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Opinions of Social Studies Teachers on Environmental Education Through Social Studies Curriculum and Textbooks

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As the number of global environmental problems is increasing day by day, one of the courses given in environmental education, which is gaining importance, is social studies. In this context, environmental education in social studies gains importance, as well. From this point of view, this research aims to determine the views of social studies teachers about environmental education given through social studies curriculum and textbooks. The research was conducted with a phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research designs. The study group of the research consisted of 8 social studies teachers working in schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education of Türkiye (MoNE) in the fall semester of 2021-2022. The study data were collected with a semi-structured interview form prepared by the researcher. The obtained data were analysed by the descriptive analysis method. According to the research findings, social studies teachers are of the opinions below: the emphasis on the sustainability principle of environmental education in the curriculum is low, it is insufficient in terms of achievements and is not suitable for the level, however, it is sufficient in terms of skills. In addition, the textbooks are far from actuality, and especially at the 5th-grade level, the visualization is insufficient. While the applied-based education approach is mostly adopted in environmental education, it has been emphasized that the most important problem in the realization of environmental education is the procedure. Teachers suggested the practice and activity-based education approach and environmentalist content.

Introduction

The environment is a very comprehensive concept. Every creature in the universe lives in a certain environment. The environment in which it lived and the ones in it interact with each other. In the process of interacting with nature, humans, unlike other creatures, can change nature more through their abilities. Mankind, who has been trying to dominate nature from the early ages to the present, has given great harm to nature in the war s/he has waged on nature. Domination of nature, which is one of the most basic instincts of mankind, has entered a process against humanity with the deterioration of the ecological balance. It was seen that the human being, who seemed to have won the war for a short time, actually lost the war with

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the deterioration of the environmental balance. Today, s/he is exposed to disasters caused by the deteriorated ecological balance.

The history of the world and humanity started a very long time ago, however, environmental problems have started to become visible with excessive fossil fuel consumption after the industrial revolution (Bostancı and Yıldırım, 2019). Environmental degradation causes environmental problems such as deforestation (Allen and Barnes, 1985; Veldkamp, et al. 2020), biodiversity loss, desertification, erosion, urban and water pollution, and global climate change (Mabogunje, 2002). Although environmental problems started to emerge after the industrial revolution, they were perceived as a problem in the international arena only after the second half of the twentieth century (Smyth, 2006; Dilek, 2008). The first step regarding the environment on a global scale was taken with the “1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment” (Handl, 2012). After that date, environmental problems were brought to the agenda by many non-governmental organizations and governments, especially UNESCO, but they have not still resolved today. While the ecological footprint, one of the most important indicators of natural destruction, was 0.73 worldwide in 1961, this value increased up to 1.69 in 2016 (Kılınc, 2021). In Türkiye, in 1972, the ecological footprint exceeded the biological capacity for the first time, and in 2007, it increased approximately 1.6 times of the biological capacity (Öztok and Tapan, 2012). In the following years, it is estimated that it will continue to accelerate as a result of environmental degradation, population growth, and the increase in heavy industry day by day.

Environmental problems have been increasing day by day and have become visible in different areas. They can only be solved with permanent and effective methods. In this sense, for an effective solution, it is necessary to stand out against the factors that harm the environment as individuals and society (Yılmaz, 2007). Education is the most effective method for global awareness and movement. Within the frame of general education, environmental education can be considered as an effective method for consciously developing positive attitudes and behaviours towards the environment (Erten, 2003; Vadala, 2004). The fact that environmental problems will be solved through environmental education has become a common view in the world (UNCED, 1992). Environmental education is “a learning process that increases people’s knowledge and awareness of the environment and develops the knowledge and skills necessary to solve these problems, and encourages attitudes, motivations and commitments to make conscious decisions and take responsible actions” (Erhabor and Don, 2016). The main purpose of environmental education is to develop environmental awareness, and sensitivity about protecting and using nature (Başal, 2003).

By means of the international environmental movements, environmental education has started to take place in the programs of all of the world countries today. However, environmental education differs according to each country's education system and policies. Even before the basic curriculum change in England, environmental education used to even change according to school types (Demirkaya, 2006). In England, environmental education was included in the science, geography and cross-curricular with the curriculum change (Şentürk, 2010). In their study, Bakırcı and Artun (2011) compared the environmental education policies of Türkiye and some countries, it was seen that while Greece was the closest to Türkiye, Papua New Guinea was the farthest in the comparison list. In Türkiye, environmental education is given in the content of compulsory courses such as life sciences, social studies and science (Öztürk & Zayımoğlu Öztürk, 2016). Additionally, environmental education courses are included in the elective courses at the 7th and 8th grade levels. With the last regulation made in 2021, it will be given under the name of “environmental education and climate change” at all three

levels. Although the science courses include more environmental acquisitions among the compulsory courses, the science course approaches the environment as a whole. However, social studies focus more on the environment and human relationship due to its mission of raising good and effective citizens (Karakuş, Karaaslan & Pehlivan, 2018). With this aspect, social studies can be more effective in developing awareness and positive attitudes towards the environment. The opinions of teachers, who are among the most important components of education and who are the implementers of the program, about the curriculum and textbooks, which are the other important components of education, are significant.

When the literature on environmental education in social studies is examined, the following studies are found: Myers and Stitely's (1973) on environmental issues in social studies student materials, Adara's (1996) on environmental education strategies in social studies, Adedayo and Olawepo's (1997) on integration of environmental education into social sciences at secondary school level, Ergin's (2011) on the role of social studies in the development of environmental awareness, Karakuş, Palaz, Kılcan et al. Çepni's (2012) on the use of cartoons in the teaching of environmental problems in social studies, Edinyang, Eneji, Tijani and Dunnamah's (2013) on the role of environmental education and social studies in creating an environmental-friendly society, Kodan and Bozdemir's (2014) on the contribution of science and social studies course outcomes and activities to environmental education, Öztürk and Zayimoğlu Öztürk's (2016) on the evaluation of social sciences curriculum in terms of environmental education, Fidan and Ay's (2016) on operational environmental literacy in social studies course, Çoban and Temir's (2018) on environmental education in social studies textbooks, and Apaydın Timur's (2020) on environmental education qualifications of social studies teachers, Itasanmi's (2020) on secondary school teachers' awareness and attitudes of social studies teachers towards environmental education, Iyunade & Olubela's (2020) on environmental sustainability and the relevant roles of social studies educators, Aladejebi's (2020) on environmental education in Nigerian Social Studies teacher training program, Bayram's (2021) on social studies course and environmental education, Arisandi & Faisal's (2021) on the use of cooperative learning in environmental education and its relationship with social studies, Kaya, Gökdemir and Yazıcı's (2021) on environmental education self-efficacy of social studies pre-service teachers, Bursa's (2022) on the views of social studies pre-service teachers about environmental justice. Although all these studies above were found in literature, no study has been found regarding the views of the social studies teachers on the environmental education in social sciences curriculum and textbooks. Teachers, who implement curricula and textbooks in all fields and have the opportunity to observe the results in the real education field, are one of the basic elements of education. For this reason, teachers' views on environmental education in social studies curriculum and textbooks are important, especially for courses such as social studies. At this point, the research aimed to determine the views of social studies teachers about environmental education in the social studies curriculum and textbooks.

Method

Research Design

The research was designed with a phenomenological pattern, one of the qualitative research designs. Phenomenological research is the common definition of the lived experiences of a certain group related to a concept or phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Phenomenology is used in social sciences to reveal concepts, events, situations, and experiences (Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2016). In the research, the phenomenological design was



used because it was aimed to determine the opinions of social studies teachers about environmental education in the social studies curriculum and textbooks.

Study Group

The study group of the research was determined by the convenience sampling method and consisted of eight social studies teachers working in schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education. Convenience sampling is used when it is desired to include existing, fast, and easily accessible volunteers who want to participate in the research into the sample (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). In the research, the study group was determined by the convenience sampling method, because it is fast, low cost, and based on volunteering. Due to the fact that the researcher resides in Istanbul, eight social studies teachers working in schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education in Istanbul consisted of the study group. The data regarding the study group are explained in detail in Table-1.

Table 1. Participant Information Table

No	Gender	Age	Graduated Field	Occupation Period	City of Work
T-1	Female	35	Social Studies Teaching	10	İstanbul
T-2	Male	32	Social Studies Teaching	9	İstanbul
T-3	Female	41	Geography Teaching	20	İstanbul
T-4	Female	31	Social Studies Teaching	11	İstanbul
T-5	Female	37	Social Studies Teaching	14	İstanbul
T-6	Male	34	Social Studies Teaching	12	İstanbul
T-7	Female	29	Social Studies Teaching	7	İstanbul
T-8	Male	40	Social Studies Teaching	18	İstanbul

Demographic information (age, gender, department, and occupation period) of the participants of the study is given in Table 1. Seven of the participants are graduates of social studies teaching, and one of them is a graduate of geography teaching, however, he has been working as a social studies teacher for 16 years. “T-1” represents the participant in the first place and “T-8” represents the participant in the eighth place.

Data Collection Tool

In the study, a semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher was used to determine the social studies teachers’ views on environmental education in the social studies curriculum and textbooks. In the semi-structured interview, the researcher prepares the interview protocol, which includes the questions that she/he planned to ask beforehand, but during the process, s/he can provide those new questions are asked and answered according to the situation (Türnüklü, 2000; Sönmez and Alacapınar,2016). In the semi-structured interview, the questions can be arranged to ask the participants more questions about the details, to ask for clarification, or to provide examples (Merriam, 2009). The interviews were conducted one-to-one in a participatory and healthy environment in accord with the data collection process. The interviews were recorded using a voice recorder, with the permission of the participant. The interviews were conducted by the researchers in person and did not include third parties and lasted an average of 16 minutes.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis aims to encode the data, divide the text into small units (into statements, sentences, or paragraphs), assign labels to each unit, and gather the codes under themes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2014). Of the qualitative data analysis, descriptive analysis was used in this study. In the descriptive analysis, questions, topics, or themes that are in data collection tools such as observation, interview, and document used in the research are analyzed (Ekiz, 2009: 75). The data are classified, summarized, and interpreted according to predetermined themes (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008: 224). After the interview with the teachers in the research was recorded as a written document, the teachers were coded as “T-1” for the participant in the first place and “T-6” for the participant in the sixth place. The data are presented under themes and supported with direct quotations from teacher opinions when necessary.

Validity and Reliability in Research

In qualitative studies, the triangulation (variation) method is used to reduce misunderstanding and increase the validity of the research (Stake, 1995). While preparing the semi-structured interview form used within the scope of the study, the opinions of the field experts were asked. The interview transcripts obtained in this study were reviewed by different researchers. During the research process, the codes and themes were prepared by the researchers at different times and in different environments. Then, the similarities and differences of the analyzes were checked. In this way, cross-checking was ensured between the coders and coordination between researchers. In the findings section, direct quotations from the data obtained from the participants are given. The themes obtained in the research were evaluated and discussed with the relevant literature. Information about the participants and the environment was given in the research.

Findings

This study aims to examine the views of social studies teachers on environmental education in social studies, and the findings are presented under three different themes, according to the data obtained from teachers’ opinions. These themes are listed as environmental education social studies curriculum, environmental education in social studies textbooks, and problems and suggestions regarding environmental education in social studies.

Environmental Education in Social Studies Curriculum

When the views of social studies teachers on environmental education in the social studies curriculum were examined, the codes for the expansion of the acquisition and content supporting the theme, the suitability of the acquisitions to the level, and the proficiency of the skills were reached. The data relating to the theme are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Environmental Education Theme in Social Studies Curriculum

Theme	Codes	Participants
Environmental Education in the Curriculum	Expansion of Acquisition and Content	T-1, T-5, T-6, T-8
	Appropriateness for the Level	T-2, T-7
	Skill Proficiency	T-4, T-5, T-6

When teachers' opinions are examined, the most emphasized code is the expansion of the acquisition and content. Teachers' views on this issue are presented below:

T-1 "For example, if we look at it from the broader point of view, more detailed acquisitions can be added. I think the impact of geography should be increased a little more."

T-5 "However, it can be developed at the social activity level. Especially in the field, for students to gain environmental awareness, the increase in activities accordingly will also enable them to internalize the acquisitions."

T-8 "I find it insufficient. The issue of sustainability should be included and acquisitions including the UN Sustainable Development Goals should be included."

T-6 "However, current environmental crises should be included more in the social studies curriculum"

When we examine the teachers' views given above, the teachers state that environmental education should be improved in terms of duration, acquisition, geography-based environmental issues, practice-based understanding, sustainability, and current environmental crises.

When the teachers' opinions are examined, the other code for environmental education in the social studies curriculum is that the learning outcomes should be appropriate for the students' levels. Teachers' views on this issue are presented below:

T-7 "In my opinion, the most important mistake of the environmental education program is the part of readiness. For example, for the acquisition of 'student can generally explain the landforms of the place where s/he lives and her/his environment,' asking for doing this from a student who does not have enough map concepts and skills can force her/his level a bit. For this reason, I believe that the environmental acquisitions should be created after thinking about the before and after."

T-2 "Some of the acquisitions are not suitable for the semester the students are in"

When we examine the opinions of the teachers given above, the teachers state that the environmental education acquisitions in the social studies curriculum are not suitable for the student's level and readiness.

When the teachers' opinions are examined, the code for environmental education in the social studies curriculum is related to the status of the skills. Teachers' views on this issue are presented below:

T-4 "Already, there are environmental education and environmental skills in the social studies curriculum"

T-5 “Environmental education is sufficient. I think students have been given the necessary skills.”

T-6 “Especially the skills such as environmental literacy, observation, and location analysis show that the program is also prepared for environmental education”

When we examine the opinions of the teachers given above, the teachers state that the environmental education skills are sufficient in the social studies curriculum. In this case, after the update of curriculum in 2018, increased environmental skills are also seen.

Environmental Education in Social Studies Textbook

When the views of social studies teachers on the place of environmental education in social studies textbooks were examined, the codes for insufficient use of visuals (photos, maps and event pictures, etc.), course content, and language use were reached. The data relating to the theme are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Environmental Education Theme in Social Studies Textbook

Theme	Codes	Participants
Environmental Education in Textbooks	Insufficient Use of Visuals	T-1, T-3, T-5, T-6, T-8
	Course Content	T-6, T-7, T-8
	Use of Language	T-4, T-6

When teachers’ opinions are examined, the most emphasized code is the use of visuals. Teachers’ views on this issue are presented below:

T-3 “So I think visuality is not enough considering the age levels of children. Because when we think specifically about the fifth graders, children are more learning by seeing.”

T-1 “There are visuals, but I generally find the textbooks insufficient. For children in the 5th and 6th grades, especially in the 5th grade, more detailed visuals will make it easier for them to understand the topics.”

T-5 “We can say that it is sufficient about information in general, but the visual materials and activities are seen to be insufficient in terms of relevance for the purpose.”

T-8 “Textbooks aim to raise environmental awareness in the individual, but they are insufficient in terms of content and visuals.”

T-6 “I think that the visuals in the textbooks are insufficient.”

When we examine the opinions of the teachers, the teachers emphasize that the social studies textbooks are insufficient in terms of environmental education and visuality in general. It has been stated that student age groups, especially the fifth graders, have level problems due to their age.

When the views of social studies teachers on the environmental education in social studies textbooks are examined, the other code emphasized by the teachers is the course content. Teachers’ views about this issue are presented below:

T-6 “In addition, the interactive activities are less in the textbooks. In particular, awareness-raising and guiding content towards environmental crises and natural disasters in our immediate environment and different parts of the world should be added.”

T-7 “It is far from being up-to-date. It focuses on how to protect our classical environment. It focuses on how to protect our classical environment. There are no activities to produce solutions.”

T-8 “Textbooks aim to raise environmental awareness in the individual, but they are not enough in terms of content and visuals.”

When we examine the teachers’ views on the code, the teachers emphasized that the social studies textbooks are far from environmental disaster information and actuality in environmental education and that these textbooks lack interactive and solution-based activities.

When the views of social studies teachers on environmental education in social studies textbooks are examined, the other code emphasized by the teachers is on the language used in the books. Teachers’ opinions on this topic are presented below;

T-6 “In addition to this, the use of very scientific language in some parts of the textbooks can create a disadvantage for the 5th and 6th graders.”

T-4 “I mean, textbooks give environmental information like a website text or general news, for instance, there has been flooding somewhere, or a forest fire has broken out somewhere, etc. Like network news”

When we examine the opinions of teachers about the code, two different approaches are seen regarding the language used in environmental education in social studies textbooks. Regarding this, T-6 stated that the scientific language was used mainly, while T-4 stated that the language used in the textbooks was similar to network news. The reason for the emergence of two different approaches here may be the grade levels that the teachers taught were different.

Problems in Environmental Education

Social studies teachers emphasized that they encountered some problems in providing training for environmental education in the social studies course. The data relating to the theme are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Problems Encountered in Environmental Education in Social Studies Course

Theme	Codes	Participants
Problems in Environmental Education	Lack of Opportunity	T-2, T-4
	Procedure	T-3

These problems are examined under two codes as lack of opportunity, and procedure (permissions from MoNE, communication with environmental institutions). Teachers’ opinions on this issue are presented below:

T-2 “So, some schools don't have the opportunity, our school doesn't have a yard either”

T-4 *“It is not possible to do anything about the environment at my school. Especially if you are in Istanbul, it is very difficult to do anything in the schoolyard. Our schoolyard is so small.”*

When the opinions of the teachers are examined, teachers are seen to emphasize that it is impossible to provide training for environmental education in the schoolyards and that the schoolyards in Istanbul are too few.

Another factor that causes problems in the implementation of environmental education is the implementation of procedures. Concerning this, the opinion of T-3 is presented below:

T-3 *“But going to a place related to the environment, of course, requires a procedure, so it is troublesome. These procedures must be overcome. In other words, even a museum visit is sometimes a big burden for us. The procedures are ridiculous.”*

When teachers’ opinions are examined, it is seen that practice-based environmental education is limited by the bureaucracy and the procedure. These procedures may mean the permissions required to be obtained from institutions and organizations such as the Ministry of National Education, governorship, administration of the places to visit.

Suggestions for Environmental Education in Social Studies

Social studies teachers emphasized teaching methods, and content codes for environmental education in social studies. The data relating to the theme are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Suggestions for Environmental Education in Social Studies

Theme	Codes	Participants
Suggestions for Environmental Education	Method	T-1, T-2, T-3, T-4, T-5, T-6, T-7
	Content	T-6, T-8

In these two codes, the teaching method-techniques code for environmental education has been emphasized more intensively. Teachers’ opinions on this subject are presented below:

T-1 *“There may be field trips, presentations, or just observation. But of course, it would be much better if the field trips were increased more, for children, and opportunities can be enriched because our opportunities are a bit limited.”*

T-2 *“We need to do the activities outside as much as possible to be able to teach children something. For example, we need to be able to go to a forest-related environment. I am just thinking simply.”*

T-3 *“I wish it should be taught by doing and experiencing. For example, every child could learn the benefits of trees by planting a sapling. The forests can be visited for better understanding the beauty of the forest, the value it adds to the environment, its contributions to tourism, its hosting living things. Later, children who have the opportunity can visit the burned forest areas and learn the difference between the two by seeing and experiencing them. Also, for example, if the necessary hygiene conditions are provided and children can collect litter in the forest, they will better understand that they need to keep the environment cleaner after that.”*



T-4 *“I think environmental education comes with practices. The child must be involved, otherwise, the general network news in the textbooks and the teachers' telling is not enough.”*

T-5 *“Environmental education should follow a path that reaches the whole, following the constructivist approach and without contradicting the close-to-far relationship, starting from the latest examples in line with the aims and acquisitions of National Education. Today, the latest examples of increasing environmental pollution, rapid population growth, natural disasters, irregular settlements, and unplanned settlements should first be examined for the goals of National Education.”*

T-6 *“I see that it is very difficult to gain this awareness with only textbooks. With social studies teaching supported by out-of-school learning environments, places such as lakes, forests, sea, and plains should be demonstrated.”*

T-7 *“It should arouse curiosity in students and students should have a chance to practice what they learned. It should not be aimed only to provide sensitivity towards the environment. The opportunities for students to take the necessary steps in this regard should also be provided by the teachers.”*

When the teacher's views on the code were examined, it was emphasized that environmental education should be given with a constructivist approach, using practice-based activities and methods, adopting the principle of being close to current problems, and using out-of-school environments.

The other code highlighted in the theme of suggestions for environmental education in social studies is the content. The opinions of the teachers about this code are presented below;

T-8 *Current issues should be included. Awareness about the concepts such as sustainability, ecological footprint, carbon footprint, ecological village, and activities on this issue should be raised.*

T-6 *“Subjects such as not turning the stream beds into a source of economic rent, not turning the animals in the Arctic into a commodity, not closing public beaches for building residences and hotels, not allowing concrete to win against forests and parks should be included more in the program within the scope of environmental education. The child, who sees too many of these on social media, immediately realizes the paradox when he cannot see it in the books.”*

When the views of teachers on the content code for environmental education in social studies are examined, teachers emphasize the enrichment of the content with current events in the environment, global problems such as sustainability, ecological footprint, carbon footprint, ecological village, and locally based rent issues. Otherwise, the lack of these issues in the curriculum and textbooks, and the fact that students do not encounter real-life problems, will lead to the emergence of social studies that is disconnected from real life. Like this disconnection is against the nature of education, students' not encountering real-life problems can also cause a decrease in interest.

Discussion, conclusion, and suggestions

The world, which has not been exposed to any deterioration by the living things in its billions of years history, has been exposed to the large-scale human-driven deterioration in the last two hundred years. The biggest causes of this extensional destruction are the unconscious and greedy human beings. It is possible to prevent it only with education, which is a solution in every field. Raising awareness and sensitivity about the environment in general education can be achieved through environmental education. While environmental education is taught as a separate course in some countries, it is taught within existing disciplines in some countries

(Alım, 2006). In our country, environmental education is included in social studies and science course curricula at the secondary school level (Erentay, 2013; Şahin & Yazgan, 2013). There are two different approaches to environmental education, traditional and contemporary. A traditional approach focuses on protecting the relationship between humans and the environment based on science. On the other hand, contemporary approaches consider the environment in a holistic and socio-cultural framework and are defined as action-based and sustainable (Sauve, 2005 cited in Tanrıverdi, 2009). In this framework, the opinions of the social studies teachers are important since this course is significant for environmental education. In this study, the views of social studies teachers on environmental education in social studies were examined.

Currentness in environmental education in social studies was heavily emphasized by five teachers under three different themes and four different codes. The most emphasized code on environmental education in social studies is actuality. The need to develop current information on environmental education and environmental disasters was emphasized by participants. These results of the study show similarity to the study conducted by Akdağ, Oğuz, Tatar and Subaşı (2014). However, the study results of Çoban & Temir's (2018) study, which indicates that current topics related to environmental education is sufficient, differ from the results of this study. In the study, the result that environmental education acquisitions are not sufficient among the results related to the program is similar to the results of Tanrıverdi (2009), Öztürk & Zayimoğlu Öztürk (2016) and Aktaş (2019). Accordingly, the study results of Karakuş, Karaaslan and Pehlivan (2018) on science and social studies undergraduate program, Kodan and Bozdemir (2014) on primary education program are not in favour of social studies. The result of the research is similar to the study conducted by Çoban & Temir (2018) in which social studies textbooks are evaluated in terms of environmental education and the results of the study conducted by Tanrıverdi (2009) on sustainable environmental education in primary education programs. Unlike the results of this study, in the study conducted by Gökçe and Dilek (2021), it was concluded that the goals and objectives of the Tbilisi Declaration and UNEP were reflected in the social studies curriculum. Two social studies teachers emphasized that acquisitions were not grade-appropriate, while five social studies teachers emphasized that the visuals in the textbooks were not grade-appropriate. And one teacher emphasized that the use of language was not grade-appropriate. While the research is similar to the study conducted by Öküzçüoğlu (2019), it differs with the evaluation results of the program prepared by (MoNE, 2020). When the opinions of the teachers were examined, it was emphasized that the use of visuals in textbooks at the 5th grade level was insufficient. This result obtained in the research is similar to the results of the studies conducted by Memişoğlu and Karacabey (2021), Taşkın and Açıkalin (2020), Şahin (2014). It is obvious that social studies teachers lack of opportunity and have procedural problems in environmental education. The results of the research are similar to the results obtained by Öztürk (2019) and Torun (2021) on out-of-school environments. Teachers find the skills in the social studies program sufficient in terms of environmental education. This result of the research coincides with the result of the study conducted by Öztürk & Zayimoğlu Öztürk (2016).

In the study, the practice-based education approach in the field of environmental education was intensively emphasized by the social studies teachers. While the lack of this understanding is emphasized in the curriculum and textbooks, it is mostly involved in the suggestions regarding education. This is similar to the results of the studies conducted by Tırpancı (2019) and Şan (2016), Fidan & Ay (2016) with the secondary school students, and by Öcal (2016) with the pre-service teachers. It is also similar to constructivist education



approach and applied education regarding the education of pre-service teachers carried out by Aladejebi (2020). In addition, in the research conducted by Bursa (2022), it was concluded that applied education and sightseeing tours affect the development of environmental justice, and in the study conducted by Arisandi & Faisal (2021), collaborative and activity-based education provides significant contributions in raising ecological awareness. In addition, in the research conducted by Bursa (2022), it was concluded that applied education and sightseeing tours affect the development of environmental justice, and in the study conducted by Arisandi & Faisal (2021), collaborative and activity-based education provides significant contributions in raising ecological awareness. When all of these results are evaluated, the necessity of using practice-based education methods in environmental education emerges.

In the research, it is stated that social studies teachers should develop environmental education in terms of duration, achievement, geography-based environmental issues, practice-based understanding, sustainability, and current environmental crises in the social studies curriculum. It emphasizes that social studies textbooks are far from up-to-date, environmental disaster information, and are insufficient in terms of interactive and solution-oriented activities and visuality. The small size of the schoolyards and the lack of green areas in the schools where the participants work, and the insufficient environmental excursions due to the lack of opportunities can be an obstacle to implementing the applied education of the social studies course for the environment. In the social studies course, teachers emphasized that environmental education should be given with a constructivist approach, which adopted the principle of giving examples starting from immediate environment, with practice-based activities and methods, and current problems (ecological footprint, carbon footprint, locally-based unearned income) by including out-of-school environments.

Considering the results obtained in the research, environmental education should include global problems such as environmental disasters, sustainability, ecological footprint, carbon footprint, ecological village and locally based rent issues. Environmental education should be prepared at the appropriate level of students in the social studies education curricula and textbooks. In particular, textbooks should include visual, current, interactive and solution-based activities. In order to realize practice-based education in environmental education, the problem of the narrow the schoolyards in densely populated regions should be eliminated and intensive procedures for environmental trips throughout the country should be reduced. In addition, studies can be conducted to improve teachers' self-efficacy for out-of-school educational trips and observations.

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