 2021). Classroom teachers are also seen to have a positive attitude towards students' learning about human rights and democracy (Merey & İşler, 2018).

However, when the studies on concept teaching for pre-service teachers in the literature are examined, it can be seen that such training mostly focuses on science and mathematics (Akbaba Dağ, 2009; Başaran Uğur, 2018; Baygeldi, 2023; Demirci, 2003; Dönmez, 2011; Eren, 2019; İhtiyar Şahin, 2023; Karakuş, 2023; Kınık Topalsan,

2015; Sezgin, 2020; Şemet, 2023; Uygun, 2023; Yıldırım, 2010; Zeybek, 2007). These studies particularly focus on the difficulties students encounter in learning advanced and counter-intuitive concepts. Conceptual change is not limited to the natural sciences; rather, it is relevant across a wide range of disciplines, from mathematics and biology to history and gender studies. The number of studies which focus on the teaching of basic concepts that is required for the teaching of the Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship Education (HRDCE) course for student teachers who have not yet started their profession is seen to be quite limited.

When the studies in the literature on misconceptions of the basic concepts that can be used in the HRDCE course are examined, it is seen that student teachers often have a limited understanding of the concepts involved. This can lead to misconceptions, a tendency to use more everyday expressions instead of scientific language when defining concepts, and the confusion and interchangeable use of related concepts (Alkar & Yılmaz Derin, 2023; Ertuğrul, 2023; Kılıç, 2015).

When the studies on eliminating the misconceptions identified in the basic concepts that can be used in the HRDCE course were examined, it was seen that the application of concept teaching techniques to the lessons was effective in eliminating students' misconceptions, improving the teaching process, increasing the retention of information, and ensuring that the definitions made by students after lessons structured using concept teaching techniques were more understandable and scientific (Akşit, 2016; Dere & Aktaşlı, 2019; Kılıçaslan, 2021; Kürümlüoğlu, 2019; Namlı Altıntaş & Yıldırım, 2017; Taşkıran, 2023). It has also been observed that students have fun in lessons supported by concept teaching techniques. Furthermore, not only do they tend to like and find the activities engaging, but they also believe that they make the lesson more efficient (Taşkıran, 2023; Kılıçaslan, 2021; Akpınar, 2019; Akşit, 2016).

This study focuses on determining the possible misconceptions of pre-service classroom teachers of the HRDCE course taught in the undergraduate program of primary teaching at a state university, and the improving of the educational activities by the creation of an action plan to eliminate these misconceptions. At the same time, it is hoped that expressing the opinions and suggestions of pre-service primary school teachers on the applied action plans will allow the deficiencies and problems that may be overlooked in the plan to be noticed, and thus provide an opportunity to improve the process. Based on this aim, the following questions were asked:

1. What misconceptions do student teachers have during the HRDCE course, which is a requirement of the undergraduate primary class teaching education program?
2. To what extent were the misconceptions of the student teachers eliminated by the activities carried out within the course of research?
3. How do primary school student teachers feel about the activities carried out within the course of research?

Method and Design

An action research design was adopted to attain the above aims. Action research is a systematic, orderly, and cyclical process of defining the problem, collecting and analyzing data, creating an action plan, and finally implementing the action plan and sharing the findings (Johnson, 2019; Mcniff et al., 1996). The approach involves defining a problem, solving it, and then evaluating the researcher's practices, observations, or possible aspects of the problem in terms of how successful the results are (Dinkelman, 1997). Berg (2001) classifies action research into three types: technical/scientific/collaborative, practical/collaborative/deliberative, and emancipatory/developmental/critical action research.

Since the researchers in this study were also practitioners, a fourth type, in which 'the practitioner is effectively the researcher', was employed in this research. This approach involves the researcher(s) collecting data on the identified problem while simultaneously carrying out the practice (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

Participants and the Role of the Researcher and the Working Environment

Criterion sampling is a purposive sampling technique chosen in accordance with the purpose of the research (Büyüköztürk et al., 2016). This approach was adopted due to the researchers taking criteria which they had previously determined as being a reference point in the selection of the participant group. The study group consisted of 31 student teachers who had expressed their willingness to participate in the study while taking the HRDCE course during the 2022-2023 academic year of the Department of Classroom Teaching at the Faculty of Education in a state university in Türkiye. This faculty offers facilities such as technology-equipped classrooms, individual special education service units, modern computer laboratories with an internet connection, a science laboratory, an equipped reading room, seminar rooms, and conference halls. The research was carried out in a classroom with a smart board with an internet connection, a whiteboard, and a green board. A photograph of the classroom where the research was conducted is given in Figure 1.

Figure 1

The Classroom in Which the Research Was Conducted



The researchers participated in the research process by determining the basic concepts to be covered in the course and then explaining the purpose of the study to the trainee teachers. Two researchers were actively involved in the study. The first researcher designed and implemented the instructional process with the pre-service teachers, including planning the sessions and preparing the teaching materials. The second researcher participated as a non-participant observer, taking detailed field notes and providing supervisory support throughout the implementation.

This dual-role structure was intentionally designed to minimize potential researcher bias by balancing insider facilitation with external observation. During the data analysis phase, both researchers independently coded the qualitative data and engaged in a comparison process to ensure intercoder reliability. These strategies contributed to the methodological transparency and trustworthiness of both the intervention and the overall research process.

At the beginning of the above-mentioned semester, the researchers generated preliminary data which led to the preparation of teaching activities and materials before implementing them along with other course content and materials.

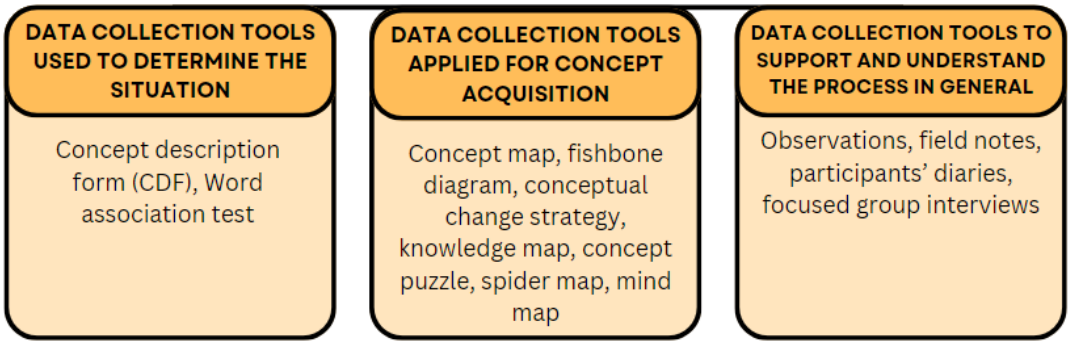
Data Collection Tools

A data triangulation strategy was applied in the research which involved utilizing various data sources to increase the quality, credibility, consistency, confirmability, and

dependability of the collected data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016), as well as the transferability of the research findings. Data collection tools and other sources used in the research are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2.

Data Collection Tools



Data Analysis

There are several stages to qualitative data analysis, including organizing, describing, making sense, defining and explaining the data, interpreting the preliminary findings from the perspective of the participants and the researcher, and presenting patterns, themes, and categories in an orderly and systematic manner. In the analysis of qualitative data, a single correct way of analyzing and presenting the data is not sought unless it is appropriate for the purpose (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2021).

In this study, the researchers analyzed the students' responses to the concept definition form, student diaries, and focus group interview data using content analysis. An inductive approach was adopted, beginning with open coding to identify initial codes. These codes were then grouped into categories and overarching themes through iterative analysis. This phase of data analysis was carried out collaboratively by the researchers, checking and controlling the developed codes and categories simultaneously and respectively to increase the reliability. Thus, a structured comparison of the codes, categories and themes was not considered necessary to ensure the credibility, dependability and trustworthiness of the findings.

The Research Process

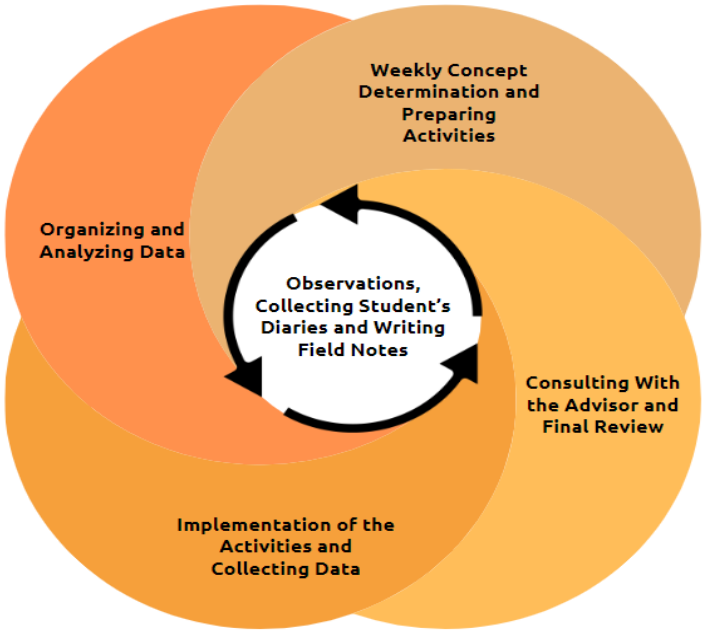
The research process was based on teaching the subjects by following weekly lesson plans that taught 30 basic concepts associated with these subjects. The lectures are supported by question-answer techniques and presentations. The weekly structure of the instructional sessions, the duration of each activity, and the teaching techniques used (e.g., station technique) are presented in detail in Appendix 1.

Action activities related to the topics to be covered were prepared each week for implementation in the classroom. Students were asked to complete diaries from the first week. Before planning and creating the following week's activity, the researcher considered feedback from the previous week's students' diaries before planning activities for the following week.

The weekly research cycle is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3.

The Weekly Research Cycle



Problems Encountered in The Research Process

- **Timing Issues:** Morning sessions scheduled at the beginning of the week led to late arrivals and reduced attendance.

Solution: Although the schedule was adjusted to a later time, the issue partially persisted.

- **Inadequate Audio Recording:** Focus group discussions were recorded only via audio, which posed challenges during the analysis phase.

Solution: It was noted that keeping detailed observation notes would enhance future data collection processes.

- **Instances of Academic Dishonesty:** Some participants used non-original content in their reflective diaries.

Solution: The importance of authentic expression and individual reflection was emphasized during subsequent sessions.

- **Interview Timing:** Holding interviews after the instructional sessions resulted in low participation and engagement.

Solution: Second-round interviews were shortened and supported with preliminary preparation activities to improve quality.

- **Irregular Diary Submission:** Participants often failed to submit their reflective journals on time.

Solution: Class time was allocated at the end of each session to facilitate immediate writing and submission.

- **Activity Duration Constraints:** Time-intensive activities (e.g., station technique) could not be implemented effectively due to time limitations.

Solution: Activities were simplified and adapted to fit the available instructional time.

- **Researcher Inexperience:** The first focus group interviews lacked sufficient depth, likely due to the lead researcher's limited experience.

Solution: With guidance from the second researcher, subsequent interviews were conducted more effectively and yielded richer data.

Credibility, Dependability, Confirmability, Transferability and Ethics

In this study, credibility, transferability, consistency, and confirmability were ensured by using more than one data collection tool. Different methods were used in combination through a data triangulation strategy. In addition, experts were consulted throughout the research process, and the researchers impartially explained the processes in detail in his report.

More accurate and reliable data was obtained through long-term interactions in the research being taken, with the data collection process being determined by the research question. Before the research, the students were informed of their right not to participate, and written permission from an institutional ethics committee was obtained for the research. The researcher explained the purpose of the research throughout the process to the students and did not force the students who did not want to participate. Permission for audio recording of the interviews was also obtained beforehand.

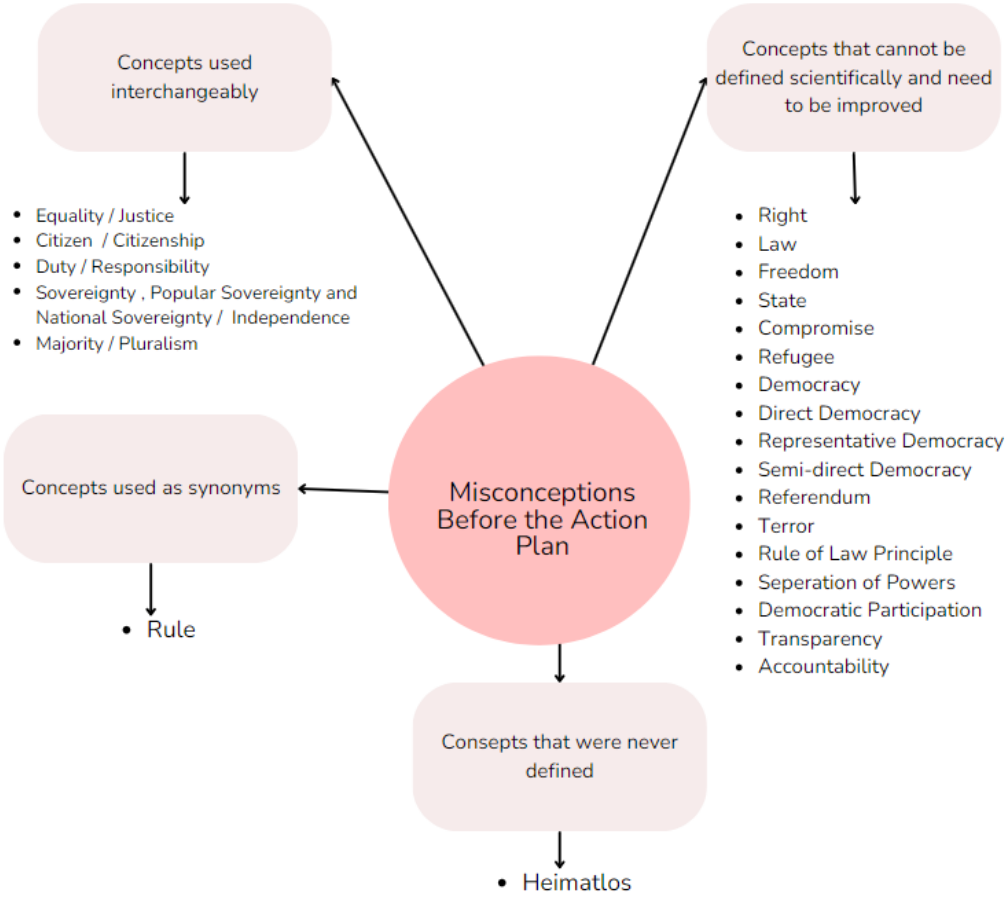
Findings

Determination of Misconceptions

Findings related to the participants' misconceptions of the basic concepts in the HRDCE course are provided in Figure 4. It can be seen that before applying the action plan, participants confused the concepts and used every day, rather than scientific, descriptions.

Figure 4

Findings Related to Misconceptions



It can be seen from the above that the participants used concepts interchangeably, made definitions by using synonyms, and used descriptions of concepts that were not scientific and therefore needed to be developed.

One response provided by a participant in the research process was: 'Equality in every sense.' (P1). As can be seen from this quote, the student tried to establish a relationship between the concepts of equality and justice but confused the concepts. Another participant defined the concept of justice as 'The structure that ensures equality in the country.' (P14). It can be seen from these definitions that the participants do not have a clear understanding of the concepts of equality and justice.

Some definitions which were created from synonyms of the concept were evaluated as being misconceptions. For example, one participant's definition of the concept of 'rule' is '*It is the regulation*' (P23). When this excerpt is analyzed, it can be seen that the use of a synonym for a definition demonstrates that the participant's knowledge of the concept is quite limited. Another participant suggested that a definition of 'rule' could be '*a statute*' (P27). When these definitions are examined, it is seen that they do not fully explain the concept of 'rule' and are actually quite superficial.

One concept where it was observed that the participants, who had not defined it before the action plan, did not have any knowledge of was 'heimatlos'.

It was observed that the participants did not fully explain most of the concepts and used expressions that were far from being scientific. For example, the definition given by one of the participants of the concept of 'freedom' was as follows: '*The individual's use of his/her rights in the way he/she wants*.' (P23). When this excerpt is analyzed, it is seen that the student's understanding of the concept is limited as he/she did not mention considering the rights of others when acting, which is the distinguishing feature of the concept. Another participant expressed the concept of freedom as '*When you close your eyes, there is no limit to your dreams*.' (P9). When this excerpt is analyzed, it is seen that the participant's definition is subjective, rather than being scientific, and that they had not fully grasped the concept.

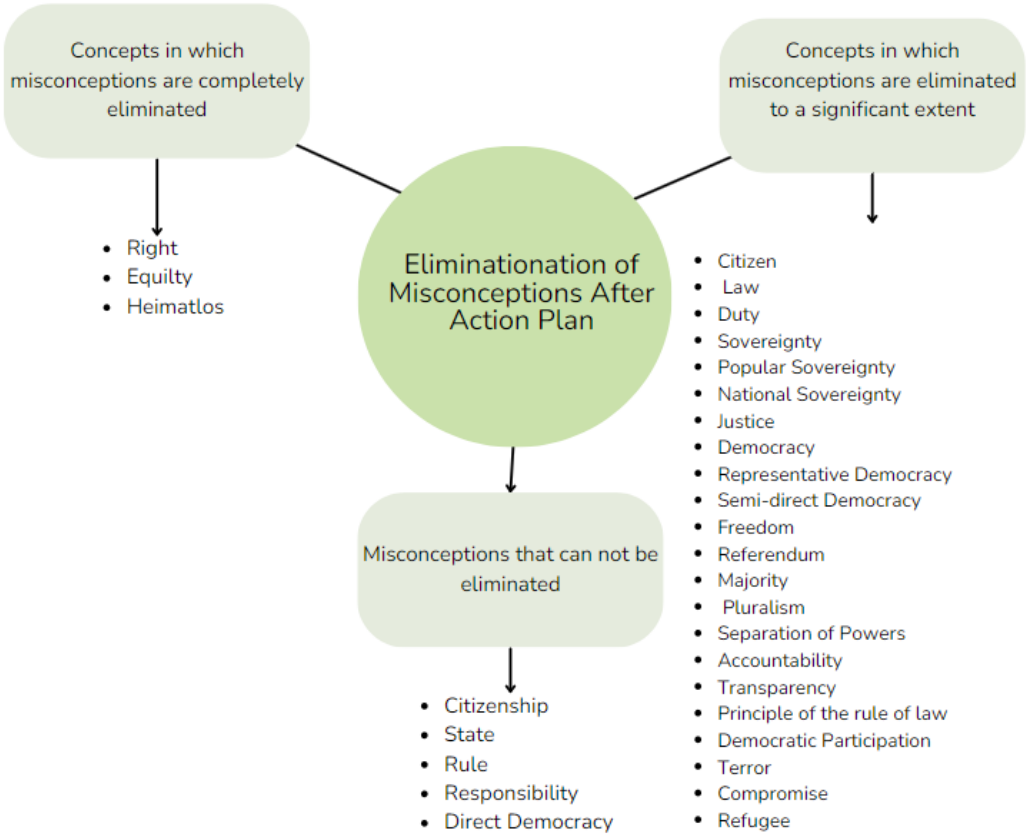
Based on the findings, it can be interpreted that participants tended to explain the concept of 'rule' by only using synonyms of the word and by associating the concept of 'terrorism' only with organizational terms. Based on the findings, it can be said that the participants' learning of the basic concepts in the HRDCE course should be both supported and improved. These conceptual confusions may stem from individuals' pre-existing misconceptions shaped by their daily experiences (Thornberg, 2008). According to Vosniadou (2002), when new information contradicts an individual's existing mental models, it can prevent the development of a coherent understanding of the concept. Teachers' pedagogical practices are often shaped by concrete experiences, everyday language and emotional reactions, with limited reference to key concepts and theoretical frameworks in education. Coupled with the absence of a professional pedagogical language, such practices risk appearing unsystematic and lacking instructional coherence (Thornberg, 2008).

Elimination of Misconceptions

The findings regarding the correct definitions that the participants wrote on the concept definition form after the implementation of the action plan are given in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Findings About Elimination of Misconceptions



When Figure 5 is analyzed, it can be seen that the misconceptions of the participants were completely or significantly eliminated by the end of the research. Another finding is that misconceptions about the following five concepts: Citizenship, State, Rule, Responsibility, and Direct Democracy, persisted.

When the concepts in which the misconception was eliminated are considered, the participants defined the concept of 'rights' as *'A person is born or acquired. It is the totality of the privileges gained in the country in which it is located.'* (P7) and *'It is the fundamental privilege granted to individuals. Every human being has certain rights. Some*

of them are innate and some are acquired later.' (P27). It is seen that the participants are aware that 'rights' should be expressed as a set of privileges. It is seen that the knowledge that rights can be acquired at birth or afterward is present in the students, but it was observed that they did not make use of examples related to rights in the explanation.

When we look at the statements of the participants about 'equality', another concept in which misconceptions were eliminated, it is seen that participants mentioned the economic and political areas of the concept of equality, as well as being able to define the concept scientifically. A sample participant definition is '*Equality can be handled in more than one field: economic equality, political equality, etc. It is about having the same rights as other individuals*.' (P10).

As a result of the activities, it was seen that the misconceptions of the students about the concept of 'law' were eliminated to a significant extent. The statement of a participant whose misconception was eliminated is as follows: '*It is a set of rules. It is the plural form of the word right. It is important to ensure the integrity of society. It is binding. The state is necessary for its implementation*.' (P23). Based on this statement, it can be said that the student is aware that the concept of 'law' is a set of rules regulating society and they emphasize the importance of law. Another participant, similar to the statements of other participants, expressed the concept as '*Rules that regulate the state*' (P6). As can be understood from the expression, it can be said that the participants of the research have acquired the knowledge that law is the rules that provide social order.

After considering 'justice', another concept in which misconceptions were eliminated to a great extent, it was seen that the participants were able to make explanations such as '*Developing a form of behavior by considering the differences between people, being fair between people*.' (P20) and '*Not giving more to those in need than they need or not according to status*.' (P14). When the explanations are analyzed, it is seen that the participants talk about the distribution of opportunities to everyone to the extent they deserve them, and that they can see the distinction between the concepts of 'equality' and 'justice'.

One of the participants had misconceptions about the concept of 'state', which is one of the concepts whose misconceptions persisted after the application. This participant defined 'state' as '*A piece of land with certain borders in which people and communities live*.' (P15). Although the country is an element that constitutes the state, it is not sufficient to explain the concept. It can be said that the participant confused the concepts of 'state' and 'country'. It was also determined that the concepts of 'state' and 'government' were being confused. Sample expressions related to this finding are '*Administration*.' (P30) and '*The structure that has the power to govern a country*.' (P21).

Another misconception that persisted after the application was 'citizenship'. It is seen that the activity related to the concept of 'citizenship' was not significantly effective in eliminating the misconceptions of the participants. Most of the participants had similar

misconceptions such as *'It is the fulfillment of the duties and responsibilities of the individual in the state in which he/she lives'* (P10). Another misconception is shown in the following definition: *'Individuals who have rights and freedoms that are bound to any state and who have responsibilities towards their state'* (P13).

Citizenship rights and duties, fulfillment of citizenship duties, and citizens are related to the concept of citizenship, but it is difficult to consider them as being expressions which explain the concept. Although the concept of 'citizenship' brings with it various duties and responsibilities by its very nature, looking at the concept in terms of duties and responsibilities outside the bond between the state and the individual is insufficient to explain the concept.

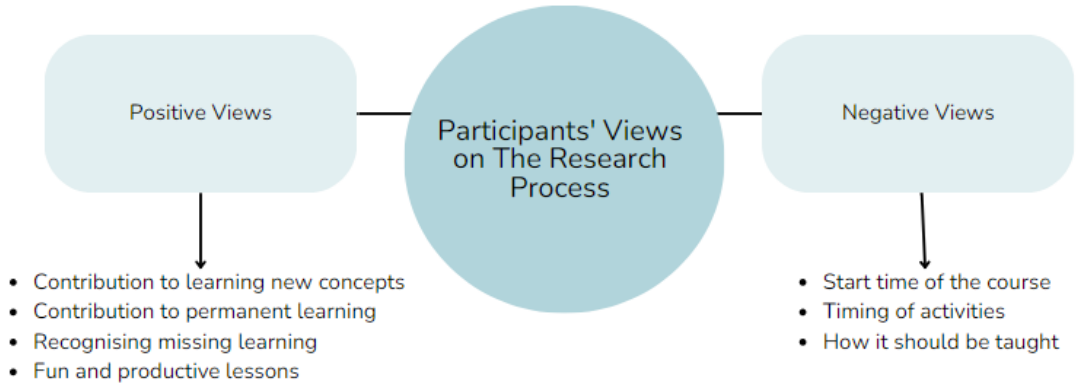
When the findings in Figure 4 are analyzed, it can be said that the students made more comprehensive, clearer, more comprehensible, and more accurate definitions that were closer to the scientific definitions of the concept after the implementation of the action plan. It can therefore be said that the action plan was effective.

Participants' Views on The Research Process

The opinions and suggestions of participants regarding the action plan were shaped by focus group discussions and the observations of researchers. Findings regarding student opinions are shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6.

Participants' Views on The Research Process



When the positive student opinions about the research process were examined, it was seen that the students generally stated that they found it efficient to start the lesson with the repetition of the previous week's topics, and that the activities were effective in reminding them of previously covered concepts, increased retention, were fun and helped the lesson to be effective, and it was a better way of making sense of the concepts than memorizing them. The participants also realized that they had insufficient

knowledge of the concepts they frequently used in daily life and that they could see their deficiencies. Some positive opinions were: *'In general, the lesson was productive. I learned many concepts that I did not know. With the activities at the end of the lesson, we both repeated what we had learned, and it provided many benefits to make the learning permanent. The subjects were explained clearly. It was very instructive and good.'* (P1) and *'I can say that our lessons were very good. Thanks to these lessons, I learned the meanings of the words that I often encounter in daily life, but I didn't know their exact meanings. Our lessons were very nice and fun.'* (P3)

Considering the negative views of the students about the timing of the activities, one student, who did not find it useful to carry out the activities at the end of the lesson, wrote in his diary that *'...I do not think that the activity papers distributed at the end of the lessons are very useful. At least for me. Because there is an explanation of the concept and it is the end of the lesson, we are constantly in our minds to finish and leave. Therefore, I don't think it has much effect.'* (P8). Based on participants' reflections, the scheduling of activities at the end of the instructional process appears to have diminished their readiness and limited their active involvement.

It was also observed that students felt there was insufficient explanation of how the concepts they had learned could be taught to primary school students, i.e. that the application part of the course was insufficient. They expressed that they were worried about how to reduce the concepts to the level of a primary school student and that the concepts should be embodied more. This situation may stem from the predominantly theoretical structure of the course and the participants' limited exposure to practical teaching experience, as the majority had not yet taken the teaching practicum course. Some example student opinions about this are as follows: *"The lesson was verbal and based on the memorization method. Even now, we know that we know these concepts, but we can notice the weakness of our power of expression in our conversations. I don't feel like I have the power of expression. Maybe something can be done for a much younger age, when we think about it, we can use more visual themes. He stayed a little in theory."* (P13) and *"...We break off after a while. I'll tell you for myself. Maybe a little, or it could be from the subject, or the way it's told, or the scientific nature of the subject. As he said, I think it would be better if it was reduced to a child's level a little more. The concepts should be better embodied."* (P28).

Results and Discussion

The research shows that participants have misconceptions, incomplete learning, and limited understanding of 30 basic concepts in the course. Students were found to have misconceptions about concepts such as citizenship, state, responsibility, majority, pluralism, and justice. Similarly, in the study conducted by Kılıç (2015) to determine misconceptions in the course, it was found that most of the students had misconceptions in the related concepts.

Thornberg (2008) emphasizes that such concepts are highly prone to pedagogical misunderstandings when acquired incidentally outside formal education. While concepts are taught with scientific or legal definitions in the school context, in everyday life they are often associated with different, and frequently distorted, meanings. This discrepancy creates cognitive conflict in students and hinders their ability to grasp the accurate structure of the concept. Vosniadou (2002) describes this phenomenon as a "mental model conflict."

Conceptual change is not only defined as an individual, internal, and cognitive process, but also as a social activity that occurs within a complex sociocultural World such as culture, media, family (Aikenhead, 1996; Caravita & Halldén, 1994; O'Loughlin, 1992; Vosniadou, 1994). Students tend to develop alternative understandings of the abstract core concepts addressed in the Human Rights, Democracy, and Citizenship Education (HRDCE) course, influenced by their daily life experiences and shaped by colloquial language. This tendency may stem from the strong sociocultural and ideological context surrounding the concepts used in the study.

In the study, it was determined that a significant number of the participants could not define the concept of heimatlos and left the concepts related to different types, and principles, of democracy unanswered. This is thought to be because these concepts have not yet been taught. It was observed that students had an idea, albeit incomplete, of concepts such as freedom, equality, citizenship, compromise, law, rule of law and transparency in democracy.

However, it can be said that students used superficial expressions that were far from the scientific definitions of the concepts. Similarly, in the studies of Kılıç (2015), Yılmaz (2013) and Mulhan (2007), it was observed that students more accurately understood the concepts they frequently use in daily life.

It was concluded that the activities implemented within the scope of the action plan positively affected the learning process, significantly eliminated misconceptions, and lessons supported by concept teaching techniques improved learning. When misconceptions were analyzed, it was seen that students used more objective expressions that met the scientific meaning of the concept and were supported by examples.

Similar to the results of the research, when the studies in the literature are examined, it is seen that the use of concept maps, which is one of the concept teaching techniques, increases student achievement and plays a role in the retention of knowledge (Koçyiğit et al., 2023). It was also apparent that the use of teaching methods and techniques that will make students active in the lessons increases motivation towards the lesson and the efficiency of the lesson, is beneficial in concretizing abstract concepts (Corrales Serrano, 2023; Kılıçaslan, 2021; Namlı Altıntaş & Yıldırım, 2017; Taşkıran, 2023; Tuncel & Ayva, 2010), and that the use of concept teaching techniques eliminates existing

misconceptions and ensures the retention of information (Adıgüzel, 2019; Akpınar, 2019; Dere & Aktaşlı, 2019; Kürümlüoğlu, 2019).

The most frequently left blank concepts at the end of the application were the ones related to sovereignty and types of sovereignty. The reason for students' resistance to misconceptions about the concepts of citizenship and sovereignty may be that these concepts are established concepts that are frequently used in daily life, are taught in a limited way from a young age and are abstract. At the same time, the fact that the lessons were conducted on the axis of the lecture method may have been disadvantageous in terms of students' active thinking and retention of information. This is supported by Yılmaz's (2013) findings that students had difficulty making sense of concepts, such as sovereignty, that they could not experience concretely in daily life.

The concepts to which students gave the most correct answers were the concepts related to heimatlos, freedom, types, and principles of democracy. For example, the reason why the concept of 'heimatlos' was learned the most may be that students found the word interesting because they had never heard the concept of 'heimatlos' before. Students' accurate understanding of the concept *heimatlos* may be related to their first-time exposure to the term and their perception of it as interesting due to its foreign origin. It has been suggested that unfamiliar or symbolically striking concepts can stimulate curiosity and facilitate learning (Berlyne, 1960; Ainley, Hidi, & Berndorff, 2002). This kind of "novelty effect" can enhance students' attention and contribute to deeper processing of the concept (Renninger & Hidi, 2011). Furthermore, the foreign nature of the term may have triggered a sense of exploration in students.

The reason why misconceptions about the types of democracy and the principles of democracy were mostly eliminated may be that these concepts can be explained in a logical framework based on their names in the context of the lesson. At the same time, supporting the lessons with video, presentation, and discussion techniques in addition to concept teaching techniques may have been effective.

While students found the activities productive and fun, some students stated that the fact that the lesson started in the morning hours caused difficulty in focusing. Regarding the techniques used in the lesson, students stated that techniques such as question-answer and brainstorming, as well as video, presentation, and the active learning methods used in the lesson, increased the interest in the lesson; and that the implementation of the activities after the lecture was more efficient and reinforced learning.

Students stated that even though they had an idea about the concepts, they did not have enough knowledge to express them properly. They were also uncertain about how to explain the concepts they learned at the primary school level, felt that the concepts remained abstract, and although the HRDCE course was theoretically useful and instructive, it should be taught more practically. Similar to the above-mentioned results of the study, it was observed in a study conducted by Akşit (2016) that students liked the activities carried out for concept teaching, enjoyed the lessons supported by concept

teaching methods, and found these lessons fun (Akpınar, 2019; Kılıçaslan, 2021). They also felt that supporting the subjects with concept teaching techniques attracted students' attention and that was useful for them (Taşkıran, 2023).

Recommendations

Based on the results of the research, it is recommended that teaching methods and techniques that will ensure active participation of students and enrich concept teaching in the HRDCE course and related courses should be used. It can also be suggested that more practice-oriented studies with prospective classroom teachers be implemented. Furthermore, studies can be conducted on how the participants will apply the concepts they have learnt in their lessons in the future, and micro-teaching practices can be included. In terms of the misconceptions that are resistant to change which were revealed in the study, the reasons underlying these misconceptions can be examined in more depth. In addition to concept teaching techniques, technology supported activities can be included. Longitudinal studies can also be conducted with larger participant groups to evaluate the examined subject in different conditions and contexts.

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Genişletilmiş Türkçe Özet

Bireylerin temel eğitim düzeyinden itibaren demokratik bir toplum düzeninde yurttaş olmayı, hak ve sorumluluklarının farkında olmayı ve bunları kullanmayı, bir toplumun parçası olmayı, çeşitli değerleri özümseyerek yaşam biçimi haline getirmeyi, toplumlar arasındaki ilişki ağlarını fark etmeyi öğrendikleri derslerden bazıları Sosyal Bilgiler, Hayat Bilgisi ve İnsan Hakları, Yurttaşlık ve Demokrasi gibi derslerdir. İlgili derslerde öğretilmesi planlanan kavramlardan bazıları olan demokrasi, hak, özgürlük, eşitlik, adalet, vatandaşlık, görev, sorumluluk, egemenlik gibi kavramlar özellikle ilkokul düzeyindeki öğrenciler için oldukça soyut kalabilecek kavramlardır. Sınıf öğretmenleri tarafından öğretilmesi beklenen bu kavramlarla ilgili olarak, öğretmenlerin kavramları tam olarak anlamaları bir ön koşuldur. Öğretmen adayları, lisans eğitimleri sırasında aldıkları derslerdeki temel kavramları öğrenerek, eksik öğrenmelerini ve kavram yanılgılarını tespit edip gidererek dersler hakkında doğru ve bilimsel bilgiye sahip olabilirler. Nitekim kavramlar bireylerin dünyayı anlamayı ve insanlar arasında iletişimi gerçekleştirmeyi sağlayan çeşitli bilgi formları olarak ifade edilir (Ülgen, 1996). Bu noktada bu bilgi formlarında meydana gelebilecek düzensizlikler bireyin dünyayı anlamlandırma çabasının önüne geçebilmektedir. Bu noktada sınıf öğretmenlerinin insan hakları ve demokrasi eğitiminde geçebilecek temel kavramları doğru bir şekilde anlamlandırabilmeleri önemlidir. Bu önemden hareketle bu çalışma Türkiye'de bir devlet üniversitesinde sınıf öğretmenliği lisans programında okutulan İnsan Hakları ve Demokratik Vatandaşlık Eğitimi (İHDVE) dersinde sınıf öğretmeni adaylarının olası kavram yanılgılarının tespit edilmesi ve bu yanılgıların giderilmesine yönelik eylem planı oluşturularak eğitim-öğretim faaliyetlerinin iyileştirilmesine odaklanmaktadır. Aynı zamanda uygulanan eylem planları hakkında sınıf öğretmeni adaylarının görüş ve önerilerinin alınması, planda gözden kaçabilecek eksikliklerin ve sorunların fark edilmesini sağlayacak ve sürecin iyileştirilmesi için bir fırsat sunacaktır. Bu odaktan hareketle aşağıdaki sorulara yanıt aranmıştır.

1.Öğretmen adayları, sınıf öğretmenliği lisans programının bir gereği olarak aldıkları İHDVE dersinde ne gibi kavram yanılgıları yaşamaktadırlar?
2.Araştırma kapsamında gerçekleştirilen etkinlikler sayesinde öğretmen adaylarının kavram yanılgıları ne ölçüde giderilmiştir?
3.Sınıf öğretmeni adaylarının araştırma kapsamında gerçekleştirilen etkinliklere ilişkin görüşleri nelerdir?

Araştırmanın Yöntemi

Araştırma amaçlarına ulaşmak için bu çalışmada eylem araştırması benimsenmiştir. Eylem araştırması, problemi tanımlama, veri toplama, toplanan verileri analiz etme, bir eylem planı oluşturma ve son olarak eylem planını uygulama ve bulguları paylaşmaya yönelik sistematik, düzenli ve döngüsel bir süreçtir (Johnson, 2019; Mcniff vd., 1996).
Çalışma grubunun seçiminde daha önce belirlenen ölçütler referans alındığı için araştırmanın amacına uygun olarak amaçlı örnekleme tekniklerinden ölçüt örnekleme tercih edilmiştir (Büyüköztürk vd., 2016). Çalışma grubu, Türkiye'deki bir devlet

üniversitesinin Eğitim Fakültesi Sınıf Öğretmenliği Bölümü'nde 2022-2023 akademik yılında İHDVE dersini alırken çalışmaya katılmaya istekli olduğunu ifade eden 31 öğretmen adayından oluşmaktadır. Bu araştırmada veri çeşitleme stratejisi uygulanmıştır. Bu strateji, toplanan verilerin kalitesini, inandırıcılığını, tutarlılığını, teyit edilebilirliğini ve güvenilirliğini, araştırma bulgularının aktarılabilirliğini artırmak için çeşitli veri kaynaklarından yararlanmayı içermektedir (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2016). Elde edilen nitel verilerin analizi, düzenlenmesi, betimlenmesi, anlamlandırılması, tanımlanması ve açıklanması, ön bulguların katılımcıların ve araştırmacının bakış açısından yorumlanması, kod, tema ve kategorilerin düzenli ve sistematik bir şekilde sunulması gibi birçok gerekliliği içerir. Nitel verilerin analizinde, amaca uygun olduğu takdirde verileri analiz etmek ve sunmak için tek ve doğru bir yol aranmamaktadır (Cohen, Manion ve Morrison, 2021). Bu çalışmada, öğrencilerin kavram tanımlama formuna verdikleri yanıtlar, öğrenci günlüklerine yazdıkları ifadeler ve grup görüşmelerinden elde edilen verileri içerik analizi ile analiz etmiştir.

Araştırma Süreci

Araştırmacı tarafından ilk hafta uygulanan kavram tanımlama formu ile katılımcıların mevcut durumu betimlenmiştir. Ardından her hafta işlenecek konularla ilgili etkinlikler hazırlanmış ve bu etkinlikler sınıfta uygulanmıştır. İlk haftadan itibaren öğrencilerden ders ile ilgili günlükler toplanmıştır. Bir sonraki haftanın etkinliğini planlamadan ve oluşturmadan önce araştırmacı bir önceki haftanın öğrenci günlüklerini analiz etmiş ve öğrencilerden gelen geri bildirimleri dikkate alarak bir sonraki haftanın etkinliğini planlamıştır.

Sonuç

Araştırmada katılımcıların kavramları birbirinin yerine kullandıkları, eş anlamlı kelimeler kullanarak tanımlamalar yaptıkları, kavramın bilimsel anlamından uzak ve geliştirilmesi gereken ifadeler kullandıkları belirlenmiştir. Uygulanan eylem planı sonunda ise katılımcıların kavram yanılgılarının bazılarının tamamen bazılarının ise önemli ölçüde giderildiği görülmüştür. Katılımcıların eylem planı sonrasında, uygulama öncesine göre kavramların daha kapsamlı, açık, anlaşılır ve bilimsel tanımına yakın tanımlamalar yaptıkları görülmüştür. Dolayısıyla eylem planının süreci iyileştirmede etkili olduğu söylenebilir. Araştırma sürecine ilişkin görüşler incelendiğinde katılımcıların genel olarak bir önceki haftanın konularının tekrarı ile derse başlamayı verimli bulduklarını, etkinliklerin eski kavramları hatırlatmada etkili olduğunu, kalıcılığı artırdığını, eğlenceli olduğunu ve dersin etkili geçmesine yardımcı olduğunu, kavramları ezberlemekten ziyade daha iyi anlamlandırdıklarını, günlük hayatta sıkça kullandıkları kavramlar hakkında yeterli bilgiye sahip olmadıklarını fark ettiklerini ve eksikliklerini görebildiklerini ifade ettikleri görülmüştür.

Aynı zamanda öğrencilerin öğrendikleri kavramları ilkokul öğrencilerine nasıl öğretecekleri konusunda olumsuz görüş bildirdikleri ve dersin uygulama kısmının yetersiz olduğu belirtilmiştir. Katılımcıların kavramların bir ilkokul öğrencisinin seviyesine nasıl indirgeneceği konusunda endişeli oldukları ve kavramların daha fazla

somutlaştırılması gerektiğini ifade ettikleri görülmüştür. Bu noktada sınıf öğretmeni adaylarıyla daha çok uygulamaya dönük çalışmalar yapılması önerilebilir. Aynı zamanda çalışmada değişime dirençli olan kavram yanılgıları ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu yanılgıların altında yatan sebepler daha derinlemesine incelenebilir. Kavram öğretim tekniklerine ek olarak teknoloji destekli etkinlikler eklenebilir. Bunun yanı sıra daha geniş katılımcı gruplarıyla farklı bağlamlarda boylamsal çalışmalara yer verilebilir.

Etik

Çalışmada birden fazla veri toplama aracı kullanılarak inandırıcılık, aktarılabilirlik, tutarlılık ve teyit edilebilirlik sağlanmıştır. Ayrıca araştırma süreci boyunca uzman görüşlerine başvurulmuş ve araştırmacı raporunda tarafsız bir yaklaşımla süreç detaylı bir şekilde açıklanmıştır. Araştırmada uzun süreli etkileşimlerle daha doğru ve güvenilir veriler elde edilmiştir. Veri toplama süreci araştırma sorusuna göre belirlenmiştir. Araştırma öncesinde öğrenciler bilgilendirilerek katılmama hakları vurgulanmış ve araştırma için yazılı kurumsal etik kurul izinleri alınmıştır. Araştırmacı süreç boyunca öğrencilere araştırmanın amacını açıklamış ve katılmak istemeyen öğrencileri zorlamamıştır. Görüşmelerin ses kaydı için öğrencilerin izinleri önceden alınmıştır.
Ethics Committee Approval: *This study has been prepared in accordance with the rules of scientific research and publication ethics.* The ethics committee approval for this research was obtained from Anadolu University Social Sciences and Humanities Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee in the Field of Social and Human Sciences. (Ref. number: E-54380210-050.99-432517)

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Appendix 1

Action Plan

Week	The Subject of The Course	Related Concept	Activity	Time
Introduction week	Meeting the participants and applying the first CDF			
1st week	Rules Regulating Social Life	law	a concept map, a fishbone diagram	120 min.
2nd week	Citizenship Types	citizen, citizenship, heimatlos, state	concept change strategy, concept map	120 min.
3rd week	Human Rights and Historical Development	right, sovereignty, popular sovereignty, national sovereignty	knowledge map	120 min
4th week	Current Situation of Human Rights in the World, including Türkiye, and Classification of Human Rights	rule, equality, justice	concept puzzle, station technique, focus group interviews	120 min.
5th week	Definition, Principles, and Types of Democracy	democracy, majority, pluralism	spider map	120 min.
6th week	Classifications of Democracy	immediate democracy, representative democracy, semi-direct democracy, referendum	mind map	120 min.
7th week	Current State of Democracy, Criticisms and Problems	freedom, accountability, separation of powers, democratic participation, transparency, rule of law principle	concept puzzle	120 min.
8th week	Democratic Participation, Democratic Life and Democracy Education	duty, responsibility	Teacher talk	120 min.
9th week	Human Rights Problems in the World and Türkiye	refugee, terror, compromise	word association test	120 min.
End of the action plan		Applying the last CDF, focus group interviews		