

# Examination of perceptions of 6th grade students regarding the concepts of law and justice

Hakkı Yazıcı<sup>1</sup>, Oğuz Doğan<sup>2</sup>, Mehmet Kürşat Koca<sup>1</sup> and Mehmet Tamer Kaya<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Education Faculty, The University of Afyon Kocatepe, Afyonkarahisar, Turkey.

<sup>2</sup>Ministry of Education, Atatürk Middle School, Afyonkarahisar, Turkey.

Accepted 16 June, 2021

---

## ABSTRACT

Within the scope of the Law and Justice course curriculum, it is aimed to provide students with knowledge and skills such as the development of law and justice awareness, and the development of legal literacy. This study aims to reveal students' perceptions about the concepts of law and justice in the Law and Justice course curriculum, which is taught in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade of secondary school. Phenomenology, one of the qualitative research methods, was used as a method in the study. The working group of the research consists of 150 students studying in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Atatürk Secondary School and Gazi Mustafa Kemal Secondary school located in the center of Çay district, Afyonkarahisar in the 2019-2020 academic year. The "Law and Justice Word Association Test" prepared by the researcher was used as the data collection tool. Descriptive analysis, one of the qualitative data analysis methods, was used in the analysis of the data, and frequency tables were created to determine students' perceptions about each concept and to reveal the relationships between concepts. Concept networks have been prepared using frequency tables. The data were analyzed and interpreted according to the relationships that emerged in the concept networks. Within the framework of the results obtained from the research, the perceptions of the students towards the concepts of law and justice are close to each other. It has been revealed that the students have enough conceptual knowledge to raise awareness about the concepts of law and justice. With the help of word association tests, it is seen that students can have an idea about their concept perception.

**Keywords:** Concept, perception, law, justice, social studies.

---

\*Corresponding author. E-mail: mtkaya@aku.edu.tr. Tel: +90 537-4648804.

---

## INTRODUCTION

In addition to the physical needs of the human being as a social being, the needs triggered by living in society have emerged. Because the relations in social life require order along with some rules in order to maintain this order. One of the rules required for social order is the rules of law. These rules guide people, impose certain prohibitions on them or allow them for certain actions for social order. They also meet the needs of society for security and justice while maintaining order (Ildir, 2006). The state of the law is a phenomenon based on the sense of justice, where the rule of law is at the forefront. Society's acceptance of the duty of legal rules to create and maintain the social order can only be achieved by ensuring justice.

The sustainability of the justice and legal system, which are complementary and integral, is only possible by raising the awareness of the law among people and society's owning this system. The most effective system and institution in providing this and giving these concepts to individuals is education (Gülener, 2013).

In the Law and Justice course program, which aims to raise awareness of the law to individuals, first, the competencies related to law and justice and then the gains based on these competencies were determined for this purpose. In addition, Law and Justice course aim to ensure that students have some sensitivities and attitudes. It is expected to develop sensitivity among students in addressing problems, gaining awareness of

the law, knowing their rights and recognizing the responsibilities accompanying them, showing courage to seek their rights, learning when and how to take action by means of legal remedies, knowing that law guarantees rights, and recognizing the justice system and its practitioners. The positive attitudes expected to develop are expressed as being reasonable in daily life, respecting the rights of other individuals, being fair, trusting in justice and accepting the rule of law. At this point, special attention is paid to the student's internalization of the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes he has learned by associating them with daily life (MoNE, 2013). Democratic societies desire citizens to obey social rules, fulfill their responsibilities, and internalize values. In order to be a good person, the individual must know his responsibilities and transfer them to his daily life. In this respect, how students perceive the concepts of law and justice is very important.

Concepts are units of abstract thinking formed by gathering things, assets or events under a certain group (Çaycı et al., 2007). In another definition, a concept is an abstract thought unit that is the imagination of objects and thoughts in the human mind (Ülgen, 1996; Korkmaz, 1992). The main feature of the concepts is that they symbolize objects that have some common features. This basic feature creates ease of thinking and the benefit of saying a lot in less time (Batur and Uygun, 2012).

Concepts are scientific information. In this sense, concepts are the building blocks of knowledge. Especially starting from childhood, individuals begin to learn concepts, the names (words) of concepts, group them, classify them, and reach new knowledge by establishing relationships between concepts (Çaycı et al., 2007).

In social sciences, concepts are the building blocks. It enables the cycle of thought. It clarifies the structures in thought. Concepts also have a distinctive feature in defining events or facts. Concepts have different meanings in various fields. In order for students to gain the principles of Social Studies teaching and to seek solutions to social problems, they should learn the basic concepts very well. For this reason, teachers should give importance to concept teaching and help students learn basic concepts in a meaningful way (Uygun and Batur, 2015).

Concepts are frequently used words in daily life and, of course, in education. During the education and training process, students are confronted with the concepts related to the subject within the unit in all lessons. Students should learn the concepts very well in order to comprehend the subject and reach the acquisitions they need to achieve.

The elements that the Law and Justice course want to teach students are important both for human beings and for the creation of the building blocks that make up society. The concepts of law and justice, which are both nationally and universally important, are two important

concepts that should be introduced to children in society building. In addition to providing basic knowledge and skills education is also expected to teach respect, right, law, justice, truth, conscience, responsibility, etc. Law and Justice course primarily aims to teach children the sense of justice, responsibility awareness, law, legal awareness and legal functioning. Thus, it is desired to create a society where people know their rights and act in this direction. In this sense, it is aimed to examine the perceptions of the students taking this elective course on the concepts of law and justice.

In this context, the research questions of the study are as follows:

1. What are the perceptions of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students regarding the law?
2. How are 6<sup>th</sup> grade students' perceptions of justice?

## METHOD

### Research pattern

Phenomenology, one of the qualitative research designs, was used in this study. Qualitative research gives more in-depth information especially to studies related to social events and psychological conditions than quantitative research. Qualitative research can be used to search for answers to questions that are difficult to express with classical research methods (Büyüköztürk et al., 2011: 254). Phenomenology design creates a suitable research ground for studies that aim to investigate the phenomena that we are aware of but cannot fully grasp (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006). Phenomenology can be defined as studying the experiences of individuals by considering their perspectives (Kuzu, 2013). In this study, the cases that 6th grade students stated about law and justice were examined. In order to reveal these cases, a word association test was applied to the study group and the concept perceptions were tried to be understood.

### Data collection tools

Word association test was used as a data collection tool in the study. These two concepts were chosen in order to determine the cognitive structures of 6th grade students regarding the concepts of law and justice, which the law and justice course is named after. As in the given sample, ten-line tables were prepared for each and the concept of justice was placed on the front page and the concept of law on the back page.

Before moving on to the concepts in the word association test, a sample test consisting of a single concept was used for informative purposes, and after completing the concept of justice on the front page, the concept of law on the back page was continued.

## Study group

The universe of the research consists of the students taking the Law and Justice course in the 2019-2020 academic year. The research sample consists of 150 6th grade students who take Law and Justice course in the Çay district of Afyonkarahisar province. The sample was determined in this way in terms of cost. The information about the working group is given in detail in Table 1.

Table 1 shows the distribution percentages of the students participating in the research by gender. The research has a ratio of 48% (72) female students and 52% (78) male students. Although the participation rate is close to each other, male students have a 4% difference in the rate of participation by gender.

By applying questionnaires directly to the students participating in the study, the data were obtained and the data obtained were interpreted. In the research, the

working group was determined by purposeful sampling. The basis for this sampling is to take one or more sub-segments of a population as a purposeful sample rather than a representative sample for the research. Purposeful sampling is the selection and handling of the most appropriate part of the universe for the problem as the subject of analysis (Sencer, 1989: 386). The elective law and justice course that was determined as the subject of the study was effective in determining the number and level of the study group. Since the law and justice course can be taught in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades of secondary school as an elective, 6<sup>th</sup> grade students taking this course were selected. In addition, because the word association test application was conducted in the 6th grade, the study was deemed appropriate to be conducted on secondary school 6th grade students. Thus, it is aimed to reveal the concept perceptions regarding the concepts of law and justice more clearly.

**Table 1.** Distribution by application school and gender.

<b>Distribution by practice schools</b>		
<b>Practice schools</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Atatürk Secondary School	90	60
Gazi Mustafa Kemal Secondary School	60	40
Total	150	100
<b>Distribution by gender</b>		
<b>Gender</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Girl	72	48
Boy	78	52
Total	150	100

## Validity and reliability

In order to ensure validity in the research, the researcher avoided guiding questions in a way that was as impartial as possible about the subject he was interested in. The subject studied has been studied as a whole. The data obtained were supported by some additional methods such as expert opinion, participant confirmation and peer review, which help increase validity and reliability. (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006). The processes performed during the analysis of the collected data were carried out by the researcher and the field expert independently from each other. Later, the researcher and the field expert compared their studies and carried out the reliability study. When the researcher and the expert reached a consensus, the process ended. For the reliability calculation of the study, the reliability formula of Miles and Huberman (1994) [Reliability = Consensus / (Consensus + Disagreement)] was used. A reliability result above 70% is a valid rate for the reliability of the study (Miles and

Huberman, 1994). The fact that the reliability of the research was found to be 90% at the end of the calculation revealed that the study was reliable. The findings obtained were interpreted in tables with frequencies and using mind maps.

## Data collection

The word association test prepared by the researcher with the support of his experts was applied in October 2019. Brief information about the word association test was given to the study groups before the test was administered. In the word association test, two basic concepts of law and justice course (law, justice) are given as key concepts. The students were asked to write the words that evoke the concept in their minds in the ten empty boxes opposite the concept and to make a meaningful sentence by using these words underneath. The working group was given 45 seconds for each of the

key concepts.

The word association test started with the start command of the practitioner. The practitioner warned the study group to switch to the other key concept at the end of the time given for each key concept. Since the concepts of law and justice are in a very close relationship and are sometimes used interchangeably by individuals, the concept of justice was placed on the front page of the paper, and the concept of law was placed on the back page of the paper and students were prevented from seeing the concept of law on the back page while filling the concept of justice.

### Data analysis

In order to evaluate the results of KIT applied to the study group, the answer words given to the key concepts were examined in detail. A frequency table showing the frequency of repetition of the answer concepts given to key concepts was created. A concept network was created based on the frequency table data created. The cut-off point (KN) technique developed by Bahar et al. (1999) was used in the creation of the concept network in order to clearly show the relationships between the concepts in the cognitive structure. According to this technique, for any key concept in the word association test, a certain number of words below the maximum answer word is used as a cut-off point. Answers above this answer frequency are written in the first part of the concept network. Then the breakpoint is pulled down with certain intervals and the process continues until all keywords appear in the concept network and the relationship between key concepts is revealed. It means that the concepts emerging in each breakpoint interval are repeated as many times as the number of students in that interval. In our study, 99-over, 99-89, 89-79, 79-69, 69-59, 59-49, 49-39, 39-29, 29-19, 19-10. 10 different cut-off point intervals were determined. For example, the concepts emerging in the 99-89 cut-off range were stated as answer words by 20-29 students.

In the research, each cut-off point range is shown with different colors indicating the said range. Using this technique in data analysis, the breakpoints in the concept network formed from the data and the colors expressing each breakpoint interval are specified as follows (Karaca, 2018).

The cutoff point of 99 and above is expressed in **red**.

The cutoff point between 89-99 is expressed in **water green** color.

The cutoff point between 79-89 is expressed in **black**.

The cutoff point between 69-79 is expressed in **gray**.

The cutoff point between 59-69 is expressed in **brown**.

The cutoff point between 49-59 is expressed in **yellow**.

The cutoff point between 39-49 is expressed in **purple**.

The cutoff point between 29-39 is expressed in **green**.

The cutoff point between 19-29 is expressed in **blue**.

The cutoff point between 10-19 is expressed in **orange**.

Answer concepts with a cut-off point of 10 and below were not included in the concept networks in the study. Answer concepts with 10 or more repetitions were used in the study.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the findings obtained from the word association test applied to the study group were analyzed and interpreted. Findings and comments are presented in various tables and concept maps. 150 6th grade students participated in the study. A word association test consisting of the key concepts of law and justice was applied to the students. The collected data were analyzed in terms of the number, variety and relationship of key concepts and answer concepts, and concept networks were created based on the results. Concept networks created according to breakpoints show the emerging relationships of key concepts and answer concepts. (Table 2)

The number of answers given to the key concepts of law and justice is given in the table above. It is seen that the students participating in the study associate 2 key concepts with 2751 answer concepts in total. Among these, the concept of law was associated with 1363 and the concept of justice with 1388. Table 3 contains key concepts and response concepts with the highest frequency for each key concept.

According to Table 3, the concept of justice is associated with the "equality" response concept and the law key concept with the "law" response concept. According to a study conducted on 150 students, 65.33 percent of the students associated the key concept of justice with the equality response concept. They associated the key concept of law with the law response concept with a rate of 86.67 percent.

**Table 2.** Distribution of answer concepts associated with key concepts.

Key concept	f	%
Law	1363	49.55
Justice	1388	50.45
Total	2751	100

**Table 3.** Distribution of the most repeated answer concepts regarding the key concept.

Key concept	Response concept	f	%
Justice	Equality	98	65.33
Law	Law	130	86.67

In this section, there will be concept network maps and interpretations created according to the answer concepts with a frequency value of 10 and above. In the concept networking process, the cut-off technique developed by Bahar et al. (1999) was used. According to the frequency values obtained, 10 different cut-off point boundaries (99 and above, 89-99, 79-89, 69-79, 59-69, 49-59, 39-49, 29-39, 19-29, 10-19) (Table 4) were determined and the concept network map was created. In the concept network, 10 is determined as the lower frequency limit and the answer concepts with a frequency value of 10 and above are included in the concept network map. In addition, it aimed to see the relationships in the concept map by using colored arrows for each cut-off point. The colors represented by each breakpoint range are available in shape names and arrow colors.

#### **Mind map created based on breakpoint 99 and above and interpretation**

When we look at the concept network map created according to the cut-off point 99 and above, we can see that they have associated the key concept of law with the other key answer concepts, "justice" and "code" (Figure 1).

#### **Mind map created according to breakpoint 89-99 and interpretation**

Looking at the concept network map created according to the cut-off points 89 and 99, only the key concept of justice is associated with the "equality" answer concept (Figure 2).

#### **Mind map created according to breakpoint 79-89 and interpretation**

Looking at the concept network map created according to the cut-off points 79 and 89, the key concept of justice is associated with the key concept of "law", which is the other key concept (Figure 3).

#### **Mind map created according to breakpoint 69-79 and interpretation**

They associated the concept of justice with the key response concepts of "court", "right" and the key concept of law with the "right", "rule", "equality" answer concepts (Figure 4).

#### **Mind map created according to breakpoint 59-69 and interpretation**

When looking at the concept network map created

according to the cut-off points 59 and 69, only the key concept of justice is associated with the "judge" answer concept (Figure 5).

#### **Mind map created according to breakpoint 49-59 and interpretation**

When looking at the concept network map created according to the cut-off points 49 and 59, the key concept of justice is associated with "prosecutor", "responsibility" response concept; and the law key concept has been associated with the answer concept "court", "constitution", "state" (Figure 6).

#### **Mind map created according to breakpoint point 39-49 and interpretation**

When looking at the concept network map created according to the cut-off point 39 and 49, the key concept of justice has been associated with "neutrality", "Code (law)", "judiciary"; The law key concept has been associated with the "jurisdiction", "judge" response concept (Figure 7).

#### **Mind map created according to breakpoint 29-39 and interpretation**

When looking at the concept network map created according to the cut-off point 29 and 39, the key concept of justice has been associated with "fair", "freedom", "lawyer", "constitution", "state" key concepts; the key concept of law is associated with the concept of "order", "responsibility", "prosecutor" (Figure 8).

#### **Mind map created according to breakpoint 19-29 and interpretation**

Looking at the concept network map created according to the cut-off points 19 and 29, we can see that the key concept of justice is associated with "defendant", "complainant", "truth", "respect" response concepts, the key concept of law is associated with "truth", "lawyer", "respect", "legislation", "human", "execution" response concepts (Figure 9).

#### **Mind map created according to breakpoint 10-19 and interpretation**

Looking at the concept network map created according to the cut-off point 10 and 19 the key concept of justice is associated with "execution", "victim", "case", "conscience", "people", "property", "president", "witness", "complaint", "peace", "punishment", "trust", "honesty",

**Table 4.** General data table on law and justice concepts.

	Cut-out Interval	Justice key concept data				Law key concept data			
		Word Count	Unit	Justice	Frequency	Word count	Unit	Law	Frequency
1	99 and above			x		1	1	Code	130
						2	1	Justice	102
2	89-99	1	1	Equality	98			x	
3	79-89	1	1	Law	83			x	
4	69-79	1	3	Court	77	1	1	Equality	78
		2	1	Right	74	2	4	Rule	75
						3	1	Right	71
5	59-69	1	4	Judge	68			x	
6	49-59	1	4	Prosecutor	54	1	2	Constitution	57
		2	1	Responsibility	52	2	3	Court	53
						3	1	State	50
7	39-49	1	4	Jurisdiction	49	1	4	Judge	45
		2	1	Code	44	2	1	Jurisdiction	40
		3	1	Impartiality	40				
8	29-39	1	4	Lawyer	36	1	1	Order	36
		2	1	State	36	2	1	Responsibility	35
		3	2	Constitution	35	3	4	Prosecutor	32
		4	2	Freedom	34				
		5	1	Fair	31				
9	19-29	1	1	Righteousness	29	1	1	Righteousness	26
		2	2	Complainant	23	2	2	Legislation	26
		3	1	Respect	23	3	1	Respect	24
		4	2	Defendant	20	4	4	Lawyer	22
						5		Human	22
						6	2	Execution	20
10	10-19	1	1	Peace	18	1	1	Fair	18
		2	1	Honesty	17	2	3	Punishment	18
		3	1	Society	17	3	1	Honesty	16
		4	1	Order	16	4	1	Freedom	14
		5	2	Accused	15	5	4	Police	13
		6	2	Complaint	15	6	2	Complainant	12
		7	2	Witness	15	7	1	Trust	12
		8	1	Trust	14	8	1	Impartiality	12
		9	1	President	12	9	2	TBMM	12
		10	4	Police	12	10	1	Society	12
		11	2	Defendant	12	11	1	Atatürk	11
		12	2	Executive	12	12	2	Defendant	10
		13	3	Punishment	11	13	2	Defendant	10
		14	1	Society	11	14	2	Guilty	10
		15		Human	11	15	4	Rule of Law	10
		16	1	Property	11				
		17	4	Conscience	11				
		18	2	Case	10				
		19	2	Victim	10				

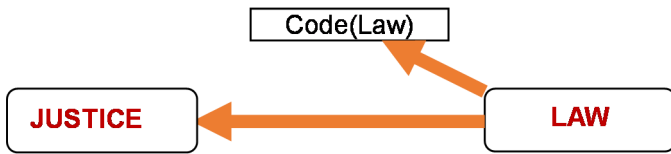


Figure 1. Mind map created based on breakpoint 99 and above.

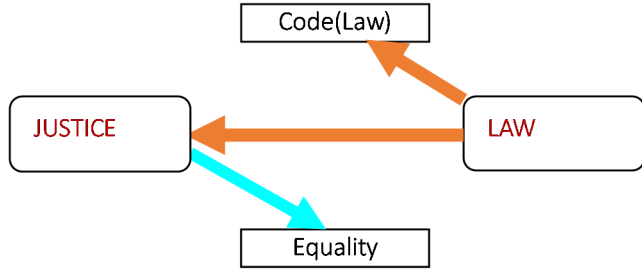


Figure 2. Mind map created according to breakpoint 89-99.

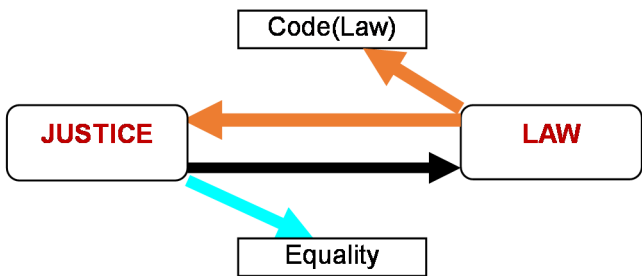


Figure 3. Mind map created according to breakpoint 79-89.

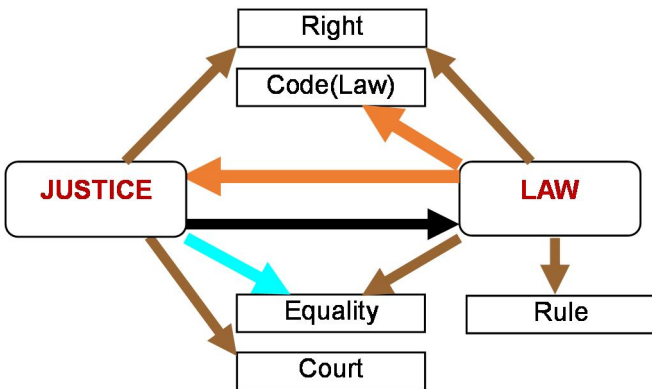


Figure 4. Mind map created according to breakpoint 69-79.

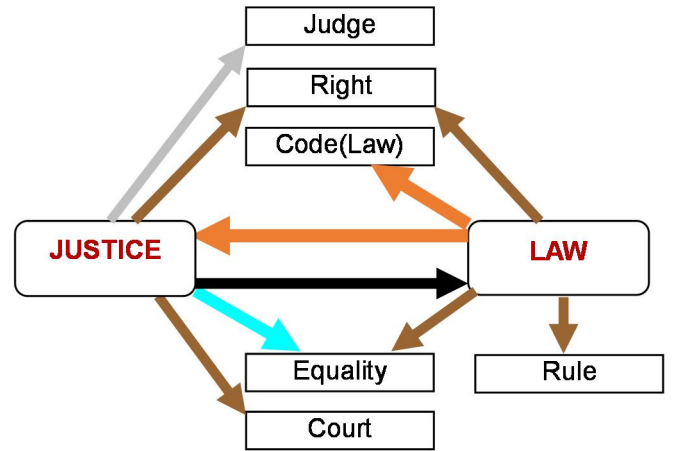


Figure 5. Mind map created according to breakpoint 59-69.

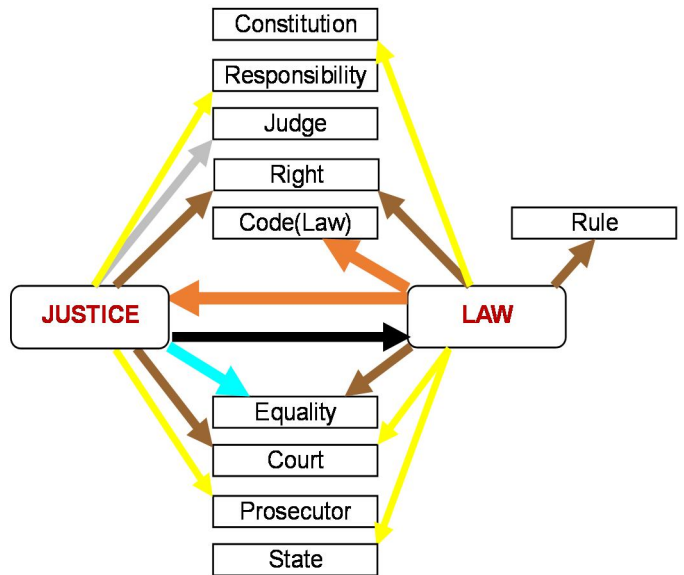


Figure 6. Mind map created according to breakpoint 49-59.

"police", "society", "accused", "human", "criminal", "order" response concepts; key concept of law has been associated with "plaintiff", "criminal", "defendant", "TBMM", "impartiality", "rule of law", "Atatürk", "defendant", "society", "police", "honesty", "freedom", "fair", "trust", "punishment" response concepts (Figure

10).

When we look at the map with a cut-off point of 10 and above, there are 42 answers to 2 key concepts and 44 concepts in total. It is seen that students establish a close relationship between key concepts (law, justice). When we look at the map with a frequency of 10 and above, 28

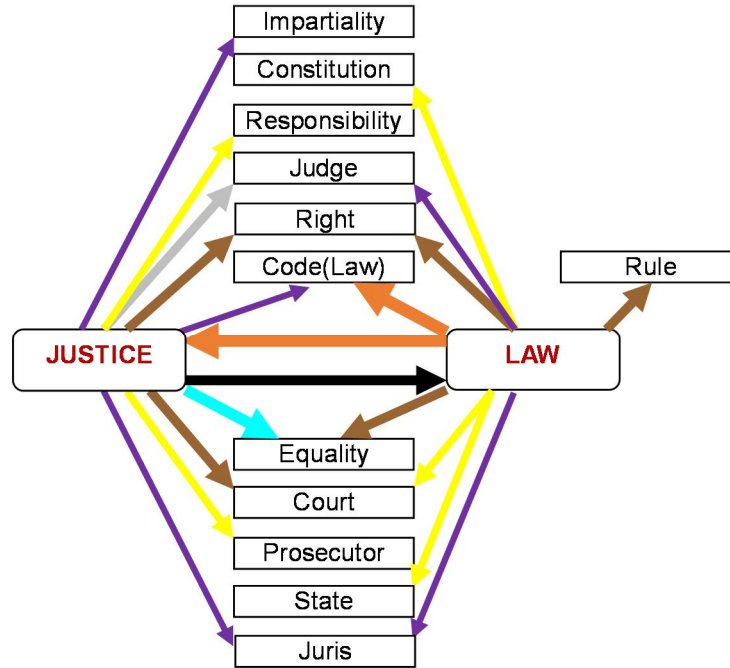


Figure 7. Mind map created according to breakpoint 39-49.

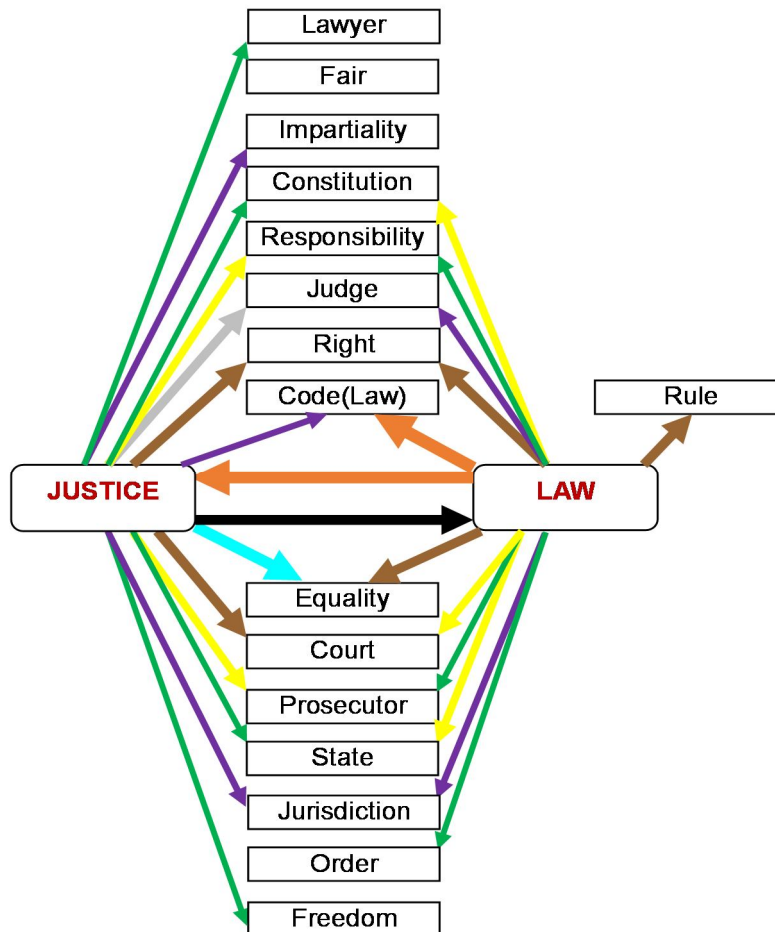


Figure 8. Mind map created according to breakpoint 29-39.



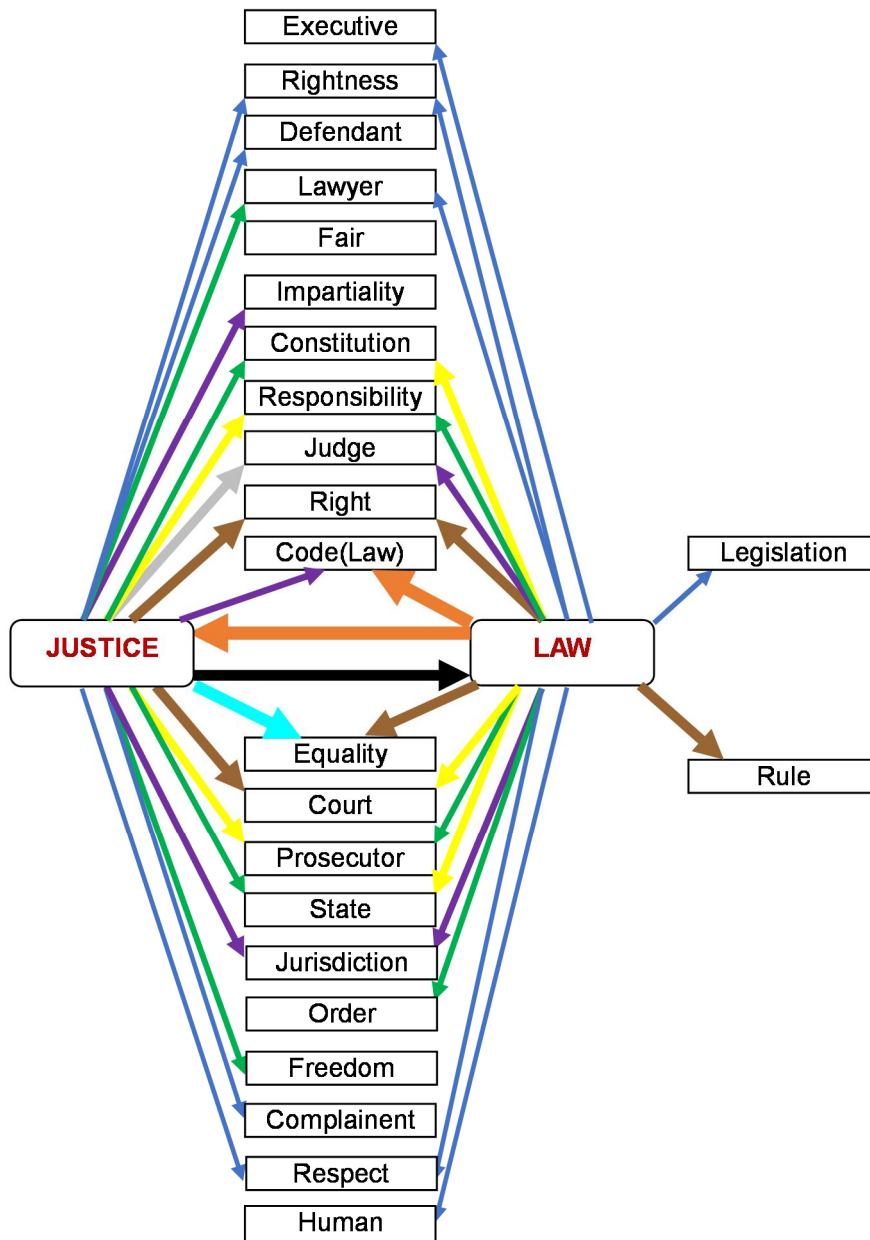


Figure 9. Mind map created according to breakpoint 19-29.

of the 42 answer concepts given to the key concepts of law and justice are common response concepts.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

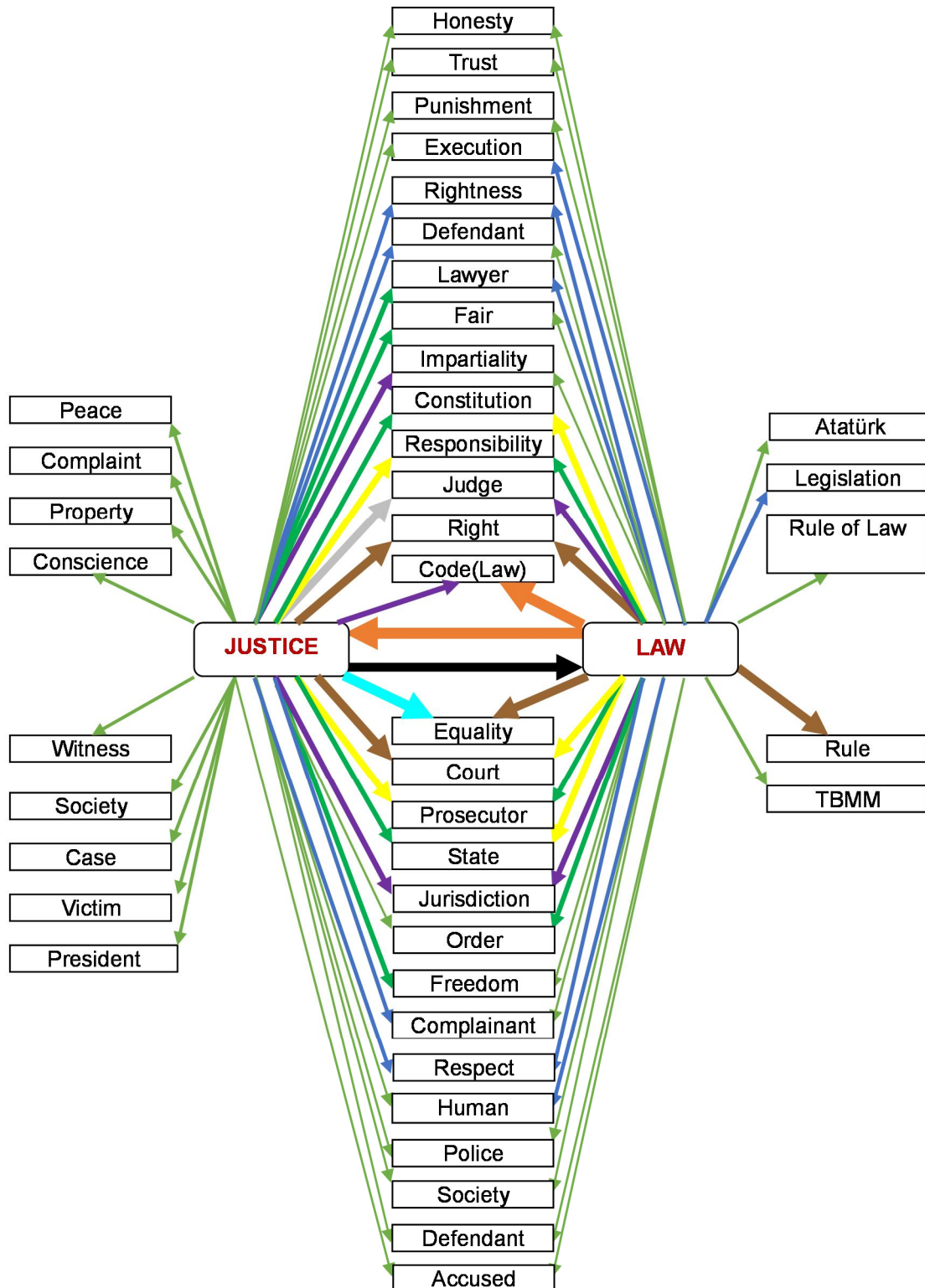
The data obtained as a result of the research were analyzed by creating percentage frequency tables and concept network maps. In line with these data, the results regarding the findings obtained from the percentage and frequency tables are listed below.

From the two key concepts given, 2751 response concept frequency has been reached. In this study

carried out with 150 students, 3000 answer concepts are supposed to be reached when the answer concept is written so that all the boxes are filled in each concept. Looking at the total number of response concepts produced for key concepts, it is seen that 2751 answer concepts are produced. In this case, it is concluded that the 249 answer concept boxes are blank.

Looking at the number of responses given to key concepts, with 1388 repetitions the highest number of responses were produced to the key concept of justice and the key concept of law with 1363 repetitions.

1. The key concepts of law and justice have been



**Figure 10.** Mind map created according to breakpoint 10-19.

associated with 135 different answer concepts in total, and 84 of these answer concepts are common response concepts to the key concepts of law and justice.

2. The 150 students who participated in the study matched the key concept of law with 111 different concepts and the key concept of justice with 108 different

concepts.

3. 111 answer concepts were produced by students to the concept of law, which was given as a key concept, and it was observed that the students had no difficulty in producing answer concepts.

4. 108 answer concepts were produced by the students to the concept of justice, which was given as a key concept, and it was observed that the students had no difficulty in producing answer concepts.

5. In concept relations with a frequency of 10 and above, 30 of 44 concepts are associated with both the concept of law and justice.

6. The key concepts of law and justice have been associated with 135 different answer concepts in total, and 84 of these answer concepts are common response concepts to the key concepts of law and justice. 102 students out of 150 students gave justice as an answer to the key concept of law, and 83 students gave the concept of law as an answer to the key concept of justice. The emergence of this result may be that students frequently use the concepts of law and justice interchangeably or their perceptions of the concepts of law and justice are similar. 150 students who participated in the study matched the key concept of law with 111 different concepts and the concept of justice key with 108 different concepts. These frequency values, which are close to each other, support the aforementioned finding.

7. It was concluded that the perceptions of the research group students regarding the concepts of law and justice are close to each other.

8. When the definitions related to the key concept of justice and the answer concepts that students have associated are analyzed, it can be said that the students involved in the research associate the concept of justice with the right answer concepts and perceive the concept correctly. In addition, based on the findings, within the framework of the definitions and explanations within the scope of the 6th grade law and justice course, most of the students in the study associated the concept of justice with the right concepts.

9. When the definitions related to the law key concept and the answer concepts that students have associated are analyzed, it can be said that the students involved in the research associate the concept of law with the right answer concepts and perceive the concept correctly. In addition, based on the findings, it was seen that most of the students in the study associated the concept of law with the right concepts within the framework of the definitions and explanations within the scope of the 6th grade law and justice course.

The data collected in the research were prepared in the form of network maps by using the frequency value 10 and above response concepts according to the cut-off point technique developed by Bahar et al. (1999). The results regarding the findings obtained from the concept network maps prepared can be listed as follows:

1. When we look at the concept network map created according to the cut-off point 99 and above, the key concept of law is associated with the other two key concept answers, "justice" and "code (law)". Considering that the ultimate purpose of the law is a set of codes that exist to ensure justice, it is seen that students establish the correct connection between the concepts. The justice key concept has not been associated with an answer in the 99 and above concept network.

2. When looking at the concept network map created according to the cut-off point 89 - 99, there was no change in the law key concept, while the concept of justice was associated with the concept of "equality" response. At the 6th grade level, it was observed that the thought that justice will also be achieved when equality is achieved prevails in the majority of students; this can be seen as a reflection of the idea that one of the most important ways of ensuring justice is equality.

3. When we look at the concept network map created according to the cut-off point 79 - 89, while the concept of law is not matched with any answer concept in this range, we see the concept of law as the second key concept of justice key concept. The data in this concept map reveals that there is a close relationship between justice and law. Students see the concepts of law and justice as complementary to each other.

4. As the number values determined at the cut-off point decrease, there is an increase in the number of answer concepts in the concept network maps. In the concept network map created according to the cut-off point 69 - 79, the concept of law is associated with the answer concept of "equality", "right", "rule", and the concept of justice with the concepts of "court" and "right". In associating the key concepts of law and justice with the response concept of right, it may be that students think that law-based justice is to protect human rights.

5. In the concept network map created according to the cut-off point 59-69, only the concept of justice is associated with the concept of "judge". The idea that judges have a great role in the provision of justice and making justice prevail in the minds of the students may be effective in associating the concept of justice with the concept of the judge.

6. In the concept network map created according to the cut-off point 49-59, the concept of justice has been associated with the concepts of "prosecutor", "responsibility" and the concept of law with the "state", "constitution", "court" response concepts. Considering that the law maker is the state and the most basic legal rules are the constitution, we can say that the students associate them with the right concepts.

7. In the concept network map created according to the cut-off point 39-49, the concept of justice has been associated with the response concepts of "neutrality", "judgment", "law", and the concept of law with the concepts of "judge" and "judgment". The concepts of impartiality and judgment have been added to the

concept map. The idea that being impartial has a great effect on the provision of justice in students plays an important role in associating the key concept of justice with the response concept of neutrality. The fact that the concepts of justice and law are associated with the concept of judicial response within this cut-off point is because the students think that law-based justice can only be done by the judiciary.

8. In the concept network map created according to the cut-off point 29-39, the key concept of justice is associated with "lawyer", "freedom", "fair", "constitution" and "state" response concepts, while the key concept of law is associated with "order", "responsibility", "prosecutor" response concepts.

9. In the concept network map created according to the cut-off point 19-29, the concept of justice is associated with the response concepts of "defendant", "plaintiff", "truth", "respect", and the key concept of law has been associated with "execution", "human", "legislature", "respect", "lawyer", "righteousness" answer concepts.

10. In the concept network map created according to the cut-off point 10-19, the key concept of justice has been associated with "peace", "honesty", "society", "order", "criminal", "complaint", "witness", "trust", "president", "Police", "defendant", "execution", "punishment", "people", "human", "property", "conscience", "cause", "victim" response concepts, while the law key concept has been associated with "fair". "Punishment", "honesty", "freedom", "police", "complainant", "trust", "neutrality", "TBMM", "society", "Atatürk", "defendant", "criminal", "rule of law" answer concepts. It has been observed that the highest number of answer concepts appeared in the range of 10-19 cut-off points. Although this range is the range of least repetitive answer concepts in the study, it is the range in which concept diversity is the highest.

11. Considering the answer concepts given to the key concepts of Law and Justice, it can be said that the students have enough conceptual knowledge to raise awareness about the basic concepts of legal science. This and conceptual knowledge will contribute to the formation and development of legal awareness in students.

In the law and justice course, which is taught as an elective course in secondary school, students are expected to understand the necessity of law and justice in individual and community life, be aware of their responsibilities within the framework of the understanding of seeking their rights through legal means, be in favor of resolving their legal problems peacefully by revealing the causes and consequences of their legal problems, know authorized people and institutions in the resolution of legal disputes. The aim is to raise legal literate individuals who have an awareness of law and justice in society by providing basic legal knowledge, skills and values related to law and justice to secondary school students. As the

awareness of law and justice will develop and settle in the society consisting of individuals who receive education in this way, a healthier, more peaceful and happy society will be built.

The study conducted by Ünlütepe (2016) aimed to present the necessity of providing legal education in basic and secondary education institutions and the reasons and solutions related to this. Within the framework of the research results, it has been emphasized that the Law and Justice course has an important role in the acquisition of the lawful behavior model at an early age. Considering the opinions of the teachers regarding the Law and Justice course, they stated that the lesson was beneficial by contributing to the awareness of rights, law, justice and responsibility among the students. Oğuz (2013) aimed to measure the legal literacy levels of 8th grade students in his research. In his study with 8th grade students, he found that the legal literacy level of the students was higher than the determined values. In the study presented by Alıcı (2015), the effect of the Law and Justice course, which has just started to be taught as an elective course, on improving the awareness of the law in students was examined. Within the scope of the study, it was understood that the course in question increased students' perceptions of legal behavior and positive changes were experienced in their sensitivity towards their environment. In the study presented by Kara and Tangülü (2017), a case study was conducted on gains in law and political literacy in the social studies curriculum. It is stated that the Social Studies course has gains that contribute significantly to the development of legal and political literacy skills. In addition, it was stated that the high level of legal literacy and political literacy is related to the development of effective citizenship behavior. In the study conducted by Gülener (2013), it was pointed out that citizenship awareness, ethical understanding and critical thinking started to develop in children at the secondary school level. Accordingly, it has been stated that giving law and justice lessons to middle school students may have a facilitating effect on the adoption of concepts such as responsibility, right, human rights, law and justice at the social level. When we look at the answer concepts used by students in our study, the concepts of right, law, justice and responsibility have high-frequency values.

In the research conducted by Çengelci Köse (2017), it was determined that the teaching material of the Law and Justice course includes the values of justice, equality, responsibility, respect, love, freedom, solidarity, solidarity, trust, moderation, sensitivity to the natural environment, and peace and reconciliation. The importance of values in human life and cultural continuity is emphasized. When the concepts expressing values are examined, students found values such as justice, responsibility, freedom, equality, trust, respect and peace as the answer concept within the scope of our study. When we look at the values

in this study, which is included in the law and justice course curriculum and is based on examining the course material, we see that the concepts expressing some values are in the answer concept in our study. The fact that we cannot see all values in our study may be that students' time to answer is limited. İrşi (2017), as a result of his interviews with the teachers who participated in his study, concluded that the aims and achievements of the program are suitable for the needs of the students. However, most of the teachers participating in the study stated that they were undecided about whether the students' level of readiness was in line with the acquisitions in the course curriculum. The students were asked to write a meaningful sentence using the answer concepts they wrote in the KIT that we used in our study, but it was observed that most of the students either did not write sentences or could not make meaningful sentences. This has led to the conclusion that the cognitive levels of the students are not ready enough to internalize the concepts. In line with the opinions of the teachers, it was concluded that the information in the curriculum should be important issues that students can use in daily life, and should raise awareness of the basic concepts of legal science. When the Law and Justice course is viewed from the perspective of values education, it is emphasized that its content will bring many fundamental values, justice being the first (being fair). In the study, the teachers stated that the students who took law and justice courses had an awareness of law and justice and they observed an increase in the behavior of obeying the rules. Although research on the law and justice course curriculum and application is limited, the most recent study was conducted by Alkalayış (2019). In the study conducted by Alkalayış (2019), the elective law and justice course was evaluated according to the opinions of teachers and students. Thanks to the Law and Justice course, the students showed expected positive behavior about the knowledge of rights and responsibilities, awareness of legal institutions, ability to seek rights and respect for the people in their environment. These results show that the students adopted the aims of the Law and Justice course. It is seen that the students' views about the content and teaching of the Law and Justice course are positive, but they have difficulty in grasping the meaning of the content and they develop a negative opinion about many words and terms. All of the teachers stated that awareness was created among the students in accordance with the purpose of the lesson. Teachers stated that they observed that students' skills emerged in addition to their knowledge of seeking rights.

When the researches conducted were examined, it was stated that the course contributed to the adoption of concepts such as right, law, justice, responsibility and human rights in students. In addition, the importance of courses such as elective law and justice, social studies, and citizenship in raising awareness of law and justice to

individuals at an early age is emphasized. When we look at the results obtained within the scope of our research, the fact that the concept of law and justice is associated with most of the concepts expressing the values in the law and justice curriculum, as well as the fact that students write most of the concepts in the units as answer concepts reveals that students have a level of conceptual knowledge to create awareness about their concepts. When the current research results and the results within the scope of our study are compared, it is seen that the results are similar and overlap with each other.

The following suggestions can be made in line with the findings of this study, which was conducted to determine the concept perceptions of 6th grade students regarding the concepts of law and justice with the word association test:

1. The subject of this study is the concepts of law and justice. Word association test can also be applied to different concepts in the law and justice course.
2. This study was applied to 6th grade students who took this course in 2 secondary schools in the Çay district of Afyonkarahisar. It can be made possible that the perceptions of students who take the elective law and justice course are compared with those who do not.
3. By giving examples of word association, the use of KITs as an alternative assessment and evaluation tool among teachers can be widespread.
4. In the process of education, teachers should give importance to teaching concepts so that they can give and assimilate the gains they want students to achieve. They should determine students' perceptions of concepts, if any, they should identify and correct their misconceptions so that students can avoid confusion.
5. In order to make the awareness of law and justice fully permanent it should be supported by other courses as well.
6. An educational environment supported by case studies, dramas, interesting stories and various visuals should be provided during the lesson to help students relate the lesson with daily life. In this way, students will look at the events around them more objectively.
7. In order to prevent misconceptions, first of all, misconceptions should be determined. Word association test can be used to determine misconceptions. However, it should not be forgotten that it is not enough to determine misconceptions only in order to eliminate misconceptions. After the misconceptions are determined, the techniques to eliminate the misconceptions should be used and the misconceptions should be corrected.

## REFERENCES

- Alıcı, A. (2015). Ortaokul hukuk ve adalet dersinin öğrencilerdeki hukuk bilincini geliştirmeye etkisi. (Yayımlanmamış Doktora Tezi).

- Dumlupınar Üniversitesi, Kütahya.
- Alkalayış, M. (2019).** Ortaokul seçmeli hukuk ve adalet dersi öğretim programı ve uygulamasının öğrenci ve öğretmen görüşlerine göre değerlendirilmesi. (Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi). Adıyaman Üniversitesi, Adıyaman.
- Bahar, M., Johnstone, A. H., and Sutcliffe, R. G. (1999).** Investigation of students' cognitive structure in elementary genetics through word association tests. *Journal of Biological Education*, 33(3): 134-141.
- Batur, Z. and Uygun, K., (2012)** İki neslin bir kavram algısı: Teknoloji. *Uşak Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 5(1): 74-88.
- Büyüköztürk, Ş., Çakmak K., E., Akgün, Ö. E., Karadeniz, Ş. and Demirel, F. (2011).** Bilimsel araştırma yöntemleri. Ankara: Pegem Akademi.
- Çaycı, B., Demir, M. K., Başaran, M., and Demir, M. (2007).** Sosyal bilgiler dersinde işbirliğine dayalı öğrenme ile kavram öğretimi. *Kastamonu Eğitim Dergisi*, 15(2): 619-630.
- Çengelci Köse, T. (2017).** Hukuk ve adalet dersi öğretim programı ve öğretim materyalinde değerler. *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 10 (51), 656-664.
- Gülener, S. (2013).** Türkiye'de hukuk ve adalet bilincinin geliştirilmesine yönelik önemli bir adım: Hukuk ve Adalet Dersi. *Güncel Hukuk*.
- İldir, G. (2006).** Hukuka giriş. Ankara: Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık.
- İrşi, E. (2017).** Ortaokul hukuk ve adalet dersi öğretim programının öğretmen görüşlerine göre değerlendirilmesi. (Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi). Gaziosmanpaşa Üniversitesi, Tokat
- Kara, H., and Tangülü, Z. (2017).** Sosyal bilgiler öğretim programında hukuk ve politik okuryazarlığı üzerine bir durum incelemesi. *Araştırma ve Deneyim Dergisi*, 2(1): 23-26.
- Karaca, A. (2018).** Yedinci sınıf öğrencilerinin çeşitli meslek grupları hakkındaki algılarının kelime ilişkilendirme testi (kit) aracılığıyla incelenmesi ve öğrencilerin gelecekte meslek seçiminde rol oynayan faktörlerin belirlenmesi. (Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi) Ömer Halis Demir Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Niğde.
- Korkmaz, Z. (1992).** Gramer Terimleri Sözlüğü. Ankara: TDK Yayınları.
- Kuzu, A. (2013).** Araştırmaların planlanması. *İçinde; Bilimsel araştırma yöntemleri* (Ed: A. A. Kurt), ss. 19-45. Eskişehir: Web-Ofset.
- Miles, M. B., and Huberman, A. M. (1994).** *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook.* (2nd ed.). California: Sage Publications.
- Ministry of National Education (MoNE) (2013) Hukuk ve adalet dersi öğretim programı. <https://docplayer.biz.tr/3262606-Hukuk-ve-adalet-dersi.html> (Erişim Tarihi: 17. 02. 2020).
- Oğuz, S. (2013).** Ortaokul öğrencilerinin sosyal bilgiler eğitimi çerçevesinde hukuk okuryazarlık düzeylerinin belirlenmesi. (Yayımlanmamış Doktora Tezi). Gazi Üniversitesi, Ankara.
- Sencer, M. (1989).** Toplumbilimlerinde yöntem. İstanbul: Beta Basım.
- Uygun, K. and Batur, Z. (2015).** Öğretmen adaylarının sosyal bilgiler öğretiminde kullanılan kavramlara ilişkin algıları. *International Journal of Social and Educational Sciences*, 2(4): 127-147.
- Ülgen, G. (1996).** Kavram geliştirme, kavram ve uygulamalar. Ankara: Setma Basımevi
- Ünlütepe, M. (2016).** Temel ve ortaöğretim okullarında hukuk eğitimi üzerine. *Legal Hukuk Dergisi*. 14(161): 2393-2407.
- Yıldırım, A., and Şimşek, H. (2006).** Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri. Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık.

---

**Citation:** Yazıcı, H., Doğan, O., Koca, M. K., Kaya, M. T. (2021). Examination of perceptions of 6th grade students regarding the concepts of law and justice. *African Educational Research Journal*, 9(2): 665-678.

---