



(ISSN: 2602-4047)

Kaya, M.H., Bilal, M., Saraçoğlu, Y.B., & Özcan, Ş. (2024). Challenges and prospects of combined class teaching in Turkey: an in-depth analysis of current practices and future directions. *International Journal of Eurasian Education and Culture*, 9(26), 275-299.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.35826/ijoecc.1828>

Article Type (Makale Türü): Research Article

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF COMBINED CLASS TEACHING IN TURKEY: AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF CURRENT PRACTICES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Mustafa Hakkı KAYA

Teacher, Karaaslan Cumhuriyet Primary School, mustafa_1405@hotmail.com

ORCID: 0009-0004-6534-9622

Mustafa BILAL

Teacher, Karaaslan Cumhuriyet Primary School, bbilal139@gmail.com

ORCID: 0009-0004-6226-9934

Yusuf Bahadır SARAÇOĞLU

Teacher, Karaaslan Cumhuriyet Primary School, ybahadirsaracoglu@gmail.com

ORCID: 0009-0006-1423-4256

Şener ÖZCAN

District Director of National Education, Derbent District Director of National Education, s42ozcan@hotmail.com

ORCID: 0009-0008-0949-0997

Received: 12.02.2024

Accepted: 11.05.2024

Published: 01.06.2024

ABSTRACT

This paper delves into the complexities and dynamics of combined class teaching in Turkey, a pedagogical model predominantly necessitated by rural demographics and resource constraints. With approximately one-fourth of Turkey's primary schools employing this model, it presents unique educational challenges and opportunities that merit thorough investigation. This study synthesizes a range of data sources, including ministry reports, academic research, and case studies, to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of combined class teaching across the nation. The analysis begins by contextualizing the socio-economic and demographic factors that necessitate the existence of combined classes, particularly in less urbanized areas. It explores how these factors influence educational strategies and outcomes, highlighting the adaptability and resilience required in these settings. Additionally, alternative educational models such as boarding schools and transported education are evaluated for their feasibility and potential impact on rural education. In synthesizing these findings, the paper offers a set of recommendations for policymakers, educators, and community stakeholders aimed at optimizing the combined class model to better serve the educational needs of rural populations. By addressing both the challenges and opportunities inherent in this model, the study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on educational equity and quality in Turkey, providing actionable insights for enhancing rural education systems in similar contexts globally. This comprehensive analysis not only underscores the critical role of combined class teaching in rural Turkish education but also serves as a foundation for future research and policy-making aimed at improving the efficacy of multigrade teaching practices.

Keywords: Combined classes, rural education, educational challenges, teacher workload, multigrade teaching.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the increasing trend towards mobile education in recent years and the fact that most village schools are not included in urban data, one out of every four schools in Turkey is still a village school, and approximately three to four schools out of ten are combined class village schools (MoNE, 2020). According to the Ministry of National Education's (MoNE) 2021 data, out of the total 25,576 primary schools, 6,200 are combined class schools. This indicates that combined class schools constitute approximately one-fourth of the total schools (MoNE, 2021). According to the latest data from MoNE for the academic year 2022/2023, 62,154 out of 1,413,047 primary school students (approximately 5%) are enrolled in village schools (MoNE, 2023).

Combined class teaching is a system where multiple classes come together under the supervision of one teacher (Sidekli, Coşkun, & Aydın, 2015). This method plays an important role in providing education opportunities to students in regions where resources are limited. Within this role, it is possible to mention some advantages and disadvantages of combined classes. When considering the advantages of combined classes, it can be seen that they include allowing children living far from central areas to access education, economically enabling children in disadvantaged areas to access education, providing opportunities for children growing up in different age groups and environments to learn, share, and socialize together, facilitating intellectual and academic development through interaction with different methods and techniques in the same class environment, allowing students to receive education while staying with their families, and increasing the education level of children living in rural areas (Gelebek, 2011; Gönül, 2019; Little, 2001; Mortazavizadeh et al., 2017).

The existence of combined classes is inevitable due to the financial and organizational challenges of forming classes in areas with low student numbers. This model can also lead to various challenges for teachers and students in the education process (Özdemir, Özdemir, & Gül, 2020; Yeşiltepe & Korucuk, 2020). Factors such as teaching the same curriculum to different class levels without considering regional and school differences, the curriculum not addressing the lives of students in the village, the complexity experienced in lesson planning and implementation processes due to the need for more resources and materials when teachers have to address multiple class levels in the same classroom, and the curriculum sometimes being distant from the needs and interests of children can lead to the curriculum's achievements not being fully delivered and slow progress in the curriculum. The lack of a separate program for combined classes and the absence of textbooks consisting of program content pose problems for classroom teachers in adapting lesson plans and curricula to combined classes. Situations such as the program not being oriented towards the needs of village life and insufficient time for teaching program achievements to students lead to problems in the application of the constructivist approach to combined classes (Sınmaz, 2009; Taşdemir, 2012). The combined class teaching model is important for increasing education opportunities in rural areas as part of Turkey's education system. However, in order for this model to be effectively implemented, the challenges faced by teachers and students need to be taken into account and solutions need to be developed. In this way, combined class teaching can offer a more efficient and

effective educational experience and contribute to the future success of students (Dursun, 2006; Sidekli et al., 2015).

Another challenge of combined classes is the necessity of providing instruction tailored to the individual needs of students. Students coming from different class levels have their own learning paces and needs. Teachers must develop a flexible and personalized teaching approach to meet each student's needs and support students at every level. This requires additional time and effort and can mean an increased workload for teachers. Additionally, the decrease in the number of students in combined classes may limit teaching methods such as classroom interactions and group work for teachers. In smaller classes, opportunities for interaction and collaboration among students may be limited. Among the other challenges faced by teachers in combined classes are factors such as the limited opportunities of village life, parental indifference, and the decrease in the number of students. Especially in rural areas, infrastructure deficiencies and resource constraints may cause teachers to face difficulties in finding educational materials and resources. Parental indifference may result in limited support for students at home (Can, 2022; Erdem, Kamacı, & Aydemir, 2005; Özdemir et al., 2021; Sidekli et al., 2015; Taşdemir, 2012).

When the literature is examined, it is seen that teachers working in combined classes have many problems. Firstly, teachers in combined classes are expected to finish the same curriculum in the same time as teachers teaching separate classes (Gelebek, 2011). It is known that teachers working in combined classes experience problems due to the lack of practice related to combined classes in their education processes (Bingöl, 2002; Gözler & Çelik, 2013; Tosun Çam & Filiz, 2017). In other words, teachers working in combined classes may face difficulties in quickly finding solutions to the situations they encounter due to the lack of practical experience with combined classes. Another problem is related to teachers not being able to reside where they work (Karataş & Kınalıoğlu, 2018). Another issue is the additional tasks that teachers have to do outside of teaching. It is likely that teachers may experience burnout due to the high number of tasks they are exposed to (Yıldırım & Amaç, 2020).

In conclusion, the number of combined class schools across Turkey is significant. Teachers working in these schools face challenges such as the decrease in the number of students, students from different class levels receiving education, and resource shortages. These challenges may affect teachers' efforts to provide effective education to students. Furthermore, as long as the adverse conditions under which the combined class practice emerged persist, it is predicted to continue (Bozdoğan & Polat, 2022). Therefore, understanding how teachers cope with these challenges in combined classes and developing solution proposals is an important issue in the field of education.

BACKGROUND

Concept of Combined Classes

For various reasons, such as the small number of students per grade level or the inability to allocate a separate teacher for each class, educational units are created by merging multiple classes under the management of a single teacher, commonly referred to as "combined classes." These classes are established to efficiently utilize educational resources, provide more attention and support to students, and aid in better planning by teachers. Combined classes are particularly preferred in rural areas or small schools where low student numbers make it economically and educationally inefficient to operate individual classes (Oğuzkan, 1981; Yeşiltepe & Korucuk, 2020; Yıldırım & Amaç, 2020).

In the field of education, research on class types created for economic and administrative reasons commonly uses terms such as "multigrade classes" or "multi-grade classes" (Miller, 1999). These terms denote classroom structures developed in response to various challenges within educational systems, shaped under multiple factors and identified by different designations in different countries, such as 'family class, combined, mixed, multiple class, multilevel, composite, double class' (Khan & Khan, 2007).

Moreover, expressions like "combination classes" or "mixed classes" also indicate such class formations. These classes are arranged to include students of various ages and grade levels and emerge as practical solutions in small schools or rural areas where student numbers are limited. They aim to use educational resources more effectively and offer increased opportunities to students. Terms like "compulsory mixed-age classes" describe classes where mixing of age groups is mandatory due to the distribution of age groups in the student population, without requiring students to be strictly classified by age. Similarly, "compulsory mixed-level classes" refer to scenarios where mixing different grade levels is necessary. All these terms help better understand the complexities of the educational system and student needs, aiding educators, administrators, and researchers in using more specific language when discussing these structures. These structures are designed and managed with the objectives of meeting educational needs and optimally utilizing educational resources (Little, 2001).

Educational Processes in Combined Classes

It is noted that combined classes require a different approach to teaching and management compared to independent classes (Doğan, 2000). This unique classroom structure has been an integral part of our education system since the establishment of the republic. The necessity for combined class school practices is driven by a series of fundamental reasons stemming from various challenges in the educational field, illustrating the adoption of this class structure to overcome these challenges. Primary reasons for the widespread preference of combined classes include low student numbers, particularly in rural areas or small settlements where not every class garners sufficient student enrollment. In such cases, operating each class independently might not be sensible in terms of efficient resource usage. Hence, student groups are merged into combined classes. Another

significant reason is teacher shortages. In some regions, there may not be enough teachers available, or it may not be feasible to assign a specific teacher to certain grade levels. In such situations, combined classes offer an opportunity to use existing teachers more effectively. Additionally, a lack of sufficient classrooms is another contributing factor. The need for a separate classroom for each class can lead to a deficiency in physical infrastructure in some schools. Therefore, combined classes allow for more efficient use of existing classrooms. Ultimately, combined classes have a deep-rooted history in our education system and are necessary due to reasons such as low student numbers, teacher shortages, and inadequate classroom availability. These class structures are designed to use educational resources effectively and provide solutions to various educational challenges, thus continuing as a vital component of our education system (Erdem, 2015).

Combined classes involve groups of two or more classes taught together by a single teacher. Many village schools in Turkey and some schools in towns operate as combined classes (Binbaşıoğlu, 1983). Combined classes have a long history both in the world and in Turkey. Nearly half of the schools in Turkey conduct education through combined classes (MEB, 2005).

Working in combined classes is more challenging than in independent classes. Reasons for this include the physical condition of the school, the local environmental conditions, the cultural structure of the village community, economic and social conditions, students' readiness for basic education, and the class teacher's responsibilities in teaching and managing the school, as well as informing and assisting the village community in solving their problems (Bilir, 2008). Despite these challenges, most newly appointed teachers begin their duties in a combined class primary school without having had the opportunity to intern at any village school during their training (Yıldız, 2011). The implementation of combined class teaching in Turkey has been in practice for many years. Three main reasons make combined class education mandatory in our country: the scarcity of teachers and students and the insufficiency of classrooms (Dursun, 2006).

It is crucial for a teacher working in a village to be knowledgeable about the cultural structure and socioeconomic status of the area to conduct successful educational activities. Therefore, teachers need to research and learn about the following problem areas (Akbaşlı & Pilten, 1999; Uçan, 1997): The village's location and resulting problems, the geographical conditions of the village and associated problems, the village's founding and historical issues, the village's sources of livelihood and related issues, the commercial life in the village and resulting problems, health issues in the village, the social and cultural structure of the village and related issues, the governance of the village and resulting problems, the educational level of the village and related issues.

Reasons for the Emergence of Combined Classes

The importance of primary education in Turkey increased after the opening of our parliament in 1920. Following the adoption of the new alphabet, efforts were made to increase the rate of schooling through the establishment of National Schools. During the preparation of various programs by the ministry, the implementation of combined class teaching was developed due to factors such as the scarcity of teachers, students, and classrooms,

and the geographical conditions of our country (Yıldız, 2011). Combined class teaching is not only a practice in our country but is also applied in many other countries (Fidan & Baykul, 1993).

The implementation of combined class teaching, which has been integrated into our education system for many years, holds a significant place in the field of education. The mandatory nature of this practice reflects the major challenges and needs in education. These reasons can be summarized as the limited number of teachers, low student numbers, and insufficient amount of classrooms. Firstly, the limited number of teachers is a factor that makes this practice mandatory. In some regions, the absence of a sufficient number of teachers or the impossibility of assigning a specific teacher to certain grade levels leads to the creation of combined classes. In such cases, a single teacher may need to manage multiple grade levels simultaneously. Another significant reason is the low number of students, particularly in rural areas or small settlements, where not every class receives adequate student enrollment. In such cases, operating each class with a separate teacher would not be sensible in terms of effective use of educational resources. Therefore, student groups are merged into combined classes. Additionally, the insufficient amount of classrooms also leads to the mandatory implementation of combined class teaching. The need for a separate classroom for each class can create a lack of physical infrastructure in some schools. Combined classes provide an opportunity to use existing classrooms more efficiently, thus offering more students the chance to receive an education. Indeed, the implementation of combined class teaching is a practice with a deep-rooted history in our education system. The main reasons for this practice stand out as the scarcity of teachers, limited student numbers, and insufficient classrooms. According to statistics, this practice is frequently observed in a large part of our primary schools. In these schools, teachers educate nearly only 10% of the number of students compared to independent classrooms. Therefore, combined class teaching continues to exist as an essential part of our education system (Arıcı, 2015; Samancı, 2019; Sezer, 2010; Tosun Çam & Filiz, 2017; Yıldız, 2011; Yılmaz Öztürk, 2023).

Due to the irregular population distribution in our country and a large part of the population living in villages due to economic necessities, combined class teaching is prevalent in a large part of our country (Yıldız, 2011). According to Köksal (2005), the main reasons for the implementation of combined class teaching in our country are the insufficiency of student and teacher numbers and the scarcity of classrooms, although in recent years, the decreasing number of students in village schools due to reasons such as migration from rural to urban areas has been the main reason.

Benefits of Combined Class Practices

Undoubtedly, important educational practices such as independent work, group work, integration with the environment, and learning from peers play a critical role in helping students understand information and enrich their learning experiences. These learning approaches are especially emphasized in schools with combined classes and find more room in such classrooms. Group work becomes an inevitable necessity in combined class schools. Students from different age groups and grade levels are present in the same classroom, which can make

it challenging for the teacher to meet the diverse needs of the students. However, through group work, students engage in knowledge and experience sharing, supporting each other. This helps students better understand each other and strengthens their learning. During class hours with assignments, students are given the opportunity to engage in individual or group work. This provides students with the chance to progress and learn at their own pace. In combined classes, since students from different levels are present in the same classroom, it is easier to form level groups. This offers the opportunity to better respond to students' needs. Especially in small village schools, some students might be lagging in learning to read and write or falling behind in a subject. However, in combined classes, this situation can turn into an advantage where more advanced students, under the guidance of the teacher, can assist those who are lagging. This instills values such as solidarity, cooperation, and empathy in students while also helping to prevent rote learning. Consequently, in schools with combined classes, learning approaches such as independent work, group work, integration with the environment, and learning from peers play a significant role in meeting individual student needs and promoting democratic values. These classes embrace an environment where students of different levels are together, offering unique learning experiences (Dursun, 2006; Gürel et al., 2014; İspir & Akan, 2023; Taşdemir, 2014; Yıldırım & Amaç, 2020). It is appropriate to state the following regarding the various benefits of combined classes (Yıldız, 2011):

- Cooperation and helpfulness instead of individual progress and competition
- Sharing instead of continuous individual progress
- Respect for different perspectives instead of intolerance
- A critical viewpoint instead of conforming without questioning
- Entrepreneurship instead of observing others and passively accepting
- The opportunity for students of different knowledge, experience, age, and levels to work together and learn from each other
- In combined classes, since a significant part of the education process is spent on students' own work, students learn to learn independently. In this situation, they have the opportunity to acquire skills such as self-management, independent learning, and research.
- Students have the opportunity to develop their areas of expertise by working independently in fields where they are talented.
- The possibility of building a school in every village increases.
- The need for teachers is more easily met since a single teacher is assigned to multiple classes.
- Respect and tolerance for different views develop among students of different levels.
- It prevents rote learning and fosters critical thinking skills.

Disadvantages of Combined Class Applications

The responsibilities and duties of teachers in combined classes are significantly greater compared to those in independent classes. Some of the disadvantages for teachers in combined classes are as follows (Summak, Summak, and Gelebek, 2011; Yıldız, 2011):

- Classroom control and management are more challenging for the teacher.
- Efforts are made to impart all primary level learning outcomes in combined classes, which is not equitable in terms of achieving these outcomes within the same timeframe.
- The time available for individual attention to each student in the class is considerably limited.
- Teachers in combined classes require more time for lesson preparation compared to those in independent classes.
- Teachers often have to take on dual roles, including acting as administrative heads, which increases their responsibilities and workload.
- Managing all school-related tasks can be challenging for teachers, as they are often expected to handle every aspect of school operations.
- The desire of teachers to leave their assigned schools can affect their commitment and performance.
- The majority of teacher assignments being initially to combined classes in rural schools is disadvantageous for inexperienced teachers. Additionally, teachers unfamiliar with rural life may find managing a rural school challenging, which can impact their performance.
- Inexperienced teachers might know theoretically what to do in combined classes but struggle to apply it in practice.
- The Ministry of Education (MEB) has not fully developed a curriculum suitable for combined class instruction, leading to various compatibility issues in these classes.
- Inexperienced teachers in single-teacher combined class schools do not have the opportunity to learn from experienced colleagues.
- The material conditions of combined classes, maintenance of school buildings, and physical infrastructure pose significant challenges for teachers. Responsibilities such as painting, maintenance of windows, doors, roofs, cleaning of toilets, and overall school cleanliness and infrastructure issues fall under the teacher's responsibilities.

Alternatives to Combined Class Applications

There are several alternatives to combined classes, which include:

- YIBO (Boarding Regional Primary School)
- PIO (Boarding Primary School)
- Transported Education
- Families moving to locations with independent class schools

Comparing these alternatives to combined classes, it can be said that implementing these solutions is much more challenging than managing combined classes. These options are costly both financially and emotionally (Görür, Altındağ, & Özkaya, 2007). This situation makes the implementation of combined class teaching a necessity.

To address these issues, solutions such as constructing YIBOs in central locations of settlements where building a primary school is not economically viable have been attempted. These schools have been preferred especially in the Southeastern and Eastern Anatolia regions of our country, where population distribution, road conditions, and climate conditions are comparatively challenging (Meydan, 2002).

Learning and Teaching Processes in Combined Classes

In combined class teaching, classes are conducted with assignments and direct teaching. Typically, the classes consist of assignments done by the students themselves and those conducted with the teacher's guidance. In this educational system, the success of the students heavily depends on their own learning motivation and the teacher's preparation for the class (Akbaşlı & Pilten, 1999).

Classes taught by the teacher involve direct interaction with students where the teacher provides guidance and facilitates activities that impart necessary knowledge and skills (Erdem, 2002). These classes should particularly cover complex, difficult, and new topics that students find challenging to learn on their own. It is advisable to focus on priority and important topics in these teacher-led classes. The success in a combined class system primarily depends on the effectiveness of the activities students engage in during their assignment-based classes (Akbaşlı & Pilten, 1999). During non-teacher periods (Erdem, 2015):

- Teachers must plan the activities well.
- These class hours should be seen not as a negative situation but as an opportunity for effective individual learning.
- Students should be clearly instructed with examples on how to work and what to do.
- During these independent study periods, students should have the opportunity not only to revise what they have learned but also to prepare for new learnings and activities.
- The activities conducted must be regularly checked and assessed to understand if they meet the objectives of the assignment-based class period.

Forms of Creating Combined Classes

The Board of Education and Discipline (2014) outlines the forms of creating combined classes in their opinion on the weekly lesson programs for combined classes as expressed in Table 1 (TTK, 2014).

Table 1. Forms of Creating Combined Classes

Number of Teachers	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	4th Grade
1	(1+2+3+4)			
2	(1+2)	(3+4)		
3	(1)	(2+3)	(4)	

Single-Teacher Combined Classes: All grade levels from 1st to 4th are combined under the management of one teacher. Single-teacher combined classes are the most challenging to manage among combined classes. Conducting activities to ensure all learning outcomes are achieved is significantly harder in these classes compared to other combined classes (TTK, 2014).

Two-Teacher Combined Classes: Under normal conditions, it is recommended to plan such that 1st and 2nd grades form one group, and 3rd and 4th grades form another group. However, if factors like classroom and student numbers do not allow for this arrangement, different models can be implemented. These class models could be organized as (1) separate and (2+3+4) combined, or (1+2+3) combined and (4) separate (TTK, 2014).

Three-Teacher Combined Classes: Typically, it is advised that 1st grades operate independently, 2nd and 3rd grades form one group, and 4th grades form another independent class. If classroom and student numbers make this difficult, alternative models can also be arranged. These class models might include (1+2) combined, (3) and (4) as independent classes, or (1) as an independent class, (2+3) combined, and (4) as an independent class (TTK, 2014).

These configurations illustrate the flexibility required in the structuring of combined classes to accommodate various educational environments and resources. This adaptability ensures that educational institutions can maximize teaching effectiveness despite constraints in teacher availability and physical infrastructure.

COMBINED CLASS PRACTICES IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES

Combined class setups are a significant issue encountered not only in our country but also in both developed and developing nations globally. Historically, by the late 19th century, the majority of primary schools worldwide operated as single-class institutions. From the 20th century onward, this was replaced by classical schools comprising 5-6 classes of similar types.

By the late 1960s, efforts were made to phase out combined class schools as resources improved. However, from the 1980s onwards, there was a shift back to this approach, and small schools of this kind began to be reused around the world (Bayar, 2009). It is known that approximately 30% of schoolchildren globally continue their education in combined classes (Little, 2006).

In our country, socio-economic conditions and geographical factors have necessitated the implementation of combined class teaching. As a result, combined class primary schools exist in every province in Turkey. Similarly, combined classes are prevalent in many countries worldwide, including Canada, the USA, Japan, and almost all European countries (Erdem, 2015).

Globally, there has been no regular research or data collection conducted by relevant organizations on the numbers of students and teachers in combined class schools. Therefore, information about education in

combined classes is sparse and disorganized, making it difficult to determine the extent and prevalence of combined class applications in different countries (Little, 2004).

Recent statistics show that over a third of primary school students in France are educated in combined class schools (Borbely, 2023). Previously, it was known that France had 11,000 single-teacher village schools (Veenman, 1995). In New Zealand, approximately 33% of primary schools operate with one or two teachers. In Canada, one fifth of students are educated in combined classes, and one-seventh of all classes are composed of mixed-age groups (Veenman, 1995), with 17% of schools running combined classes (Kılıç & Abay, 2009). It has also been observed that urban centers in countries like Austria have more combined classes than rural areas. 25% of primary schools in Austria are multi-grade schools (Veenman, 1995), and this rate was 15.3% in the 2012-2013 academic year (Statistik Austria, 2013). In Germany, 80,000 students have been educated in combined classes, and 23% of schools in Switzerland operate as combined class schools (Veenman, 1995). In the UK, the rate of combined class applications is 19% (Kılıç & Abay, 2009).

In China, there are 420,000 schools, and in Indonesia, there are 20,000 schools with combined classes (Girls' Education Monitoring System, 2003). In China, 23% of children are educated in combined classes (Jun, 2009). In Mexico, 22% of primary schools are combined class schools, 50% in Belize, and 88% in Honduras (Girls' Education Monitoring System, 2003). According to data published by the National Institute for Educational Evaluation in Mexico, approximately 35% of primary schools were combined class in the 2016-2017 academic year (Lisa Piper, 2021).

Combined classes are managed through regional policies in Finland, where 33% of schools are combined and 7% of school-age children attend these schools. 19% of teachers work in combined class schools (Little, 2004), and as of 2012, this rate was 16.4% (Laitila & Wilen, 2014). In countries like Finland, demographic shifts and economic challenges have influenced the state of combined classes. Advocates for combined classes view them as a fundamental right for children, ensuring access to safe and modern education near their homes (Paasimaki, 2003). Some European countries, similar to Finland, have developed training programs for teachers who will work in combined classes. In the UK, teachers are trained for combined class teaching through in-service training and program support (Little, 2004).

In Greece, many schools have fewer than 50 students, leading to nearly 47% of primary schools operating as combined classes. While this is a high proportion of schools, the total number of students educated in combined classes is less than 10% of the student population (Giannakos & Vlamos, 2012). Greece has approximately 2500 combined class schools, with about 1000 being single-teacher schools (Tsolakidis, 2003). The scattered settlement patterns and the presence of many small islands contribute to the high number of combined classes in Greece. Locals believe that closing combined class schools would leave villages deserted and diminish community vitality, thus continuing the practice of combined classes is prevalent in Greece (Rediniotis, 2003).

In the US, 5% of elementary schools are combined class schools, with 95% of these being classes where two grade levels are taught together. In some states, this proportion is as low as 3%, while in others, it is around 17% (Aksoy, 2008). Recent data indicate that the proportion of combined class schools in the US has risen to about 28% (Borbely, Gehrsitz, McIntyre, Rossi, & Roy, 2023). In 2002-2003, the rate of combined class schools in Northern Ireland was 21.6% (Aksoy, 2008).

RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

Under this heading, studies conducted on combined class applications consolidated through literature review are presented. A series of studies have been conducted in combined classes for various subjects (Abay, 2007; Açıan, 2015; Aybek and Aslan, 2014; Kuzu and Aslan, 2013; Şevik, 2011; Palavan, 2012; Yıldız, 2009; Yılmaz, 2014). These studies have focused on examining the courses and processes specific to combined class teaching. Below, summaries of some of these studies are provided.

Abay (2007) conducted research on the problems related to the teaching of social studies in combined classes. A survey was administered to teachers for this study. The research found that the course content could not be organized according to the student, teaching methods and techniques were not used, activities were not conducted on time, and there was insufficient class time.

Açıan (2015) discussed the experiences of a combined class teacher working in a region where Turkish is inadequately spoken in her case study. The results showed that factors such as families' seasonal migrations, lack of Turkish language proficiency, lack of tools and resources, and absence of family support affected the process of learning and teaching initial reading and writing in the combined class.

Aybek and Aslan (2014) examined the problems encountered by teachers in combined classes using the phonics-based sentence method and their proposed solutions. Twenty-two teachers working in combined classes participated in the research, which used a phenomenological design. The findings indicated that students had problems understanding what they read, forming sentences, and writing legibly.

Kuzu and Aslan (2013) attempted to reveal the opinions of teachers working in combined classes regarding the free activity class through their qualitative research design. The study involved 35 teachers and used an open-ended interview form to collect data. The findings emerged in themes such as "planning of the free activity class," "activities conducted during the free activity class," "problems encountered during the free activity class," and "solutions proposed for these problems." The results showed that teachers used ready-made plans in the free activity class, tried to compensate for the shortcomings of other classes, and faced problems due to the lack of a guidebook for this class.

Şevik (2011) researched the possible situations and educational needs of class teachers who are obliged to teach English in combined classes. The research, which lasted for one term and employed a case study model, involved

face-to-face interviews of 60 minutes each with twenty teachers, and weekly reviews. The findings revealed that class teachers felt inadequate in teaching English and indicated that their effectiveness could increase if supportive in-service training and materials were provided.

Palavan (2012) investigated the access levels to social studies achievements of fourth-grade students in combined and independent classes and focused on teaching this subject. The sample of the research consisted of students studying in combined and independent classes. The research, which preferred a quantitative research method, found that being in a combined or independent class had an impact on accessing the achievements of the social studies course. Accordingly, students studying in independent classes had more access to the achievements of the social studies course.

Yıldız (2009) aimed to determine the applicability and problems of the achievements and teaching content of the Life Science course in combined classes. Fifty-eight class teachers working in combined classes participated in the research. The research attempted to reveal the teachers' views on the course program, the difficulties encountered in the course process, and their expectations. The data collected using a semi-structured interview form were analyzed through qualitative data analysis. The research found that while the teaching program of the life science course was positive, it was difficult to implement this program in combined classes, which had different conditions from independent classes. It also highlighted some deficiencies and difficulties related to the course process, such as assessment and evaluation, learning process, and content.

Yılmaz (2014) conducted a qualitative study to evaluate the applicability of the Turkish course teaching program in combined classes based on teacher opinions. Thirty teachers working in combined classes participated in the research. The research sought to reveal the teachers' views on the course program, their expectations from the program, and the difficulties encountered in teaching. The findings from the research showed that teachers positively evaluated the course program. However, the findings also indicated that teachers experienced difficulties in implementing this program in combined classes regarding assessment and evaluation, content, achievements, and program implementation.

These studies provide significant contributions by thoroughly examining the courses and course processes within the context of combined class teaching. Combined class teachers' emotional problems have been emphasized in several studies (Akdağ, 2014; Çağlayan, 2012; Dal, 2004; Göksoy, Arıcan, and Eriş, 2015; İnce and Şahin, 2016; Şekerci, 2015; Yıldız, 2011). Summaries of some of these studies are as follows.

Akdağ (2014) investigated the burnout levels of principal-authorized teachers working in combined class schools. The study, which involved 194 principal-authorized teachers, used a personal information form and the Maslach Burnout Inventory to collect data. The findings revealed that principal-authorized teachers experienced high levels of burnout in terms of personal accomplishment and emotional exhaustion subdimensions. Additionally, it was found that participants experienced moderate levels of burnout in the depersonalization subdimension.

Çağlayan (2012) examined the burnout levels of combined class teachers in terms of different variables. The descriptive study involved 162 combined class teachers as participants. Data were collected using a personal information form and the Maslach Burnout Inventory. The findings indicated that the burnout levels of combined class teachers did not change according to gender and monthly income. On the other hand, it was found that burnout levels changed according to age, number of children, marital status, department graduated from, professional seniority, and spouse's employment status.

Dal (2004) investigated the stress sources of principal-authorized teachers working in combined class village primary schools. The research was conducted with 85 principal-authorized teachers. The findings obtained from data collected through a questionnaire showed that the main source of stress for principal-authorized teachers was concentrated in the school management dimension. Another finding indicated that the attitudes and behaviors of students, parents, village life, inspection style, combined class teaching, and organizational opportunities were considered "low" level stressors.

Göksoy and others (2014) researched the stress levels of teachers working in combined class primary schools. Data were obtained from 322 teachers for the research. The findings indicated that teachers working in combined classes experienced stress levels ranging from "low" to "medium." Participants experienced the most stress in the "organizational stress sources" dimension. It was found that female teachers experienced more stress than male teachers and that teachers with less seniority and working time experienced more stress. Teachers with relatively more years of seniority were found to be more effective in coping with stress.

İnce and Şahin (2016) compared the professional satisfaction and burnout levels of class teachers working in combined and independent classes. The study involved 75 combined class teachers and 465 independent class teachers. Data were collected using the Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire-Short Form and the Maslach Burnout Inventory. According to the findings, the general job satisfaction levels of teachers working in both types of classes were at a moderate level. Additionally, teachers in both types of classes experienced moderate levels of emotional exhaustion and low levels of depersonalization. Independent class teachers had higher general and intrinsic satisfaction levels compared to combined class teachers.

Şekerci (2015) investigated the burnout levels of teachers working in combined classes. The study, which involved 250 combined class teachers, found that the burnout levels of teachers did not differ according to gender. Another finding indicated that whether teachers had previously lived in a rural environment did not affect their burnout levels. Similarly, the burnout levels of teachers did not significantly change according to the distance of the school they worked at from the district center.

Yıldız (2011) evaluated the interaction of teachers working in combined classes with the culture of their workplaces. The case study involved 60 class teachers. The findings revealed that the regions had their unique cultural activities, that teachers tried to find their place in these cultural environments, that teachers interacted with the culture in which they were involved, and that knowing the socio-economic and cultural structure of the

place where they worked was effective in managing educational processes. The findings also showed that the school-family cooperation was positive due to the teachers' interaction within the culture.

These studies contribute significantly to understanding the emotional problems and professional challenges faced by teachers in combined classes. A series of studies exist regarding the problems encountered by teachers working in combined classes (Abay, 2006; Bilir, 2008; Dursun, 2006; Erdem and others, 2005; Palavan and Göçer, 2017). These studies have addressed the educational problems faced by combined class teachers and proposed solutions to these problems. Summaries of some of these studies are as follows.

Bilir (2008) conducted a compilation study examining the teachers and the reality of instruction in combined class village primary schools. The research found that the emergence of combined classes was due to insufficient numbers of teachers, students, and classrooms, that the learning and teaching situations affected success, and that success depended on the support provided and sufficient learning materials. The study also highlighted that due to the differences from normal classes, more emphasis should be placed on the application process in teacher education for combined classes.

Dursun (2006) addressed the educational problems and proposed solutions in combined classes in his study. Data were obtained through surveys administered to 33 combined class teachers and 60 students attending instruction classes in combined classes. The findings indicated that explanation, question-answer, and application were among the most used methods. Additionally, it was found that teachers mostly used textbooks and technological tools like computers. In terms of the problems encountered in the classes, the findings revealed that participants were unable to provide individual attention to students, that parents were indifferent, that there was insufficient time, and that the objectives were not fully achieved.

Erdem and others (2005) researched the problems faced by class teachers teaching combined classes using the example of Denizli. Data were obtained from 62 teachers using a developed Likert-type scale. The findings showed that 93% of the teachers experienced problems to some extent. It was found that the problems faced by the teachers did not differ according to gender, number of students, school graduated from, role, professional seniority, number of teachers worked with, combined class group, years of teaching combined classes, and residency status.

Palavan and Göçer (2017) addressed the problems encountered by class teachers in combined classes based on the province of Malatya. The participants, 146 teachers working in combined classes, additionally indicated that their success would increase in the absence of administrative duties and that they had deficiencies in administration. Moreover, the teachers stated that obtaining support from families in solving problems at schools was necessary. It was also mentioned that establishing good communication with the stakeholders of the problem would contribute significantly to the solution.

These studies contribute to understanding the challenges faced by teachers in combined classes in their educational processes and the proposed solutions to these problems. Various studies have been conducted on the professional needs of teachers (Sağ, Savaş, and Sezer, 2009; Sezer, 2010). Some of these studies are presented below.

Sağ and others (2009) conducted a study aimed at determining the characteristics, problems, and needs of combined class teachers in Burdur. The study aimed to reveal the profile of teachers conducting combined class practices. The research, which employed a survey model, involved 38 combined class teachers. It was found that more than half of the participants had not received any training or courses related to combined classes during their undergraduate education. The problems of the participants were found to be mostly concentrated on environmental factors.

Sezer (2010) conducted a study to analyze the professional needs of combined class teachers. The research, which used a descriptive survey model, involved 284 teachers. The study found that combined class teachers had professional needs in program literacy, administrative tasks, and teaching and assessment dimensions. Additionally, it was found that the professional needs of teachers did not show significant differences according to experience, professional position, or willingness to teach in combined classes.

These studies provide important information to support the professional development of combined class teachers and make the educational processes more effective. Studies have been conducted on the problems encountered by students who graduated from combined classes in their subsequent educational lives (Gönül and Arslan, 2016; Şeker, 2014). Summaries of these studies are as follows.

Gönül and Arslan (2016) examined the problems encountered by students who graduated from combined classes at higher educational levels. The study involved 160 students and used a semi-structured interview technique to collect data. The findings from the research showed that the success of students who received education in combined classes and then moved to higher educational levels was negatively affected. It was observed that students who studied in combined classes and moved to higher educational levels did not recommend receiving education in combined classes. The reason cited for this was the distraction caused by the teacher teaching other classes.

Şeker (2014) conducted a study to determine the academic and social success statuses of students who graduated from combined classes at higher educational levels. The descriptive study involved middle school students as participants. Data were obtained through document analysis and semi-structured interview techniques. The findings from the research showed that students who received education in combined classes did not have positive feelings and thoughts about the education in these classes. The formation of this attitude was influenced by frequent teacher changes, students' perceptions that the teachers did not pay enough attention, and the belief that the education they received in combined classes affected their current school success.

These studies contribute to our understanding of the academic and social successes of students who graduated from combined classes and the difficulties they encountered at higher educational levels. Below are summaries of studies on various aspects of combined classes.

Öztürk (2007), in his study titled "Combined Class Applications from the Beginning of the Republic to the Present," discussed the history of combined class applications in Turkey. In his study, he stated that this application was first included in the 1968 program, that the majority of village schools in the early years of the Republic were three-class schools, and that the proposal to extend these schools to five years was brought up at the first National Education Council held in 1939. This proposal was raised at the 1st National Education Council and implementation started in 1946.

Uygur and Yelken (2010) aimed to determine the opinions of 4th and 5th-grade students and teachers working in combined class schools regarding the Science and Technology Course (new science program) in their study. They used a semi-structured interview technique to collect data. Subsequently, the data were converted into numerical expressions for analysis. This study contributes to our understanding of the effects of the new science program on students learning in combined classes and the teachers teaching this program. In particular, taking into account the opinions of students and teachers is important for improving the program and teaching processes.

Kazu and Aslan's (2011) study represents a study aimed at comparing combined class applications in different countries. This study examined Turkey's combined class application by comparing it with similar applications in other countries such as Vietnam, Peru, Sri Lanka, and Colombia.

Aslan and Kazu (2015) stated the purpose of their study as determining whether regimented education affected the academic success of students in combined classes and, if it did, understanding how this effect occurred. The researchers predicted that implementing regimented education along with a constructivist approach in educational environments of combined class schools would positively affect the students' academic achievements and learning attitudes.

Hasanoğlu (2013) examined the views of teachers and student families in inclusive education classes containing students with special needs who lived in rural areas and received education in combined classes and identified the problems they experienced.

Yıldırım and others (2016) evaluated the effects of the 4+4+4 practice on classroom management of teachers working in combined class schools. Ocakcı (2017) used a mixed method to examine how these effects varied according to variables such as professional seniority, gender, and receipt of in-service training.

Gökbulut and Dirik (2017) conducted a study examining the views of combined class teachers on the applicability of the multiple intelligences concept according to various variables. This research aimed to understand how participants' views could change depending on certain variables.

The findings from these studies contribute to our understanding of the challenges faced by teachers and students in combined classes and the effects of educational policies.

CONCLUSION

The investigation into combined class teaching in Turkey has illuminated the intricate web of challenges and opportunities that define this educational approach. Predominantly utilized in rural and resource-limited areas, combined classes serve as a necessary solution to the logistical challenges posed by low student numbers and teacher shortages. However, this study has underscored that while combined classes facilitate access to education, they inherently complicate the delivery of quality education.

One of the central findings of this research is the disproportionate burden placed on educators within the combined class system. Teachers are often tasked with managing multi-grade classrooms without adequate training or resources, which can lead to reduced educational outcomes and increased professional burnout. This issue is further exacerbated by the lack of specifically tailored curricula and instructional materials that address the unique needs of multigrade teaching environments. The effectiveness of education in combined classes is frequently compromised by these factors, highlighting an urgent need for targeted teacher support programs and curriculum development.

Moreover, the study has revealed that combined classes often suffer from infrastructural deficiencies and insufficient parental involvement, which are crucial for the educational success of students. These challenges are particularly pronounced in rural settings where economic and social constraints further hinder educational progress. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive strategy that encompasses not only educational policy reform but also community engagement and support.

In light of these findings, several recommendations can be made to enhance the effectiveness of combined class teaching in Turkey. First, there is a pressing need for the development and dissemination of specialized training programs for teachers in combined classes. These programs should focus on multigrade classroom management, differentiated instruction, and effective use of limited resources. Second, the Ministry of National Education should consider the introduction of a modified curriculum that is specifically designed for the realities of combined class teaching. Such a curriculum would need to be flexible, adaptable, and capable of being customized to meet the diverse needs of students across different grade levels.

Additionally, improving the physical infrastructure of schools and ensuring the availability of adequate teaching materials are crucial steps towards enhancing the learning environment in combined classes. Governmental and

non-governmental organizations should collaborate to fund and implement infrastructure projects that provide conducive learning environments. Community involvement is equally vital; strategies to increase parental engagement and community participation in the educational process should be prioritized, as these elements are critical for the holistic development of students.

Looking forward, it is also essential to consider alternative educational models that could complement or, in some cases, replace combined class setups. Models such as transported education, boarding schools, and regional educational centers present viable alternatives that could potentially offer more structured and resource-efficient educational environments. However, the implementation of such models must be carefully analyzed for economic viability and cultural acceptance within local communities.

In conclusion, while combined class teaching in Turkey addresses critical educational access issues, it introduces several significant challenges that must be managed to ensure the provision of quality education. This study advocates for a multi-faceted approach that involves policy reform, educational training, curriculum redesign, and community engagement. By embracing these recommendations, Turkey can significantly enhance the effectiveness of combined class teaching and, ultimately, ensure that all children have access to the quality education they deserve, irrespective of their geographical or socio-economic position. This endeavor will not only improve educational outcomes within the country but also contribute to the global discourse on best practices in multigrade teaching.

RECOMMENDATION

The study of combined class teaching in Turkey reveals several critical areas where strategic interventions could substantially enhance the educational outcomes for students and alleviate some of the pressures faced by teachers. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

Enhanced Teacher Training and Support

Develop and implement comprehensive training programs specifically designed for teachers in combined classes. These should include modules on effective multigrade classroom management, differentiated instruction techniques, and strategies for engaging students across different age groups and learning levels. Establish a mentorship system where experienced teachers can guide those new to combined class settings, providing ongoing support and sharing best practices.

Curriculum Adaptation and Material Development

The Ministry of National Education should oversee the creation and distribution of specialized curricula tailored for multigrade classrooms. These curricula need to be flexible, allowing teachers to adapt lessons according to the varying academic needs and paces of students. Provide schools with appropriate teaching materials that

cater to diverse learning stages within a single classroom environment, including technology-enhanced learning tools that can offer personalized learning experiences.

Infrastructure Improvement

Increase investment in rural school infrastructure to ensure that all educational facilities are conducive to learning, with adequate space, sanitation, and technological resources. Secure funding for necessary school supplies and learning materials, ensuring that scarcity does not impede the educational process.

Community and Parental Engagement

Initiate community outreach programs to educate parents and community members about the importance of their involvement in educational activities and decision-making processes. Develop partnerships between schools and local businesses or non-profits to support educational initiatives and create more robust community involvement in rural education.

Policy and Legislative Support

Advocate for policies that provide greater resources and support to combined class schools, recognizing the unique challenges they face. Implement legislative measures that ensure sustained funding and support for rural education, aiming to equalize educational opportunities across different regions.

Exploration of Alternative Educational Models

Conduct feasibility studies on alternative educational arrangements such as transported education systems, boarding schools, and regional educational centers to determine their viability and potential benefits over traditional combined class systems. Encourage pilot projects to test these models in various districts to evaluate their effectiveness in improving educational outcomes and operational efficiency.

Regular Assessment and Feedback Mechanisms

Establish a system for regular assessment of educational outcomes in combined class schools to monitor progress and identify areas needing improvement. Create feedback channels for teachers and students to report on the educational process and outcomes, ensuring that their insights contribute to ongoing educational reforms.

Technology Integration

Leverage technology to create blended learning environments that can help manage the diverse educational needs of students in combined classes. Invest in teacher training for effective technology use in the classroom, ensuring that teachers are equipped to utilize digital tools to enhance learning.

By implementing these recommendations, Turkey can significantly improve the quality and effectiveness of education in combined class settings, ultimately ensuring a more equitable and inclusive educational landscape across the country.

Ethics Statement

"This article complies with the journal's writing rules, publication principles, research and publication ethics rules, and journal ethics rules. The author bears responsibility for any violations related to the article." Since this article was conducted through review article, it does not require ethical board approval.

Author's Contribution Rate Statement: In this study, the first author's contribution is 25%, the second author's contribution is 25%, the third author's contribution is 25%, and the fourth author's contribution is 25%.

REFERENCES

- Abay, S. (2006). *Birleştirilmiş sınıf uygulanmasında öğretmenlerin öğrenme- öğretme sürecinde karşılaştığı sorunlar*. (Yayınlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü İlköğretim Ana Bilim Dalı, Erzurum.
- Abay, S. (2007). *Birleştirilmiş sınıflarda sosyal bilgiler öğretimindeki sorunlar* (Yayınlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Samsun Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Samsun.
- Açan, M. (2015). *Birleştirilmiş sınıfta ilk okuma yazmayı öğrenme ve öğretme sürecinin betimlenmesi: Bir durum çalışması* (Yayınlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Gazi Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Ankara.
- Akbaşlı S. ve Pilten Ö. (1999). *Birleştirilmiş sınıflarda öğretim*. Mikro Yayınları.
- Akdağ, A. (2014). *Birleştirilmiş sınıflı okullarda çalışan müdür yetkili öğretmenlerin tükenmişlik düzeylerinin incelenmesi (Adıyaman İli Örneği)* (Yayınlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Türk Hava Kurumu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Ankara.
- Arıcı, F. (2015). *Birleştirilmiş sınıflarda temel eğitim hakkının kullanılması* (Yayınlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Akdeniz Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Antalya.
- Aybek, B. ve Aslan, S. (2014). Birleştirilmiş sınıflarda görev yapan öğretmenlerin ses temelli cümle yönteminin uygulanmasında yaşamış oldukları sorunlara ve çözüm önerilerine yönelik görüşlerinin incelenmesi (nitel bir araştırma). *Turkish Studies*, 9(5), 251-263.
- Bayar, S. A. (2009). *Sınıf öğretmenliği eğitimi anabilim dalı 4. sınıf öğrencilerinin birleştirilmiş sınıflar hakkındaki görüşleri: Gazi Üniversitesi örneği* (Yayınlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Gazi Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Ankara.
- Bilir, A. (2008). Birleştirilmiş sınıflı köy ilköğretim okullarında öğretmen ve öğretim gerçeği. *Ankara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Fakültesi Dergisi*, 41(2), 1-22.
- Binbaşıoğlu, C. (1983). *Birleştirilmiş sınıflarda öğretim rehberi*. Binbaşıoğlu Yayıncılık.

- Bingöl, H. N. (2002). *Birleştirilmiş sınıflı ilköğretim okullarında müdür yetkili öğretmenlerin karşılaştıkları yönetim sorunları Çorum ili Sungurlu ilçesi örneği* (Yayımlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Ankara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Ankara.
- Borbely, D., Gehrsitz, M., McIntyre, S., Rossi, G. ,& Roy, G. (2023). Early years multi- grade classes and pupil attainment. *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, 85(6), 1295-1319.
- Bozdoğan, E., & Polat, S. (2022). Birleştirilmiş sınıflı ilkokullarda yaşanan yönetsel sorunlar ve çözüm önerileri. *Disiplinlerarası Eğitim Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 6(11), 76-89.
- Can, M. C. (2022). *Köy okullarında yaşanan sorunlar ve taşımali eğitime yönelik veli, öğretmen ve yönetici görüşleri* (Yayımlanmamış tezsiz yüksek lisans tezi projesi). Pamukkale Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Denizli.
- Çağlayan, A. (2012). *Birleştirilmiş sınıf öğretmenlerinin tükenmişlik düzeyleri* (Yayımlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Atatürk Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Erzurum.
- Dal, A. (2004). *Birleştirilmiş sınıflı köy ilköğretim okullarında görevli müdür yetkili öğretmenlerin stres kaynakları* (Yayımlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). İnönü Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Malatya.
- Doğan, A. R. (2000). *Birleştirilmiş sınıflarda eğitim öğretim*. Uzun Yayınevi.
- Dursun, F. (2006). Birleştirilmiş sınıflarda eğitim sorunları ve çözüm önerileri. *Sosyal Bilimler Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 2, 33-57.
- Erdem, A. R. (2015). *Birleştirilmiş sınıflarda öğretim* (7. baskı). Anı Yayıncılık.
- Erdem, A. R., Kamacı, S., & Aydemir, T. (2005). Birleştirilmiş sınıfları okutan sınıf öğretmenlerinin karşılaştıkları sorunlar: Denizli örneği. *Eğitimde Kuram ve Uygulama*, 1, 3-13.
- Fidan, N., & Baykul, Y. (1993). *Birleştirilmiş sınıflarda öğretim öğretmen rehberi*. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı ve UNICEF Türkiye Temsilciliği.
- Gelebek, M. S. (2011). *Birleştirilmiş sınıf öğretmenlerinin yapılandırmacılık temelli yeni ilköğretim programının birleştirilmiş sınıflarda uygulanmasına ilişkin (Kilis ili örneği)* (Yayımlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Gaziantep Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Gaziantep.
- Gökbulut, Y., & Dirik, E. (2017). Birleştirilmiş sınıf öğretmenlerinin çoklu zekâ kuramının uygulanabilirliğine ilişkin görüşleri. *Uluslararası Türk Eğitim Bilimleri Dergisi*, 8, 248-263.
- Göksoy, S., Arıcan, K., & Eriş, M. (2015). Birleştirilmiş sınıflı ilkokullarda görevli öğretmenlerin stres düzeyleri. *Asya Öğretim Dergisi (Asian Journal of Instruction)*, 3(1), 92-106.
- Göksoy, S., Arıcan, K., & Sağır, M. (2016). Birleştirilmiş sınıflı okullarda öğretmen davranışları. *Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 16(3), 830- 846.
- Gönül, İ. (2019). *Birleştirilmiş sınıfta görev yapan öğretmenlerin uygulamada karşılaştıkları sorunlara ilişkin görüşler* (Yayımlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Amasya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Amasya.
- Gönül, İ., & Arslan, R. (2018). Birleştirilmiş sınıftan mezun öğrencilerin üst eğitim kademesinde karşılaştıkları sorunlar. *Amasya Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 7(1), 43-62.

- Görür, Z., Altındağ, G., & Özkaya, M. S. (2007). Birleştirilmiş sınıfların yararları ve sınırlılıkları. *E-Eğitim Bilim ve Sanat Dergisi*. <http://www.egitirim.gen.tr/tr/index.php/arsiv/sayi-11-20/sayi-16-yonetim-ve-insan-kaynagi-agustos-2007/204-birlestirilmis-sinif-ogretiminin-yarar-ve-sakinclari>
- Hasanoğlu, G. (2013). *Birleştirilmiş sınıflardaki kaynaştırma eğitiminde yaşanan sorunlara ilişkin görüşler* (Yayınlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Eskişehir.
- İnce, N. B., & Şahin, A. E. (2016). Birleştirilmiş ve bağımsız sınıflarda çalışan sınıf öğretmenlerinin mesleki doyum ve tükenmişlik düzeylerinin karşılaştırılması. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 31(2), 391-409.
- Karataş, A., & Kınalıoğlu, İ. H. (2018). Köy okullarında çalışan sınıf öğretmenlerinin sorunları. *Uşak Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 11(3), 207-220.
- Kazu, H., & Aslan, S. (2012). Birleştirilmiş sınıf öğretmenlerinin Hayat Bilgisi dersi öğretim programına yönelik görüşlerinin incelenmesi (nitel bir araştırma). *Turkish Studies*, 7(2), 693-706.
- Khan, J. W., & Khan, S. A. (2007). School improvement in a multigrade situation and action research carried out in Chitral-Pakistan. <http://multigrade.ioe.ac.uk/fulltext/fulltextKhanandKhan.pdf>
- Köksal, K. (2005). *Birleştirilmiş sınıflarda öğretim*. PegemA Yayıncılık.
- Laitila, T., & Wilén, L. (2014). Pieniä kouluja ja yhdysluokkia koskevan päätöksenteon ja kehittämisen tietopohja [Basic information of policymaking and developing concerning small schools and multi-grade classes]. *Kasvatus: The Finnish Journal of Education*, 45(3), 263–268.
- Lisa Piper, L. (2021). Educational policies for multigrade schools in Mexico: Relegated by graduated education. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Management, Economics, and Accounting*, 7(1), 1-26.
- Little, W. (2001). Multigrade Teaching: towards an international research and policyagenda. *International Journal of Education Development*, 21, 481-497.
- Little, W. A. (2004). *Learning and teaching multigrade settings*. Paper Prepared for UNESCO 2005 EFA Monitoring Report.
- Little, W. A. (2006). *Education for all and multigrade teaching challenges and opportunities*. Springer.
- McDuffie, K. A. (2007). Co-teaching in inclusive classrooms: results of qualitative research from the United States, Canada, and Australia. İçinde T. E. Scruggs ve Mastropieri, M. A. (Ed.), *International perspectives: Advances in learning and behavioral disabilities* (ss. 311-338). Elsevier.
- Meydan, A. (2002). *Taşımali ilköğretim uygulaması*. Selçuk Üniversitesi Doktora Semineri.
- Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı. (2005). *Milli eğitim istatistikleri (2004-2005)*. Devlet Kitapları Müdürlüğü.
- Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı. (2010). *Mili Eğitim Bakanlığı istatistikleri*. Devlet Kitapları Müdürlüğü.
- Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı. (2020). *Milli eğitim istatistikleri*. http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2019_09/30102730_meb_istatistikleri_organ_egitim_2018_2019.pdf
- Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı. (2021). *Milli eğitim istatistikleri örgün eğitim 2020/2021*. http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/www/icerik_goruntule.php?KNO=424/

- Mortazavizadeh, S. H., Nili, M. R., Isfahani, A. R. N., & Hassani, M. (2017). Teachers' lived experiences about teaching-learning process in multi-grade classes. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 6(4), 354-363.
- Ocakcı, E. (2017). *Birleştirilmiş sınıf öğretmenlerinin sınıf yönetimi yeterlilikleri ve sınıf yönetimi ile ilgili görüşlerinin incelenmesi* (Yayımlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Atatürk Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Erzurum.
- Oğuzkan, F. (1987). *Eğitim terimleri sözlüğü*. Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları.
- Özdemir Çetinkaya, E., & Kurnaz, E. (2022). Birleştirilmiş sınıfta eğitim gören öğrencilerin problem çözme becerilerinin geliştirilmesi: Etkileşimli kitap okuma etkinliği. *Ahi Evran Üniversitesi Kırşehir Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 23(3), 2658- 2701.
- Özdemir, M., Özdemir, O., & Gül, M. (2020). Birleştirilmiş sınıflı okullarda görev yapan sınıf öğretmenlerinin birleştirilmiş sınıf uygulamalarına ilişkin görüşleri. *Avrasya Sosyal ve Ekonomi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 7(6), 87-101.
- Öztürk, N. (2007). Cumhuriyetin başlangıcından günümüze birleştirilmiş sınıflar uygulaması. *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Buca Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 22, 28-35.
- Paasimaki, J. (2003). Rural school in Finland. İçinde Tsolakidis, C., Sotiriou, S., Orfanakis. M. (Ed), *The path way to high quality multigrade teaching*. Epinoia.
- Palavan, Ö. (2012). Birleştirilmiş ve bağımsız sınıflı ilköğretim 4. sınıf öğrencilerinin sosyal bilgilerin kazanımlarına erişim düzeyleri. *Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 31(2), 281-294.
- Palavan, Ö., & Göçer, V. (2017). Sınıf öğretmenlerinin birleştirilmiş sınıflarda karşılaştıkları problemler (Malatya il örneği). *Kırıkkale Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 7(2), 69-96.
- Sağ, R. ve Savaş, B., & Sezer, R. (2009). Burdur'daki birleştirilmiş sınıf öğretmenlerinin özellikleri, sorunları ve ihtiyaçları. *Inonu University Journal of The Faculty of Education*, 10(1), 37-56.
- Samancı, O. (2019). *Birleştirilmiş sınıflarda öğretim*. Pegem Akademi.
- Sezer, R. (2010). *Birleştirilmiş sınıf öğretmenlerinin mesleki ihtiyaçları analizi* (Yayımlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Burdur.
- Sınmaz, A. (2009). *Birleştirilmiş sınıf öğretmenlerinin yeni ilköğretim programının uygulamasına ilişkin görüşlerinin değerlendirilmesi* (Düzce ili örneği) (Yayımlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Bolu.
- Sidekli, S., Coşkun, İ., & Aydın, Y. (2015). Köyde öğretmen olmak: Birleştirilmiş sınıf. *Trakya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 17(1), 311-331.
- Statistik Austria (2013) *Schulstatistik 2012/13 (Sonderauswertung)*. School statistics 2012/2013.
- Summak, M. S., Summak, E. G., & Gelebek, M. S. (2011). Birleştirilmiş sınıflarda karşılaşılan sorunlar ve öğretmenlerin bakış açısından olası çözüm önerileri (Kilis ili örneği). *Gaziantep Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 10(3), 1221-1238.
- Şeker, H. (2014). *Birleştirilmiş sınıflı okullardan mezun öğrencilerin üst eğitim kademelerindeki akademik ve sosyal başarı durumları* (Yayımlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Gazi Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Ankara.

- Şekerci, K. (2015). *Birleştirilmiş sınıflarda görevli öğretmenlerin tükenmişlik düzeylerinin incelenmesi; Şanlıurfa ili örneği* (Yayımlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Zirve Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Gaziantep.
- Şevik, M. (2011). Birleştirilmiş sınıflı ilköğretim okullarında İngilizce öğretimi: Durum çalışması. *Elementary Education Online*, 10(3), 1138-1147.
- Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu. (2014). Birleştirilmiş sınıflar haftalık ders programları. <https://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/>
- Taşdemir, M. (2012). *Birleştirilmiş sınıflarla öğretim*. Pegem Akademi.
- Tosun Çam, F. ve Filiz, T. (2017). Müdür yetkili sınıf öğretmenlerinin karşılaştıkları ekonomik ve okul işletmesiyle ilgili sorunlar. *İlköğretim Online*, 16(3), 978-991.
- Uçan, F. (1997). *Yeni program uygulama kılavuzu*. Pratik Öğretim Yayınevi.
- Uygur, M. ve Yelken, T, Y. (2010). Birleştirilmiş sınıflı okullarda uygulanan Fen ve teknoloji dersine (yeni Fen programına) yönelik öğrencilerin ve öğretmenlerin görüşleri. *Çukurova Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 3(38), 1-18.
- Veenman, S. (1995). Cognitive and noncognitive effects of multigrade and multi-age Classes: A best evidence synthesis. *Review of Educational Reserch*, 65(4), 319- 381.
- Yeşiltepe, S., & Korucuk, B. (2020). Birleştirilmiş sınıf sorunlarının tespit edilmesine yönelik bir çalışma: Giresun ili örneği. *Eğitim ve Yeni Yaklaşımlar Dergisi*, 3(2), 87-100.
- Yıldırım, F., & Amaç, Z. (2020). Sınıf öğretmeni adaylarının birleştirilmiş sınıf uygulamaları: Görüş ve öneriler. *Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 30(2), 203-220.
- Yıldırım, N., Elma, C., Yazıcı, L. Öcal, S., & Zabun, E. (2016). 4+4+4 yapısal değişikliğin birleştirilmiş sınıflı okullara yansması ve öğretmenlerin beklentileri. *Turkish Journal of Educational Studies*, 3(2), 83-109.
- Yıldırım, Z. (2002). *Müfredat laboratuvar okullarında okul-veli, okul üniversite ve okul- çevre iş birliği* (Yayımlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Anadolu Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Eskişehir.
- Yıldız, N. (2011). *Birleştirilmiş sınıflarda görev yapan öğretmenlerin çalıştıkları yerin kültürü ile etkileşiminin değerlendirilmesi* (Yayımlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Selçuk Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Konya.
- Yıldız, S. Ş. (2009). *2005 hayat bilgisi dersi öğretim programının birleştirilmiş sınıflarda uygulanabilirliğinin öğretmen görüşlerine göre değerlendirilmesi* (Yayımlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Afyonkarahisar.
- Yılmaz Öztürk, Z. (2023). Sınıf öğretmeni adaylarının Covid 19 pandemi sürecinde birleştirilmiş sınıfta öğretmenlik ile ilgili görüşleri. *Muallim Rifat Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi (MREFD)*, 5(2), 234-247.
- Yılmaz, A. H. (2014). *Türkçe dersi öğretim programının birleştirilmiş sınıflarda uygulanabilirliğinin öğretmen görüşlerine göre değerlendirilmesi* (Yayımlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Afyonkarahisar.