Chapter 12
Investigating Current Sustainability Issues Through Play and Future Scenarios:
Play to Save

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ABSTRACT

The concept of sustainability has started to take place in researches in the current period. At present, where urbanization continues rapidly, the idea of sustainability has become a necessity rather than an option. At this point, it is critical to address these current problems in design education. Sustainability should also take its place in design education. Based on these concepts, a studio structure was created at Istanbul Technical University, Department of Interior Architecture with third-year students as participants in 2021. The project is about the scope of sustainability awareness in future scenarios by teaching children the idea of sustainability. The studio proposes future scenarios with play experience and develops the idea by using scenario-based design as a design methodology. Participants were asked to design a play that creates alternatives to discuss sustainability through their works. Using this potential, the studio aimed to convey the importance of environmental sustainability to new generations in future scenarios.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of sustainability has started to take place in researches in the current period. Today, where urbanization continues rapidly, the idea of sustainability has become a necessity rather than an option.

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The United Nations has published a 17-point sustainable development goal in 2017 (United Nations, 2017). In this document, it is predicted that 68% of the world's population will live in cities in the near future. The rate is neutrally high. What this means for sustainability is also the subject of discussion below. Where megacities stand in this sustainable scenario matters. The most important step is to introduce and understand sustainability more effectively to the inhabitants of a city. Enlightening new generations on sustainability awareness is a prerequisite for saving the future. As Giard and Schneiderman (2013, p. 134) explain that "sustainability is a foundation block for future of the planet. It is not a fad, a fashion or a trend, but a fundamental condition for survival". It is especially important to teach sustainability to children. To create awareness, this should start with educating children. It can lead them become more aware dwellers. But on the other hand, dwellers need new specific methods for understanding the vital role of sustainability. At this point, it is critically important to address sustainability problems in design education. Moreover, in terms of design methodology, the concept of sustainability can generate new perspectives in design.

Based on this context, a new structure is proposed to create awareness in the design studio at Istanbul Technical University Interior Architecture Program. A scenario-based design methodology is used in the studio process with third-year interior design students. The aim of the design studio is the scope of sustainability awareness using future scenarios and play. Istanbul Technical University Interior design program has a unique structure which is beneficial to mention. The first-year design studios in İstanbul Technical University implement a transdisciplinary approach in which every department in the Faculty of Architecture participates. The main idea behind this first-year transdisciplinary studio is to create a wide design perspective. After this basic design education, each department has unique project courses related to its field. As mentioned for this study, the third-year design studio of the Istanbul Technical University Interior Architecture Program has been selected. The main reason for this preference is that the third-year design studio students have a better ability to do research. The topic includes sustainability and play as embedded issues. Because of this multidisciplinary and deep research field, third-year students are considered to be the ideal fit. The design studio content is about the dimension of sustainability awareness in future scenarios by teaching the children the idea of sustainability. The topic of "future scenarios" has the potential to open new perspectives and possibilities for design practice and context. The main reason for determining children as users is that the studio argues that the main factor in ensuring sustainability is child awareness. Childhood is an important time for developing pro-environmental knowledge, understanding, and behavior (Tilbury, 1994). Experience is another key term for the studio. Together, experience and play form a new daily activity, and the concept of play experience can provide a basis for discussing sustainability. This play/design project proceeds on the axis of sustainability with scenario-based design education. In design education, students study the subject theoretically by enrolling in a course on the subject, or practically by incorporating the subject in a design project (Giard & Schneiderman, 2013). This issue also exists for sustainability. However, the concept of sustainability is theoretically common in design education. This studio aims to incorporate sustainability into design practice along with the concept of play.

The concept of play is examined from a phenomenological point of view. Contrary to traditional approaches, the concepts of play, learning by playing, and experience are considered and analyzed. Informality, which aims to go beyond the normal and ordinary, presents a new environment, and a new reality in which the hierarchy that is considered outside the existing order and rules is destroyed (Yürekli & Yürekli, 2004). This allows people to think beyond the limits of current problem-solving methods. Participants identified current sustainability issues and envisioned a future scenario. The studio cre-