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Investigation of Life Studies and Social Studies Curriculum in the Context of Sustainable Development Goals

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Abstract. In this research, life studies and social studies course curricula were analyzed according to the sustainability goals of the United Nations Development Program (2016). The research was carried out with the qualitative research method. The research group is the 2018 life studies curriculum and primary school social studies curriculum. The data were accessed using the "document review" technique. Descriptive analysis was used in the analysis of the data. According to the findings, it is the principle of "gapped health and wellbeing, responsible production and consumption" of the sustainability goals that the outcomes of the life studies and social studies course curriculum are the most. It has been determined that the number of outcomes related to goals such as "quality education, gender inequality" in both curriculums is low. The life studies and social studies course aims "to develop the individual's life skills and to support him/her to be a good and responsible citizen. In this context, the results of the research showed that both courses were partially compatible and indirectly related to the UNSO (2016) objectives.

Keywords. Life studies, social studies, curriculum, sustainability, outcomes.

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“Sustainability” is a concept that comes from the Latin word “sustinere” and “to continue, to continue, to exist” in English (Redclift, 2005). The concept of sustainability “has very wide-ranging content. It is seen that sustainability was first mentioned in the "World Nature Charter" document approved by the World Nature Conservation Union in 1982, following its current meaning and purpose (Ruiz-Mallén & Heras, 2020).

While the concept was initially used in life practice to guarantee the supply of natural life and vital resources, to draw attention to nature and environmental problems, and to raise awareness of these problems and their solutions, while sustainability today, along with rapid changes and developments in the rapidly developing science and technology and dynamic world, "economic, social, natural (environmental) dimension." It was stated in the Rio Summit report (UNESCO, 2012) that sustainable education should be included at all levels of education, and that people's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors should be shaped to promote a sustainable lifestyle and thinking (Kahrıman Pamuk & Olgan, 2020). Various disciplines such as sociology, economics, and geography can be used to study the economic, social, and environmental objectives of sustainable development. Due to the inclusion of subjects such as geography, history, economy, sociology, anthropology, psychology, philosophy, politics, and citizenship in the social studies course, it is considered an important subject (Kaya & Tomal, 2011).

Gadotti (2010) described that sustainability represents a better idea and that it is a concept that includes the individual's living dynamically and in harmony with the environment and differences in the environment. The expansion of the scope of sustainability over time has also been instrumental in taking concrete steps for the idea of “sustainable development”. In 2015, the "sustainable development goals called our transforming world" were determined by the "United Nations". These principles, which included a total of 17 goals, are shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (UNDP, 2016).

As seen in Figure 1, priority will be given to efforts to end hunger across the world with the goals of "end poverty and hunger"; Raising awareness, and protecting every individual outcomes disease used by harmful chemicals and air, water, and soil pollution until 2030 with the aim of "healthy and quality life"; With the goal of "quality education", the knowledge needed by all students to advance sustainable development through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promoting a culture of peace and non-violence, world citizenship and recognition of the contribution of cultural diversity and culture to sustainable development, and the outcomes of skills, creating and developing educational opportunities sensitive to children, the disabled, and gender equality, and creating safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all; Defending women and girls everywhere from discrimination, aiming to eliminate gender inequality; To reduce inequalities, it is adopted as a principle that respects differences, eliminates languages, religions, races, genders, and ethnicities, and builds a livable world (UNDP, 2016).

Education plays a key role in achieving the purpose of sustainability principles or goals. In addition, while sustainable development focuses on the sustainable welfare of societies, it does this in the widest, fastest, and most formal way with educational cooperation. According to UNECE (2005), the development of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes of individuals with an innovative perspective on life through education will pave the way for the formation of sustainable societies.

In this context, it is necessary for all stakeholders who live in an integrated system for sustainable development to create awareness toward a common goal. Furthermore, sustainability was

traditionally viewed as an intensification of studies focusing on "environment and economy", while "social-human" structures were lagging (Gökmen, Solak & Ekici, 2019). The holistic and interdisciplinary feature of sustainable development education reveals the importance of social science-based courses. The objectives of the courses based on sites are to provide children with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that are compatible with their own and social lives and can improve their quality of life. In this context, the "life studies" lesson, which is a social studies lesson in which the child receives holistic and interdisciplinary knowledge at the primary school level, and the "social studies" lesson guides the socialization of children from the 4th grade of primary school, the concepts of "sustainable" are introduced to individuals in their own lives and social life for sustainable development. These are the courses that directly or indirectly contain the necessary qualified information and activities. In this direction, the fact that life studies and social studies courses are "holistic and interdisciplinary", and has a broad perspective on "individual, nature, society, values, skills and competencies" necessitated examining their relationship with sustainable development goals. When the literature (Arslan & Yağmur, 2022; Demir, 2023; İşler, 2023) is examined, the studies in which the outcomes of the "social studies, geography, science, visual arts" courses at primary and secondary school levels are examined in terms of sustainable development (Bulut Çakmak, 2015; Demirbaş, 2011; Kayan & Tomal, 2011; Köksal, 2016; Mamur & Köksal, 2016; Özcan & Koştur, 2019; Teksöz, 2014; Yalçın, 2022). According to this study, the outcomes of "life studies and social studies" courses are focused on within the framework of sustainable development. In contrast to previous studies, the study analyzed social studies and life studies teaching programs, examining what is included in sustainability concepts and their development in social studies lessons. In a social studies lesson, children are taught basic information before proceeding to a social studies lesson. In this respect, we hoped that the results will contribute to the disciplines of life studies and social studies since the study is an original evaluation that will be made through life studies and social studies courses. Based on these considerations, the purpose of this research is to examine the outcomes of 2018 life studies and primary school 4th-grade social studies curricula in the context of "Sustainable Development Goals" determined by UNDP (2016). The sub-objectives of the research are listed as follows:

1. What are the outcomes related to the sustainable development goals in the 2018 Life studies curriculum?
2. What are the outcomes related to the sustainable development goals in the 2018 Social Studies (4th grade) curriculum?

Method

The research was conducted using the basic qualitative research method. Qualitative research is obliged to present events and facts without distorting reality; events and phenomena are not detached from their reality or context, and they are tried to be preserved as they were formed (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Data Sources

The data sources of the research are primary school (1, 2, 3rd grade) Life Studies and Primary School 4th grade Social Studies program (MEB, 2018). In the selection of the data sources of the research, the "social-human" field of the concept of sustainable development was focused on, and for this purpose, the "purposive sampling" method was preferred in the selection of the data sources.

The units and themes of the data sources are as follows:

Life Studies curriculum (1,2 and 3rd grade)

- Life in Our School
- Life in Our House
- Safe Life
- Life in Our Country
- Life in Nature

Social Studies curriculum for 4th Grade

- Individual and Society
- Culture and Heritage
- People, Places and Environments
- Science, Technology and Society
- Production, Distribution and Consumption
- Active Citizenship
- Global Connections

Data Collection Tools

The data of the research were collected by document analysis technique. Document review is a systematic process used to examine or evaluate documents prepared in printed or electronic media (Bowen, 2009).

The data collection stages are as follows;

1. First, the life studies and social studies curriculums were accessed from the official website of the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Turkey, which is presented in print and electronically.
2. Secondly, the 17 sustainable development goals determined by the United Nations Development Program (2016) were accessed from the official website <https://turkiye.un.org/tr/sdgs>.
3. The outcomes were examined according to the UNDP goals (2016).

Data Analysis

The data of the research were analyzed by descriptive and content analysis methods. In the content analysis, the 'coding according to predetermined concepts' suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990) was preferred, and the relevant outcomes were divided into codes and themes in line with the determined criteria. While performing data analysis, UNDP (2016) sustainable development goals were taken as criteria.

1. Firstly, the analysis started with the life studies curriculum. UNDP (2016) sustainable development goals content has been transferred to an excel file as in Figure 1.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
UNSDG (2016)							
"Sustainable Development Principles"							
1	"No Poverty"	HB.2.2.6.	Investigates the contribution of the economical use of resources at home to the family budget.				
. At school, he spends his money consciously in line with his needs.							
While meeting his wishes and needs, he takes care to protect his own and his family's budget.							
2	"Zero Hunger"	He is sensitive to people around him who need help.					
Participates in social responsibility projects for the problems of people from different cultures living in our country.							
Will be willing to participate in social assistance and solidarity activities at school.							
3	"Good Health and Well-being"	.He regularly takes care of himself.					
He realizes the precautions he should take to protect his health.							
He chooses foods and drinks that are beneficial for his health.							
It is fed following the meals and balanced throughout the day.							
He prepares food for himself, observing the rules of cleanliness.							
While using mass media, he takes care to protect his physical health.							
4	Realizes the relationship between healthy growth and development and personal care, sports, sleep, and nutrition.						
Prepares a list of meals suitable for a balanced diet							

Figure 2. Data Analysis Contents.

- Then, the outcomes of the life studies curriculum were listed in order of the unit, and the "goals and outcomes" that could be related and serve the same purpose were matched. For example, according to the UNDP (2016) principles, the "responsible production and consumption" target content is "LS.2.1.6. The outcomes of "Takes care in using school resources and belongings" is matched. The same analysis was made in the social studies curriculum and the results of the analyses were presented as a frequency table.

Validity and Reliability

Regarding the reliability of this study, Miles and Huberman's (1994) "encoder reliability formula (Reliability = Consensus / (Agreement + Disagreement)) was used. The research was conducted with the help of a social studies teacher who completed his PhD in a public school. The reliability between the encoder and researchers for the first sub-goal of the study was (Reliability= 47/(47+5)= 0.90).The encoder for the second sub-goal of the study" was used, and the reliability among researchers was. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the research is considered reliable when the reliability agreement is 70% or higher.

Results

Sustainable Development in Life Studies Curriculum Outcomes

The outcomes related to the sustainable development goals in the life studies course curriculum are shown in Table 1.

Table 1.

Life Studies Course Curriculum

	“Sustainable Development Principles”	Outcomes No	f
1	“No Poverty”	<p>LS.2.2.6. Investigates the contribution of the economical use of resources at home to the family budget.</p> <p>LS.2.1.11. At school, he spends his money consciously in line with his needs.</p> <p>LS.3.2.8. While meeting his wishes and needs, he takes care to protect his own and his family's budget.</p>	3
2	“Zero Hunger”	<p>LS.2.2.7. He is sensitive to people around him who need help.</p> <p>LS.3.5.7. Participates in social responsibility projects for the problems of people from different cultures living in our country.</p> <p>LS.3.1.7. Will be willing to participate in social assistance and solidarity activities at school.</p>	3
3	“Good Health and Well-being”	<p>LS.1.3.1. He regularly takes care of himself.</p> <p>LS.1.3.2. He realizes the precautions he should take to protect his health.</p> <p>LS.1.3.3. He chooses foods and drinks that are beneficial for his health.</p> <p>LS.1.3.4. It is fed following the meals and balanced throughout the day.</p> <p>LS.1.3.5. He prepares food for himself, observing the rules of cleanliness.</p> <p>LS.1.3.7. While using mass media, he takes care to protect his physical health.</p> <p>Realizes the relationship between healthy growth and development and personal care, sports, sleep, and nutrition.</p>	15

		LS.2.3.2. Prepares a list of meals suitable for a balanced diet	
		LS.2.3.6. Realizes the effects of seasonal fruit and vegetable consumption on human health.	
		LS.3.6.2. Researches the growing conditions of fruits and vegetables.	
		LS.2.3.7. Chooses clothes suitable for seasonal conditions.	
		LS.1.1.8. Develops the habit of using the toilet and cleaning.	
		LS.2.3.4. Explain the necessity of cleaning for a healthy life.	
		LS.3.3.5. To protect the health of himself and the community, he obeys the rules of cleanliness and hygiene in common areas.	
		LS.3.3.3. It is fed seasonal foods to maintain its health.	
		LS.3.3.4. Adequate and balanced nutrition is required to maintain health.	
4	“Quality Education”	LS.3.1.6. Recognizes the individual and social contributions of the school.	1
5	“Gender Equality”		-
6	“Clean Water and Sanitation”		-
7	“Affordable and Clean Energy”		-
8	“Decent Work and Economic Growth”		-
9	“Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure”		-
10	“Reduced Inequality”	LS.1.5.4. In our country, he realizes that he lives together with people from different cultures. LS.1.1.2. Distinguish the similarities and differences between himself and his peers. LS.2.1.2. Respects individual differences. LS.2.5.7. It respects the lifestyles and habits of people from different cultures living in our country. LS.3.1.8. Expresses their wishes and needs regarding the school in a democratic way in the school environment.	5

*f: Frequency

As seen in Table 1, the order of the outcomes related to the "sustainable development goals" in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd-grade outcomes of the life studies curriculum is as follows: It is seen that the outcomes are mostly related to the goal of "health and quality life" (f=15). It is followed, in descending order, by "responsible production and consumption" (f=12); "climate action" (f=7) goals; "life on land, reducing inequalities (f=5); "no poverty, end hunger" (f=3); "quality education" (f=1).

In Figure 3, 4, and 5; sample activities that include the outcomes of the Sustainability Development Goals from the Life studies textbooks are given.



Figure 3. Primary School 3rd-Grade Life Studies Textbook (Çelikbaş, Gürel, & Özcan, 2018, p. 78).

As seen in Figure 3, there is content related to more than one topic at the event "sustainable development" principle. It is clear that this event, regarding the conscious use of resources and the importance of cleanliness, is related to the goals under the headings of "Good Health and well-being, sustainable societies" according to the UNDP (2016) goals.



Compare the correct and incorrect behaviors by examining the images below. What are our responsibilities to keep our classroom clean?

Figure 4. Primary School 3rd-Grade Life Studies Textbook (Çelikbaş et al., 2018, p. 87).

As seen in Figure 4, the activity is related to the goal of “Good health and well-being” based on environmental awareness and responsibility values.



We can find meals that our mother can make with stale bread to avoid wasting bread at home...

– Evet, evimizdeki ekmeğin israfını önlemek için annemin bayat ekmeklerle yapabileceği yemek tarifleri bulabiliriz.

Annesi:

– Defne önerin çok güzel. Böylece evimizde ekmeğin israfını önlemiş oluruz. Bununla beraber diğer kaynakları da tasarruflu kullanmalıyız. Çamaşır ve bulaşık makinelerini tam dolu olarak çalıştırsam elektrik ve sudan tasarruf etmiş oluruz.

Babası:

– Ben de lambaları tasarruflu ampullerle değiştirmeli ve damlatan muslukları en kısa sürede tamir etmeliyim.

Figure 5. Primary School 3rd-Grade Life Studies Textbook (Çelikbaş et al., 2018, p. 59).

In Figure 5, the activity includes information about “saving” and efficient and conscious use of resources. It can be stated that the event is related to the principle of “responsible production, consumption and no poverty”, one of the UNDP (2016) goals.



Research the production activities located near you. Plan a trip with your teacher.

What production activities are there in your neighborhood? Please mark it.

Figure 6. Primary School 2nd-Grade Life Studies Textbook (Dokumacı, Özdemir-Gök, and Dokumacı, 2018, p. 201).

In Figure 6, there is a trip event in which the production activities in our country are reflected on-site. It can be stated that the event is related to the principle of “responsible production, consumption and no poverty” from the UNDP (2016) goals.

Sustainable Development in Social Studies Curriculum Outcomes

The outcomes related to the sustainable development goals in the social studies course curriculum are shown in Table 2.

Table 2.

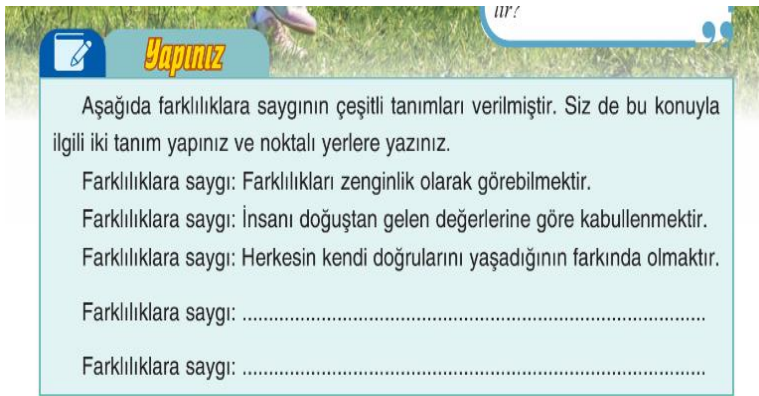
Social Studies Course Curriculum

	<i>“Sustainable Development Principles”</i>	<i>Outcomes No</i>	<i>f</i>
1	“No Poverty”	SS.4.5.4. Creates a sample budget of its own. SS.4.5.5. It uses the resources around it without wasting them.	2
2	“Zero Hunger”	-	-
3	“Gender Equality”	-	-
4	“Clean Water and Sanitation”	-	-
5	“Affordable and Clean Energy”	-	-
6	“Decent Work and Economic Growth”	-	-
7	“Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure”	-	-
8	“Gender Equality”	-	-

9	“Clean Water and Sanitation”	-	-
10	“Reduced Inequality”	SS.4.1.4. He puts himself in the shoes of other individuals with different characteristics. SS.4.1.5. Respect the different characteristics of other individuals. SS.4.7.3. Compares the cultural elements of different countries with the cultural elements of our country. SS.4.7.4. Respect different cultures.	4
11	“Responsible Consumption and Production”	SS.4.3.6. Makes necessary preparations for natural disasters. SS.4.6.1. He gives examples of the rights he has as a child. SS.4.6.4. Explain the relationship between the independence of his country and individual freedom	3
12	“Climate Action”	SS.4.4.5. Uses technological products without harming himself, others, and nature. SS.4.5.2. Recognizes the main economic activities in his family and close environment. SS.4.5.1. Makes conscious choices between the two by distinguishing between wants and needs. SS.4.5.3. Exhibits conscious consumer behavior as a responsible individual.	4
13	“Life Below Water”	SS.4.3.4. Observing the weather events occurring around him, he transfers his findings to illustrated graphics. SS.4.3.6. Makes necessary preparations for natural disasters.	2
14	“Life on Land”	-	-
15	“Peace and Justice Strong Institutions”	SS.4.3.3. Distinguish the natural and human elements in the living environment.	1
16	“Partnerships to achieve the Goal”	-	-
17	“Responsible Consumption and Production”	-	-

*f: Frequency

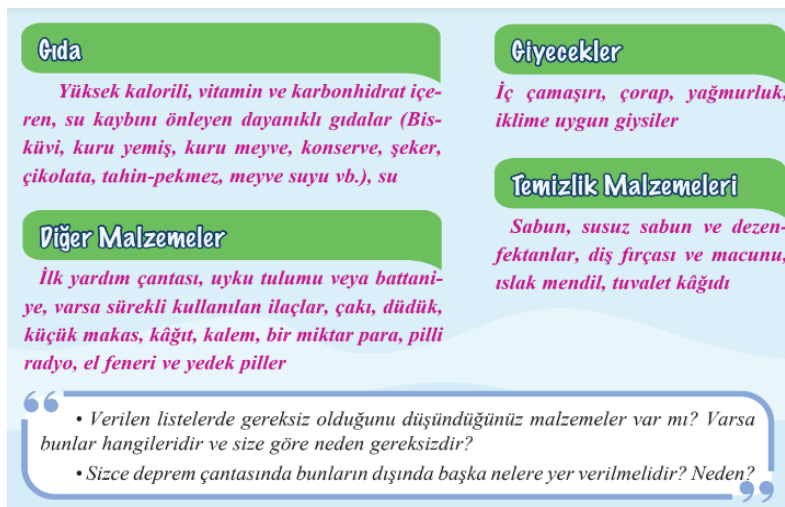
As seen in Table 2, in the case of primary school 4th grade Social Studies curriculum outcomes being related to sustainable development goals, the outcomes related to the goals of "responsible production and consumption and reducing inequalities" (f=4) come first. It was followed by the outcomes of "sustainable cities and societies" (f=3), respectively. It was ranked last concerning the goals of "end poverty and climate action (f=2) and "life on land" (f=1). In Figure 7, 8, and 9; sample activities that include outcomes related to sustainable development goals from social studies textbooks are given.



Different definitions of respect for differences are given below. Make two definitions about respect for differences and write them in the blanks.

Figure 7. Primary School 4th-Grade Social Studies Textbook (Tüysüz, 2018, p. 30).

In the activity shown in Figure 7, various definitions of the value of "respect for differences" were made and the students were asked to continue. This event coincides with the UNDP (2016) "reducing inequalities" goals.




What else do you think could be in the earthquake kit?

Figure 8. Primary School 4th-Grade Social Studies Textbook (Tüysüz, 2018, p. 86).


As seen in Figure 8, the activity is aimed at preparing earthquake bags. The students are asked what should be in the earthquake kit and what could be things that are not needed. It can be stated that the event is related to the UNDP (2016) “sustainable cities and societies” goal.

ZARAR VERMEDEN KULLANALIM.

 “Teknolojik ürünleri kullanırken kendimize, başkalarına ve doğaya zarar verebiliriz.” diyen bir kişi bu sözüne kanıt olarak hangi durumları örnek gösterebilir?

Teknolojik ürünlerin neredeyse tamamı elektrikle çalıştığı için etrafa insan sağlığına zararlı elektromanyetik dalgalar yayıyor. Özellikle cep telefonları, bilgisayarlar, kablosuz modem, kulaklık, fare ve klavyeler ile uzaktan kumandaların yaydıkları elektronik dalgalar bizleri olumsuz etkiliyor. Örneğin cep telefonları beyin ısını artırarak beyin hücrelerimizin ölmesine ve kulağımızın zarar görmesine yol açabiliyor. Bu da duyma kayıpları ve denge bozuklukları gibi ciddi sağlık sorunlarını ortaya çıkarabiliyor.

Teknoloji firmaları ürettikleri ürünlerin yanlış kullanımını önlemek amacıyla çeşitli önlemler alır. Bu önlemlerin başında kullanım kılavuzları gelir. Bunun içindir ki kullanıcılar yeni bir teknolojik ürün aldıklarında ilk iş olarak o ürünün kullanım kılavuzunu incelemelidir. Aşağıda bir cep telefonunun kullanım kılavuzundan alınmış bazı bölümler görüyorsunuz.



Let's use it without harm

A person who says that we can harm ourselves, our environment and nature while using technology products can give an example of this statement as evidence?

Figure 9. Primary School 4th-Grade Social Studies Textbook (Tüysüz, 2018, p. 114).

As seen in Figure 9, the negative situations that may arise from the use of efficiency technology outside its purpose are explained. Particular attention was paid to the harm it can cause to humans and nature. In this respect, it is clear that the event is in line with the UNDP (2016) “responsible production and consumption” goals.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this research, the relationship with the UN sustainability goals was analyzed based on the outcomes of life studies and social studies courses. The first findings of the study indicate that the outcomes of the life studies course are quantitatively higher with the sustainable development goals than the outcomes of the 4th-grade social studies course. This finding reached in the study may be because the study is parallel with the quantity of the sample group. Because life studies course is given in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd class; in the social studies course, only the outcomes of the 4th grade were analyzed. In addition to this, it was observed that there are outcomes that are indirectly related to sustainable development goals in life studies course outcomes. In addition, it was observed that the outcomes compatible with the sustainability "responsible production and consumption" goals in the life studies course curriculum were the most. However, it has been observed that there is no direct or indirect gain related to goals such as “gender inequality, decent work, and economic growth”. This

finding of the research supports the results obtained from the study of Dinçol-Özgür (2020), which evaluated primary education programs according to the UN 2030 goals.

Findings related to the second sub-purpose of the study, it has been determined that the outcomes related to the objectives of "responsible production and consumption and reducing inequalities", such as the results achieved in the life studies lesson, are in the first place in the primary school 4th-grade social studies lesson outcomes. This finding of the study coincides with the findings of Kaya and Tomal (2011) in their study. However, while there are outcomes related to the goal of "reducing inequalities", no outcomes have been found regarding the principle of "gender inequality". In addition, the social studies course is goal-based by its nature. When evaluated in this context, the results of the research show that primary school 4th-grade social studies outcomes are partially indirectly related to the UN sustainability goals, but directly or indirectly supporting objectives such as "quality education, decent work, and economic growth, peace, justice, and strong institutions" can be stated as necessary. When evaluated in this context, life studies and social studies courses can be considered as courses that should address sustainability goals in a "social dimension".

It is essential that these courses, which have the aim of "raising responsible and good citizens" as their main objectives, convey the activities that support the social dimension of sustainability goals to the students. This social dimension, of course, becomes active with how social and life studies lessons are integrated into the classroom rather than the curriculum. According to the examples given from the textbooks to support the findings of this research, life studies and social studies lessons were reflected in activities such as sustainable development goals in the curriculum. Ellien et al. (2018) stated in their studies that practices are more effective in integrating sustainable topics and ways of thinking into the classroom and in realizing their sustainability goals. In literature studies (Arslan & Yağmur, 2022; Demir, 2023; İşler, 2023) it was found that teachers are not sufficiently knowledgeable about sustainability. Teachers should be trained about this issue since they implement the curriculum.

Recommendations

In this study, the outcomes of life studies and social studies courses, the main objectives of which are "to give students life skills" and "to raise good citizens", were examined in terms of UN sustainable development goals. The limitation of the research is the data obtained from the primary school life science and primary school 4th grade social studies curriculum outputs. Based on these limitations, it can be said that the life studies and social studies course curricula that adopt an

interdisciplinary teaching approach are partially compatible with the sustainability goals, based on the overall research. In light of the results of the research, it has been suggested to curriculum developers that the outcomes can be presented about more than one goal and that sustainability as an interdisciplinary education can be transferred to the students in a richer way.

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Conflict of Interest

It has been reported by the authors that there is no conflict of interests.

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Ethical Standards

We have carried out the research within the framework of the Helsinki Declaration.

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