



INVESTIGATING THE EFFECT OF EDUCATION GIVEN WITH CURRENT EVENTS ON STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to examine the effect of environmental education with current events on attitudes towards the environment in the third grade science course in primary school. Primary School Environmental Attitude Scale and semi-structured interview form were used to collect the data. In this study, exploratory sequential mixed design, one of the mixed design types, was used. Independent groups t-test, one of the parametric test methods, was used to analyse the quantitative data of the research. Paired groups t-test was used to test whether the scores obtained from two related samples differed significantly from each other and qualitative data were analysed using descriptive analysis method. In the research findings, it was observed that there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the students' attitudes towards the environment and that there were positive developments in expressing their thoughts about the environment.

Key words: environmental education, primary school students, attitude towards environment.

1. Introduction

In recent years, as a result of effects such as the development of technology, the growth of industry and the increase in urbanisation, economic needs and demographic changes have made individuals more insensitive and unconscious towards nature. Pollution, ozone depletion, acid rain, global warming, depletion of natural resources, overpopulation, waste disposal, deforestation, desertification and loss of biodiversity are among the various processes that can be said to cause environmental problems on a global scale (World Health Organization, 1998). It is seen that human activities are the main cause of environmental problems such as global warming, air pollution, noise and decrease in biodiversity (Vlek & Steg, 2007). Individuals who have environmental awareness or who are aware of the impact of environmental problems on the society and themselves are expected to act environmentally sensitive while living their lives (Gadenne et al., 2009).

Attitude towards the environment can be defined as all positive or negative attitudes and thoughts that people show towards behaviours that are beneficial to the environment, such as fears, anger, restlessness, value judgements and readiness to solve environmental problems (Erten, 2005). Based on the definition, it is understood that positive behaviours should be emphasised in order to develop positive attitudes towards the environment.

The first years of an individual's life have an important place in gaining lifelong positive experiences about the environment (Sarı, 2022; Stevenson, 2007). It is important to start environmental education at an early age and to raise individuals with positive attitudes towards environmental problems for the future. For this reason, environmental education should start in primary school years. Therefore, environmental education given in schools is important for students to recognise environmental problems, improve the environment and maintain positive attitudes from the early stages of primary school (Ramsey, 1993).

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1.1. Environmental Education

Environmental education is an education that enables individuals to recognise attitudes, values and concepts related to the environment and provides individuals with skills, knowledge, values and experience to solve problems such as climate change, water scarcity, degradation of the earth and species decline in order to transfer a healthy and clean environment to future generations (Çetin et al., 2017; Kanyimba, 2014). It is seen as a lifelong interdisciplinary approach that aims to develop a world population with personal and social duties and responsibilities (Moseley, 2000; Semerjian et al., 2004). The main purpose of environmental education is to increase environmental awareness in the society, to provide individuals with knowledge, skills and values related to the environment, to help individuals exhibit positive attitudes and behaviours towards the environment (Çildam, 2022; Haktanır, 2007; Tidball & Krasny, 2010). One of the most important aims is to raise awareness about the environment and ensure active participation (Demir & Yalçın, 2014).

Education has always been the best way to solve environmental problems and cope with challenges (Marpa, 2020). UNESCO states that new perspectives are needed in environmental education in terms of environmental attitudes, skills, expertise, understanding and behaviour at primary, secondary and university levels.

The use of strategies that increase environmental awareness in environmental education in schools is effective (Hadzigeorgiou & Skoumios, 2013). It is seen that individuals who examine real-world problems in environmental education understand environmental problems better, have high motivation, can produce solutions to environmental problems and are active in the process (Demssie et al., 2022). In this context, the importance of interactions with the natural environment is emphasised in order to develop positive behaviours towards the environment (Christine et al., 1997). According to Edwards (2013) traditional transmission methods in environmental education cannot provide this interaction. Current events are one of the teaching methods in which students can experience environmental problems by doing and living.

1.2. Environmental Education with Current Events

It is stated that using current events in teaching is important. Using current events in the classroom environment helps students gain skills in many subjects. These skills can be listed as follows: reading news materials, creating study resources with updated material, distinguish between important and less important events, to take a certain approach to problems based on knowledge and critical evaluation of information, predicting the results that may occur in the light of existing developments, linking the past and the future, participation in social actions, develop critical thinking and problem solving skills, understanding the difference between fact and opinion and making judgement, objectivity, recognise propaganda, distorted news (Kaltsounis, 1987; Michaels & Garcia, 1996; Paykoç, 1987; Street, 2002).

Students learn more when they take part in different activities that make them think and allow them to apply emotional approaches (Milkova et al., 2015). Current events are defined as events that are important for the society and are on the agenda. With the use of current events in courses, students gain skills such as observing, asking questions, researching information and discussing with group mates. It is accepted that case studies, experiments, field studies, excursions, simulations, discussions, projects, role-playing and guided questioning can be given as examples of methods that can be used in environmental education (Markaki, 2014). From this point of view, it would be more useful to use different methods together while doing environmental education based on a certain method. This will make the learning-teaching process more efficient.

When the literature was scanned, very few studies on the use of current events were found in the courses. For example, Anderman & Johnston (1994) examined the relationship between students' goals, self-efficacy beliefs and news research behavior and current factual information. Also articles on environmental studies are also available in the literature (Bacakoğlu & Taş, 2020; Ballantyne & Packer, 2002; Eagles & Demare, 1999; Fisman, 2005; Wilson, 1996).

The use of teaching in primary school science course with current events and the emergence of its effectiveness are the motivation sources of this study. This research aims to examine the

environmental impact of environmental education through current events in elementary school in the third-grade science in class. For this general purpose, the research's subordinate objectives are as follows:

1. Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the students who received environmental education with current events in the third grade science course?
2. Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of students' attitudes towards the environment at the end of environmental education with current events in the third grade science course according to gender variable?
3. Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of students' attitudes towards the environment at the end of environmental education with current events in the third grade science course?

2. Method

This study aims to reveal the effect of environmental education supported by current events on students' attitudes towards the environment in the third grade science course. This study was designed as an exploratory sequential mixed design in which both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used. In the first stage of the study, quantitative data were collected. In the second stage, qualitative data were collected and analysed based on the literature in line with the quantitative findings (Creswell & Clark, 2015). In the quantitative part of this study, a one-group pre-test post-test experimental design was used. The study was carried out with the idea of revealing the extent of the effect of the method used in the research on the attitude towards the environment. Since it was not aimed to compare the current event method with another teaching method, a single group study was conducted and the results were investigated. Since the main purpose was to observe the effects of the current situation within the scope of an intervention programme in a classroom in which one of the researchers was involved, it was not necessary to select a control group.

As a result of the research, a difference was revealed by comparing the pre-test and post-test findings. In order to present the results obtained from the quantitative data of the study more clearly and understandably, the findings were supported by student interviews. It is stated that the use of qualitative approaches in research will add depth, emotion and different perspectives to the quantitative data obtained (Baltacı, 2019).

2.1. Universe Sample

Considering the practitioner role of the researcher in the study and the research method that requires both qualitative and quantitative data at the same time, convenience sampling was preferred to collect the data easily. When selecting the appropriate sample for the purpose, not the number (quantity) of individuals, but their quality and knowledge of the subject were taken into consideration.

This study was conducted in the science classrooms of a primary school in Istanbul with 39 third grade students. The first researcher worked with the students in the class where she worked as a classroom teacher. Four of the students in this class were excluded from the sample because they were foreign nationals and did not have sufficient language skills.

2.2. Data Collection

In this study, Primary School Environmental Attitude Scale developed by Artvinli & Demir (2018) was used to reveal students' attitudes towards the environment. For Primary School Environmental Attitude scale, the reliability values of the sub-dimensions and the entire scale are; The reliability value of the Positive Environmental Behaviors dimension is ,94 the reliability value of the Environmental Knowledge and Awareness dimension is ,75 the reliability value of the Negative Environmental Behaviors dimension is ,71 and the Cronbach Alpha internal reliability coefficient of Primary School Environmental Attitude scale is 0,93 for the entire scale. When the literature is examined, a scale reliability coefficient of 0.80 or higher is considered sufficient for the reliability of

test scores (Büyüköztürk et al., 2016; Tezbaşaran, 1996). It was decided that this scale, which was valid and reliable, was suitable for the questions of the research. In this context, this scale was used to determine students' attitudes towards the environment before and after the learning process with current events.

A semi-structured interview form was used as a qualitative data collection tool. The form contains four open-ended questions. Expert opinions were obtained after the questions were prepared. Interviews were conducted by the first researcher before and after the training. In order to reveal different perspectives, interviews were conducted with a total of six students, two low achievers, two medium achievers and two high achievers, who were determined based on the grades of the previous semester. Interviews were conducted before and after the application. In the interviews, semi-structured open-ended questions were asked to the students. The shortest interview lasted seven minutes and the longest interview lasted twelve minutes. The interviews were audio-recorded and then the voice recordings were transcribed.

2.3. Data Collection Process

In the study, teaching activities with current events were designed to be implemented in a four-week period of three hours for 'Me and My Environment' course in science education. These activities were integrated with current events small and large group discussions. In this planning process, current events suitable for the age group and readiness of the students were selected by the researchers. After this planning process, the events determined under the guidance of the researcher were tested on a small group. Events that received effective feedback from the preliminary study were used. Events that did not yield efficiency were not used. Before the implementation process, a pre-test was conducted. The researcher made the necessary explanations to the students before distributing the scale. He explained the points to be considered during scoring. The research was conducted on a voluntary basis. Before the application, the activities to be carried out in the learning process were planned by taking advantage of the opinions of an expert lecturer and three field experts in the field of classroom education, and the validity and reliability of the interview questions with the students were ensured.

Before moving on to the learning process, the topics covered by environmental education in Turkey were determined: "Protecting environmental health and preventing environmental pollution, Recycling and zero waste awareness, Waste of resources in food and food production process, Climate change, Environmental literacy, Improving the environment (Dere & Çinikaya, 2023). The subjects to be studied in the courses and the methods and techniques to be used in the learning process were determined. These subjects, methods and techniques are given in Table 1 below:

Table 1. *Subjects to be covered in the learning-teaching process and methods and techniques to be used*

Weeks	Subjects	Methods and Techniques Used
1. week	- The roles of producers, consumers and decomposers on natural balance - Endangered species	- Textbooks, encyclopaedias, newspapers, magazines, posters, cartoons and pictures - Role play - Current events with educational value
2. week	- Current environmental problems - Problems related to settlement and population	- Our home is the world game, - Round table discussion - Current events with educational value
3. week	- Problems related to global warming climate change - Recycling and recovery	- Gamification of events in the news - Current events with educational value
4. week	- Sustainable use of resources - Climate change	- Educational films - Preparing a newsletter column - Current events with educational value

Environmental education with current events lasted twelve lesson hours. At the beginning of the lesson, the approach of using current events was explained to the students. Recent current events related to the environment were selected from educational and reliable sources (newspaper reports, events from the internet). Through small and large group discussions, students were encouraged to analyse current events objectively. They were asked to discuss with their group mates to find out the

name of the event in the current events, the creatures affected by the event, where the event took place and which problem was described in the event. The groups used a group worksheet to guide them in discussing the events. Each subgroup was given a group worksheet and the students worked together to complete it. These worksheets were then posted on the notice board. While analysing current events, students used their thinking and study skills based on information gathering, interpretation, evaluation and reporting (Michaelis & Garcia, 1996). Thus, environmental education was not only done through verbal information transfer, but also students were enabled to develop 'the skills of independently producing, using, evaluating and exploring information' (Romano, 1992). They also enacted some current events using the role-playing technique. In this way, they temporarily entered the identities of living beings affected by current events and contributed to their empathy with them.

2.4. Analysis of Data

Before evaluating the quantitative findings obtained from the research, it is necessary to determine whether the collected data will be analyzed with parametric or non-parametric tests. As a result of testing the data distribution normality of the scales; pre-test environmental attitude scale kurtosis value (-.341) and skewness value (-.596) and post-test environmental attitude scale kurtosis value (-1.084) and skewness value (.752) were calculated. In order for the research data to have a normal distribution, it is sufficient for the kurtosis and skewness values to be between +1.5 and -1.5 (Tabachnick et al., 2013). After these results, the findings of the research were examined with parametric test methods. Considering these results, independent (unrelated) groups t test, one of the parametric test methods, was used to analyze the environmental attitude pre-test and post-test results of the students participating in the research. Paired groups t test was used to test whether scores from two related samples differed significantly from each other. Regarding the reliability of this study, Miles & Huberman's (1994) coder reliability formula was used. Two researchers made this evaluation by coding among themselves. The reliability between researchers was 0.94 (higher than 0.70). This result reveals that the data collection tool used in this study is reliable. Descriptive analysis was used to explain the qualitative data obtained from the interviews. The obtained data was sorted, reduced, labeled and classified. Then, the information in the tables was explained with students' sentences and reported.

3. Findings

3.1. Findings related to students' scores from the Environmental Attitude Scale

The first question of the research was "Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the students who received environmental education with current events in the third grade science course?" has created. Descriptive statistics resulting from the analysis conducted in this direction are given in Table 2.

	Variables	N	min	max	M	SD	t	p
Pre-test	Environmental Attitude	39	79	125	104.3	12.1	1.485	.169
	Positive Environmental Behaviors	39	47	81	67.6	8.6		
	Environmental Information Awareness	39	11	29	21.9	3.4		
	Negative Environmental Behaviors	39	7	18	14.8	3		
Post-test	Environmental Attitude	39	100	129	120	7.1	8.299	.000
	Positive Environmental Behaviors	39	65	81	77.3	4.1		
	Environmental Information Awareness	39	20	30	25.8	2.7		
	Negative Environmental Behaviors	39	11	18	16.8	1.8		

Table 2. Descriptive statistics regarding the scores students received from Environmental Attitude Scale

Analysis results show that there is no statistically significant difference between the pre-test averages of the groups. This finding indicates that the environmental attitude scores of male and female students were equal to each other before the application. In order to test the effectiveness of the experiment, the

related samples t test was used to check whether there was a significant difference between the students' pre-test and post-test mean scores. The findings regarding the pre-test and post-test scores they received from the environmental attitude scale are given in Table 3.

Table 3. *Related samples t test analysis of students' environmental pre-test and post-test scores*

	N	M	SD	Df	t	P
Pre-test	39	104.3	12.1	38	-8.299	.000
Post-test	39	120	7.1			

At the results, it is seen that there is a statistically significant difference in terms of environmental pre-test and post-test average scores ($t=-8.299$, $p<.05$).

3.2. Evaluation of Students' Scores from Environmental Attitude Scale According to Gender Variable

The second question of the research was "Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of students' attitudes towards the environment at the end of environmental education with current events in the third grade science course according to gender variable?" has created. Analyzes regarding whether there is a significant difference in students' attitude scores towards the environment according to the gender variable are given in Table 4.

Table 4. *Independent (unrelated) groups t test post-test results according to the gender of the students*

Variables	N	M	SD	Df	t	P
Male	19	119.8	7.6	37	.200	.646
Female	20	120.3	6.8			

Analysis results show that there is no statistically significant difference between the groups' post-test mean scores ($t=.200$, $p>.05$). These findings reveal that there is no significant difference in the environmental attitudes of male and female students after the application.

3.3. Findings Related to Student Views on Environment and Learning Process

The third aim of this study was to find an answer to the question "Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of students' thinking about the environment at the end of environmental education with current events in the third grade science course?". The following question was asked to the students in order to get their views on the use of current events: "How did you feel while examining current events?" and "Were you able to participate in the courses and express your ideas freely?" The statistics of the students' views on the learning process are given in Table 5.

Table 5. *Student views on the process of learning with current events*

Results	Number of repetitions (End)
I find it fun to draw pictures of current events	6
Learning new information	3
Finding it nice to work in a group	2
Writing articles together	2
Feeling upset when not being listened to	2

In line with the opinions of the students, the most prominent student opinions about the learning process of using current events in the science course were that it was fun ($f=5$) and that they learnt new information ($f=3$). The end-interview answers of some students about the learning process of using current events in science course are given below:

Student 2–End: It was like we were uniting with my friends. After reading the events, new ideas came to our minds. We were listening to each other first and then writing. That was nice. (Boy)

Student 1–End: It went very well, I felt happy. I felt good in the group. One of my friends... was busy with other things. I was sad. Sometimes they didn't listen to me and I was upset about that. (Girl)

The following question was asked to the students in order to get their opinions on the use of current events: "What would you say about science courses in which we analyse current events? Can you explain what you think considering the activities we have done?". Descriptive statistics of students' views on the use of current events in science courses are given in Table 6.

Table 6. Justifications obtained from students' opinions about the use of current events

Justifications	Number of repetitions (End)
Because its fun	5
Because we work with a group	3
Because it gives different information	2

In line with student opinions, among the reasons obtained from student interviews regarding the use of current events in the science course, the prominent views are that it is fun ($f=5$) and because we work in groups ($f=3$). Some students' end-interview answers to the use of current events in the science course are given below:

Student 3– End: I think it might be fun. Sometimes we don't know about current events. It might be good. We can process the courses like this. (Boy)

Student 4– End: Let's do courses like this. Let's find and bring other news. Bring it too. It was a good course. We can operate like this. We attended the lecture. We had fun. We were a group together. (Girl)

In order to get students' views on environmental problems, the question "Can you share with me three environmental problems that you remember from the current events we have analysed?" was asked to the students. The statistics of the students' views on environmental problems are given in Table 7.

Table 7. Student views on environmental problems

Results	Number of repetitions (End)
Environmental pollution	5
Damages to living things	3
Global warming	2
Natural disasters	2

Environmental pollution ($f=5$), damages to living things ($f=3$) and global warming ($f=2$) are the prominent views among the answers given for environmental problems in line with student opinions. The end-interview answers of some students about environmental problems are given below:

Student 1- End: When global warming happens, the world gets very hot. There were news about harming animals, forest fires, environmental pollution, air pollution and living things. (Girl)

Student 2- End: For example, we learnt new things about animals. We learnt about not harming them. There was news about forest fires. We learnt about lizards. There was an avalanche somewhere. There was a plant and there were people making fuel with it (environmentally friendly fuel project). There was also a news item about TEMA. They protect the environment. (Boy)

In order to get students' views on the solution of environmental problems, the question “What can we do to solve environmental problems in current events? Can you explain?” question was asked. Descriptive statistics of students' views on the solution of environmental problems are given in Table 8.

Table 8. *Students' views on the solution of environmental problem*

Results	Number of repetitions (End)
We should not throw garbage on the ground.	5
People can be warned by putting up signs.	3
We must protect the creatures around us.	2
There may be recycling bins and trash cans.	2
Chimneys can be installed in factories.	2
Electric cars can be used.	2

“We should not throw rubbish on the ground.” (f=5) and “People can be warned by putting up signs.” (f=3) the prominent opinions among the findings obtained from the interviews regarding the solution of environmental problems. The end-interview responses of some students regarding the solution of environmental problems are given below:

Student 5- End: We should not throw rubbish on the ground. There can be recycling bins and rubbish bins. The world should not be polluted, our environment should remain clean. It would also be good for plants and living things. We should not kill lizards, they have lives like us. (Girl)

Student 6- End: When we see rubbish on the ground, we can pick it up even if someone else throws rubbish on the ground. We should protect the animals and plants around us. Signs can be put up. (Boy)

4. Discussion

In this study, it was aimed to reveal the effect of environmental education given to third grade primary school students with current events in science course on their attitude towards the environment. For this purpose, an experimental research was conducted. Exploratory sequential mixed design was used in the study. In order to make the quantitative data more understandable, it was supported by interview method from qualitative research techniques. The findings of the analysis and sub-problems were reported in a certain order.

In this study, in which the effects of environmental education given with current events in science course on primary school third grade students were examined in detail, important results were reached. As the first sub-problem of the research, the results of the analyses regarding whether there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the students' attitudes towards the environment at the end of environmental education with current events in the third grade science course in primary school were evaluated. According to the findings obtained from quantitative data, environmental education using current events positively affected students' attitudes towards the environment. This result of the research is similar to the findings of the research showing that environmental education programmes have a significant effect on students' environmental behaviours (Kısoğlu et al., 2016; Payne, 2006).

As the second sub-problem of the research, the results of the analyses regarding whether there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the students' attitudes towards the environment at the end of environmental education with current events in the third grade science course of primary school were evaluated according to the gender variable. The findings show that there is no difference between the attitudes of male and female students towards the environment before the application. After the application, it was observed that there was no significant difference in the attitudes of male and female students towards the environment. As the third sub-problem of the research, students' opinions towards the environment were evaluated at the end of environmental

education with current events in the third grade science course of primary school. In the interviews conducted to compare the opinions of the students before and after the environmental education, it was seen that they liked the lessons taught with current events and could give reasonable answers to the questions related to the attitude towards the environment. In this study, students learnt current events for the first time and stated that they liked the lessons very much. Based on this finding, it can be said that lessons with current events have a positive effect on attitudes towards the environment. The students stated that it was fun to analyse the news with their friends in group work and that they found it positive that the lessons were taught in this way. This finding shows that the students liked the lessons taught with current events and had fun in the lessons. This result of the study is similar to the results of studies on the effectiveness of current event method (Mcanespie, 2016). Damar 2023.also gave environmental education to students in order to raise environmentally sensitive and responsible individuals, and the participants in the study thought that the activities were fun because they actively participated in the process.

A multifaceted reporting approach can be used when analysing current events. In this approach, teachers can include current events both in one part of the day and in one day of the week. This approach is considered to have limitations such as reporting ordinary events and surface learning due to lack of in-depth study (Michaelis & Garcia, 1996). In this study, current events were used for four weeks in the science lesson and in the unit 'My Environment and Me'. The teacher gave the students current events obtained from the press and the internet, taking into account their age level. They discussed them with their friends in the classroom. As a result of the discussion, they could not make in-depth analyses and they were not expected to do so. They were asked to find the problems they saw in the events and to identify the creatures affected by the event and to put themselves in the place of those creatures. They had difficulty in doing this in the first week. The other three weeks they were able to do what was expected of them.

With the effect of the constructivist approach, activities in which students are active are frequently carried out in the classroom environment. Therefore, students were participating in group work before the application. Current events were used for the first time. Students liked this method in time. They wanted to use it in other lessons as well. Therefore, it can be said that the environmental education caused them to develop a positive attitude towards the course. In addition, students' active participation in the lesson contributes to gaining new perspectives and making their learning permanent (Açıkgöz, 2014). Furthermore, constructivist learning activities are difficult to be applied in crowded classes. During the use of current events in this research, some difficulties were experienced due to the crowded classroom. Firstly, there was noise in the classroom because of the high number of students. Secondly, since the number of students who wanted to talk was high, the lesson time was not enough in some weeks. In the related literature, there are studies indicating that current event teaching is time-consuming (Bozkurt, 2017; Memişoğlu & Güçin, 2017).

When the acquisitions related to environmental education in the third grade science course of primary school are examined; there are acquisitions related to topics such as plant growing, animal feeding, garden care, prevention of waste of exhaustible resources, efficient use of resources and cleaning of common areas, positive and negative effects of human beings on the natural environment, giving examples of endangered species. In addition, students are informed about the importance of planting trees and non-governmental organisations. Recycling and sustainability issues are also learnt in this course. In this study, these issues related to the environment in the science course were given with current events. In this context, in this study, environmental education in science course in primary school was given with a method encountered for the first time and the results were analysed. It has been seen that environmental education with current events given to students has positive results. In the literature, the question of what kind of environmental education should be given has started to be frequently raised. Studies on which methods should be used to provide an effective environmental education that will respond to the needs related to the environment and environmental problems contribute to this field (Chawla, 1992). Jensen (2002) stated that the action-oriented nature of environmental education would help individuals not to internalise their knowledge.

When environmental education is analysed in the historical process, traditional environmental education and innovative environmental education approaches emerge. Traditional environmental

education exhibits a disciplinary characteristic and is subject-oriented. It aims to raise awareness of environmental problems. Innovative environmental education has an interdisciplinary and holistic teaching approach. In innovative environmental education, the individual's active participation in environmental problems is aimed. It is effective in questioning environmental problems by approaching them holistically, transferring experiences to daily life and raising individuals focused on problem solving (Jacobs, 1989).

In order to provide environmental education to children, various dimensions such as nature perception, ecological awareness, the effect of environmental education programmes on children's attitudes and behaviours should be taken into consideration. It is suggested that a nature-based environmental education approach can support children's creativity, co-operation skills and general learning experiences (Gençten & Aydemir, 2023). In Günşen's study 2023, it is shown that environmental education programmes can improve children's ecological footprint awareness and environmental awareness.

Short (2010) stated that students should be empowered to take ownership of the problems of their generation. Students become aware of social issues such as environmental problems through the examination, correct understanding and evaluation of current events in lessons (Akkan & Akhan, 2020; Welton & Mallan, 1999). From this point of view, at the end of the process, students became aware of current environmental problems. Moreover, students were able to offer suggestions for environmental problems: not throwing rubbish on the ground, using recycling bins and rubbish bins, the clean environment is important for all living things, not harming the living spaces of animals and warning people, hanging signs, reducing the smoke in factories and using electric cars are some of the suggestions put forward by the students for the environment.

It is stated in the literature that individuals' environmental behaviours may not coincide with their attitudes (Kaiser, Ranney, Hartig & Bowler, 1999). Inconsistencies can be observed in the behaviours of individuals at the point of affective-behavioural consistency or cognitive-behavioural consistency, and they may not exhibit consistent behaviours on a subject they have a positive attitude (Peker & Ceylan, 2020). This situation makes us think about the following point; students who have a positive attitude towards the environment may not turn it into behaviour. For example, when there is no rubbish bin nearby, they may throw the rubbish on the ground because it is difficult to carry it in their hands. This brings us to the same point with the view that there may not be consistency between the environmental attitudes and behaviours of young children and their verbal expressions and observed experiences (Atasoy, 2019).

In the first weeks of the study, students could not give effective answers to group work. Students could not focus on the important points of the events. After the first week, they understood the task they were asked to do. They were able to read the event, talk among themselves, think and report quickly. After the lessons, when the students were asked what the most important environmental problem was, most of them answered environmental pollution. In a study conducted by Ertürk (2017) with primary school students, they stated that in order to prevent and solve environmental problems, activities such as planting saplings, throwing garbage into garbage bins, using recycling bins, extinguishing the fire after picnics, installing filters on factory chimneys, not throwing garbage into lakes and rivers, educating people about the environment, placing garbage bins on the streets, and collecting waste batteries should be carried out. In the findings of another study conducted with primary school students, students living in urban and rural areas stated garbage and waste as the most common environmental problem (Sağsöz & Doğanay, 2019). According to Çabuk (2019), pollution causes physiological disorders in plants and both physiological and psychological disorders in humans and animals. Therefore, environmental pollution is one of the leading environmental problems. In the study conducted by Negev et al. (2009), according to the students, 'solid waste, open space, air pollution, water pollution, sewage and noise pollution' are among the important environmental problems. The most frequently mentioned environmental problem in the research findings is environmental pollution.

In this study, current events in newspapers were used in environmental education and learning-teaching processes were organised accordingly. Current events related to the environment were

discussed in small group and large group discussions. Ezzedeen (2008) stated that in current events, students describe the events they encounter in their daily lives and keep their knowledge up to date. Michaelis & Garcia (1996) argued that study items, topics and materials can be brought up to date in textbooks, films, videos and other educational media. Print media tools offer many opportunities to learn about current events (Martorella, 2001). Newspapers, which are “real” materials in terms of being up-to-date and accessible, should be brought to classrooms. It is stated by Galczynski et al. (2011) that discussions about current events can increase students' interest in the course in the classroom environment and Haas & Laughlin (2000) that it is useful for teachers to use this method.

The use of context-based learning approaches in environmental education has been shown to have a positive effect on students' environmental attitudes and behaviours (Yıldırım & Dağıstanlı, 2020). Integration of environmental education into early childhood education programmes and supporting interdisciplinary studies in schools are of great importance for effective environmental education (Felice et al., 1985; Focht & Abramson, 2009; Gülersoy et al., 2021; Semerjian et al.). After this study, the researcher and the students organised a tree planting activity and the families provided great support for this activity. Based on the results of his research, Bogner (1998) states that enriched out-of-class environmental education programme increases students' knowledge about the environment.

The use of active learning techniques in the classroom enables students to think about and actively participate in their own learning (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). Similarly, students developed opinions about current events and the news analysed through active learning techniques used during teaching and were able to express their personal opinions in the group. In this way, students had the opportunity to think about and comment on current events. This learning process can help them to analyse the events they encounter in their daily lives, to make inferences and to determine the point emphasised in the event.

It is emphasised that environmental education is an important factor in promoting effective environmental education practices (Berberoğlu, 2015; Tam, 2013). In the solution of environmental problems, not only laws or technological approaches but also people's own behaviours are important (Erten, 2012). The most important tool to overcome environmental problems is environmental education. Environmental education should be emphasised from the early stages of primary school. Providing environmental education to children should involve a multifaceted approach including nature-based education, parental involvement, teacher training and the use of innovative learning approaches. By considering these factors, educators and policy makers develop comprehensive environmental education programmes that effectively develop environmental awareness and consciousness in children.

4.1. Conclusion and Recommendations

In this study, the effects of environmental education with current events on students' environmental attitudes were revealed in detail. The study showed that current events contributed to significant and positive attitudes towards the environment at high impact level. Especially in primary school age, providing students with the opportunity to express themselves in groups instead of traditional verbal information transfer can increase their motivation in the learning process. The study found that environmental education planned around current events based on the principles of near-far and vitality plays an important role in optimising the learning experience. The use of active learning techniques in current event teaching contributes significantly to students' understanding of the events and environmental problems that take place in their environment. In this study, analysing the case studies through small group discussions facilitated active participation and group interactions. This method encouraged students to experience the experience of analysing, interpreting and inferring the same events. In the innovative environmental education approach, it is suggested to offer a holistic approach to make the educational process more efficient. Lessons with current events have the potential to positively influence students' satisfaction and engagement. Students initially had difficulties in analysing the events, but over time they overcame the difficulties. This study has shown that the current event method can contribute to students' ability to analyse the environmental issues they encounter in daily life in an unbiased way.

The scope of this study is limited to third grade primary school students and science course. In the future, large-scale studies can be conducted with a larger sample to investigate the effects of environmental education with current events. For this study, it was aimed to investigate the effect of current event method on students' attitudes towards the environment. Therefore, no control group was used for the study. On the other hand, students' attitudes towards the environment and their satisfaction with the process were determined through self-reported data over a four-week period. In future studies, this process can be investigated more comprehensively and multidimensionally. In this context, the positive outcome of the study may serve as an example for other studies. There is a need for studies on environmental education at an early age in the literature.

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