

**EXAMINATION OF EDUCATION IN MULTIGRADE CLASS SCHOOLS IN A
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

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ABSTRACT

Multigrade classroom practice is not a practice unique to Türkiye. It is also implemented in different countries for many reasons (economic, social, geographical, educational). In Türkiye's sparsely populated residential areas, due to the low number of students, it has become necessary for more than one class to be taught by a single teacher. The people living in these regions do not want their children to receive education in a separate place from them by sending them to bussed education or boarding schools. Türkiye has various landforms and is generally rugged. Building a school in such mountainous and forested places, where there are transportation problems, creates the problem of assigning teachers. Therefore, geographical conditions and difficulties in transportation made it necessary to build a school with one or two classrooms in these places. Due to the low number of students in rural areas, the multigrade classes teaching system was implemented in these places in order to meet the need for teachers, eliminate the shortage of classrooms and save the budget. In the research, it was determined that multigrade classroom practices have various benefits. These benefits include gaining the habit of cooperation and working in cooperation instead of individual work and competition, increasing the feelings of solidarity and sharing, developing a sense of self freely, being tolerant and not being prejudiced against differences, developing critical thinking and encouraging entrepreneurship instead of conditioned, dependent and imitative behaviors. It was determined that.

Key Words: Multigrade Class, Classroom Teacher, School

1. INTRODUCTION

The diversity of Türkiye's geographical, socio-economic and cultural characteristics necessitates different types of education and training. Especially in rural areas, due to reasons such as insufficient number of students and classrooms, compulsory education in these places was carried out as bussed and multi-grade education. In transported education; The fact that children leave their families every day and go to other places to study negatively affects their education and reduces the quality of the education they receive and this has made it necessary to focus on education at BSO (Yıldırım ve Amaç, 2020). Multigrade classroom is a place where more than one class is taught by a teacher in groups in order to save money on classrooms and teachers due to migration from villages to cities in rural settlements such as villages (Sidekli et al., 2015). The concept of multigrade class; In the literature, it is referred to as composite multigrade, mixed, multilevel and multiclass (Little, 2001). Multigrade class is a form of class that allows a teacher to provide education and training services in groups to students of different ages and grade levels in rural areas of the state (Abay, 2006).

Köksal (2005) defined the concept of multigrade class as a class where a small number of students in rural areas are formed as a group under the leadership of a teacher in a classroom due to economic and geographical conditions. Multigrade classroom teaching is defined as the work done by a teacher in rural places such as villages in groups of more than one class due to shortage of students, teachers and classrooms (İlter, 2015). Based on all these definitions, schools with multi-grade classes; It can be defined as schools in rural areas where children of different ages and classes receive education in groups accompanied by a teacher.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Historical Process of Multigrade Class Application

With the opening of the Turkish Grand National Assembly on April 23, 1920, there was an increase in the number of primary schools (Bilir, 2008). After the First İnönü War, the Education Congress was convened to discuss and determine the principles of our education system. At the congress; The ideas of abolishing the old primary education program and applying a different primary school program to villages and cities due to their different characteristics were adopted and the goals related to the program were discussed. Before the proclamation of the Republic, the Scientific Committee carried out important studies and meetings regarding education. At the meetings, decisions were taken to reduce the duration of primary school from 6 years to 5 years and to renew/develop the primary education program. With the Tevhid-i Tedrisat Law No. 430 dated March 3, 1924, all educational institutions in

the country were connected to the Ministry of Education and it was decided that the duration of primary education would be 5 years (Gönül, 2019). With the adoption of the New Turkish Letters on November 1, 1928, National Schools began to become widespread.

With the Village Schools Curriculum Program, which came into force in 1930, the principles of education in village schools were determined and the program was adapted according to the village environment in order to ensure the adaptation of students (Şahin, 2010). With the Village Educators Law, which came into force in 1937, people who were literate and had completed their military service were given the task of teaching in the village (Gönül, 2019). With the decision taken at the First National Education Council (1939), it was aimed to reduce the quality difference between village and city schools by increasing the duration of primary education to 5 years and also the principles of establishing multigrade classes and the training of village teachers were discussed. With the Village Institutes Law No. 3803, enacted in 1940, attention was paid to the training of village teachers (Bilir, 2008; Gönül, 2019). With the implementation of the new primary school program prepared in 1948, the program in 1936 was abolished. Since this program, prepared in 1948, was implemented exactly in all primary schools across the country, without distinguishing between villages and cities, village teachers experienced great difficulties in implementation (Kazu and Aslan, 2011). In 1952, American Prof. Following Wofford's suggestion, group work in multigrade classes was adopted (Bilir, 2008).

The program, which was prepared for primary schools in 1962, started to be implemented in 1968. Multigrade classes had an important place in this program. The teaching, methods and application principles of multigrade classes are thoroughly explained in this program (Yıldız and Köksal, 2009). In this program prepared in 1968, the axis course application was included for the first time. The 1968 program was implemented in the same way for a long time - until 1981 (Gönül, 2019). With the law enacted in 2000, it was decided that the Life Sciences, Social Studies and Science courses programs would be implemented in the same way in all schools/classes and thus the axis course application was abolished. With this decision; By implementing a common program throughout the country, the aim is to ensure uniformity of education and equity in measurement and evaluation (Şahin, 2010). In the preparation of the 2004 curriculum, the "Constructivist Approach", which is based on learning by doing and experiencing, was taken into consideration. The 2004 program has been put into practice since the 2005-2006 academic year. In this program; Teacher guides and student workbooks were prepared within the framework of the constructivist approach principles and student-activity based activities/evaluations were largely included (Köksal,

2005). With the "Law on Amendments to the Primary Education and Education Law and Some Laws" dated 30.03.2012 and numbered 6287, compulsory primary education consists of two parts: four-year primary school (1-4th grade) and secondary school (5-8th grade). In this case, the 5th grade was included in the secondary school from the primary school and thus the number of multigrade classes decreased to four.

2.2. Multigrade Class Practices in Other Countries

Multigrade classroom practice is not a practice unique to Türkiye. It is also applied in different countries for many reasons (economic, social, geographical, educational) (Gönül, 2019). Since 1850, multigrade classes have been implemented in many primary schools in North America and Europe. Although the number of independent classes increased with the increase in urbanization with the industrial revolution, the number of multigrade classes started to increase since the 1980s (Çıkrık, 2017). Despite its various drawbacks, multigrade classroom practice in European countries is carried out to increase the cooperation, communication/interaction of upper and lower grade students and for alternative educational purposes (Taşdemir, 2000). Nowadays, multigrade classroom application; It continues in African countries, Peru, as well as in many developed countries (Japan, USA, Canada, India, Denmark, Norway) and most of the EU countries (Aydemir, 2016). Multigrade class application; It is seen as a system implemented with the aim of ensuring unity in villages with the support of the public in Denmark, public education centers in Finland, Montessori schools in the USA and ensuring learning together with daily life in Norway (Sezer, 2010).

In African countries, multigrade classroom practice is generally aimed at benefiting equally from the right to education and increasing the quality of education (Juvane, 2005). Vietnam has further developed the existing multigrade class practice in the country by implementing the "Bringing School to Children" project in order to increase the education level of students living in rural areas and realize the basic education policy (Gönül, 2019). In England, there is also a different type of multigrade class application called "mixed age", which is created by bringing together approximately one quarter of the students from different classes (Köksal, 2005).

2.3. Reasons for the Emergence of Multigrade Classes

In Türkiye's sparsely populated residential areas, due to the low number of students, it has become necessary for more than one class to be taught by a single teacher. The people living in these regions do not want their children to receive education in a separate place from

them by sending them to bussed education or boarding schools. Türkiye has various landforms and is generally rugged. Building a school in such mountainous and forested places, where there are transportation problems, creates the problem of assigning teachers. Therefore, geographical conditions and difficulties in transportation made it necessary to build a school with one or two classrooms in these places. In addition, the lack of classrooms in some schools has led to the implementation of multigrade classes instead of education in separate classes (Abay, 2006).

The reasons that reveal the application of multigrade classes can be discussed under three headings:

- The scarcity of students in rural areas, the need for teachers and the inadequacy of classrooms,
- Gathering students from different grade levels in one classroom due to the small number of students,
- In cases of classroom and student inadequacy, the Ministry may assign one or two teachers to these schools in order to save on teacher surplus (Köksal, 2005).

Due to the low number of students in rural areas, a multigrade classroom teaching system was implemented in these places in order to meet the need for teachers, eliminate the shortage of classrooms and save the budget (Çıkırık, 2017). Palavan and Göçer (2017) explain the reasons for the emergence of teaching in multigrade classes; a) Insufficient number of students, b) Insufficient number of teachers, c) Insufficient number of classrooms.

One of the most important reasons for multi-grade classroom application is to provide economic savings. By building fewer classrooms for a small number of students in rural areas such as villages and reducing the number of teachers to be assigned, savings in the budget are achieved and a contribution to the country's economy is made (Özkan, 2019). Although the number of schools with multi-grade classes is higher in rural areas; In addition to the basic reasons such as low number of students, insufficiency of teachers and classrooms and negative transportation and climate conditions (Öztürk, 2005), the decrease in population in rural areas as a result of migration from villages to cities, the financial burden of appointing more teachers to places with low number of students, the restructuring of village schools instead of bussed education. Social and economic reasons, such as the opening of the building, are also cited as reasons (Özdemir, Özdemir and Gül, 2020).

Multigrade classroom practices vary depending on the number of students, teachers and classrooms in the school. It is the most difficult form of multi-grade classroom implementation in a group of four classes (1-4) in a single-teacher school and is implemented

due to the inadequacy of students, teachers and classrooms. In this form of application, it is very difficult to realize all the activities and achievements in the lessons at all grade levels; In a two-teacher school, grades 1-2. grades one group and 3-4. Classes constitute the other group; In a school with three teachers, the 1st and 4th grades are one group and the 2nd-3rd grades are divided into two groups due to the difference in curriculum and achievements. classes constitute a third group (Gönül, 2019; Aktürk, 2022).

2.4. Benefits of Multigrade Class Application

Although the multi-grade class application emerged as a temporary application mostly for economic reasons, later in developed and developing countries; It has been seen as a good option to bring education services to rural areas, make them permanent and increase schooling. With this application; It is aimed to provide educational services to children of compulsory education age in disadvantaged places, to contribute to their academic and social development and to develop a positive self/attitude towards school and society (İlter, 2015). Since multigrade classroom application, by its nature, requires students from different classes and levels to be educated together, it helps students' collaborative learning and children's social and mental development (Sezer, 2010). In studies conducted on multigrade classroom application; It has been seen that it expands children's access to education and contributes especially to the education of girls (Özenir, 2022). In addition, the presence of students from different classes/age groups in multigrade class application; It has been concluded that students develop skills/characteristics such as taking responsibility, being patient and tolerant, self-esteem and self-development, developing a positive attitude towards school and being disciplined (Little, 2001; Berry, 2000).

Multigrade classroom practice provides great convenience in meeting Türkiye's teacher needs economically and in enabling schools to be built in more places with fewer classrooms. Through multi-grade classes, students of different ages, grades and levels are given the opportunity to learn together and collaborate/share. In addition, multigrade class application; It contributes to students' social and academic development such as respect, friendship, sharing/cooperation, as well as cognitive skills such as studying/researching/learning on their own (Erdem, 2011; Little, 2001). With good planning/organization of teaching in multigrade classes, individual development is provided by creating an environment suitable for students to engage in different types of education according to their interests and abilities (Köksal, 2002).

In European countries, multigrade classroom practice is carried out with the thought that it will be beneficial in terms of education rather than necessity or impossibility (Özenir, 2022). In Norway, multigrade classroom practice has been used considering its benefits such as providing real-life learning in accordance with the principle of adaptability to life, applying the school-within-a-school model in the USA and becoming a public education center in Finland (Sezer, 2010).

The single-room school is one of the first examples of multigrade classroom practice. Although education is mostly carried out in self-contained classes today, multi-grade teaching has been reconsidered in some schools. In multi-grade teaching, the teacher must have different types of teaching skills/abilities suitable for students of different levels and abilities. In addition, it is estimated that multi-grade education will increase even more, considering that schools with multi-grade classes will be more economically attractive in the future (Taşdemir, 2014). Although multigrade classroom practice has generally emerged due to various inadequacies/negatives, it has positive aspects such as increasing cooperation and communication/interaction between students (Gönül, 2019). The advantages of multigrade classroom application can be summarized as follows (Summak, Summak and Gelebek, 2011; Abay, 2006):

- In multi-grade schools, students of different ages, classes and levels are in solidarity and communication. These students at different levels are provided with education in the same environment.
- Since students in multi-grade schools spend most of their time on individual study, students' skills such as planned study, self-discipline, individual learning and research develop.
- Since BSO is in rural areas such as villages and has limited opportunities, school maintenance, repair, cleaning, painting etc. are done together with the students and teachers. In this way, students are enabled to gain early life experiences, skills and attitudes and skills such as taking responsibility.
- Contribution to the economy is achieved by saving teachers.
- It contributes to providing educational services to rural settlements and saving money on classrooms.
- With the multi-grade classroom application, a solution is provided to the problems encountered in bussed education and boarding schools.
- Since students in multigrade classes are educated together with other students from

different grade levels; They can learn the subjects they are deficient in and if they have reading and writing problems, they can solve this. Moreover, lower grade students gain the opportunity to pre-learn the subjects they will learn in the future and move away from the rote learning approach.

- In the multigrade class, a suitable environment and opportunity is provided for students in the upper class to help and guide the students in the lower class. In this way; While students' emotions and skills such as teaching, cooperation, interaction, leadership, socialization and maturation develop, it also helps teachers use their time efficiently by alleviating their workload.
- Having students of different ages, grades and levels in the multigrade class; It enables students to work in groups and engage in collaborative learning and increases their socialization by enabling them to communicate/interact.

Based on the 2004-2005 statistics of the Ministry of Education, the benefits of multigrade classroom applications are listed below (MEB, 2005):

- Gaining the habit of cooperation and working in cooperation instead of individual work and competition,
- Increasing feelings of solidarity and sharing,
- Developing feelings of self freely,
- Being tolerant and not being prejudiced against differences,
- Developing critical thinking,
- Encouraging entrepreneurship rather than contingent, dependent and imitative behaviors.

2.5. Birleştirilmiş Sınıf Uygulamasının Sınırlılıkları

In addition to the benefits of multi-class schools, they also have many negative/disadvantageous aspects (Bozdoğan and Polat, 2022). In most national/international studies on multigrade classes in the literature, it is seen that stakeholders generally have a negative prejudice. Teachers working in multi-grade schools stated that their job was more difficult than in other independent schools and that this situation harmed their professional performance and attitudes (İlter, 2015).

Multigrade classroom schools are the education system generally implemented in rural settlements such as villages. In this practice, teachers often undertake both educational and administrative duties and are called "Principal Authorized Teachers". Since teachers with principal authority perform both teaching and administrative duties (Bozdoğan and Polat,

2022), this situation has negatively affected their performance/efficiency.

The negativities/disadvantages seen in multigrade classroom application can be explained as follows:

- With the 2000-2001 academic year, when the curriculum began to be implemented jointly in all primary schools - including multi-grade schools- the duties and responsibilities of teachers working in BSO increased (Gönül, 2019) and it took time to fully implement the curriculum. It caused the problem (Dursun, 2006).
- Teachers working in multigrade classes generally cannot show the required efficiency/performance because they are inexperienced and do not have sufficient knowledge (Yıldırım and Amaç, 2020).
- In schools with multi-grade classes, lessons are taught in a teacher-assigned format. In this case, the evaluation, control and feedback/correction of classes with homework negatively affect the teacher's time, performance and classroom management (Gönül, 2019).
- The low cultural level of the child's family and close circle and their low interest in school also negatively affects the student's school success (Gelebek, 2011).
- Principal authorized teachers who work as both teachers and administrators in multi-grade schools; Internet problems in rural areas cause them to experience problems in official correspondence/documents due to adverse transportation and climatic conditions (Gönül, 2019).
- Principal authorized teachers working in multi-grade schools; Apart from their education-training and administrative duties, they had to deal with problems such as cleaning, maintenance-repair, painting-whitewashing, fuel works, gardening, equipment supply, as well as parents'/environment's lack of interest in the school, professional difficulties and loneliness (Gelebek, 2011; Gönül, 2019).
- Teachers working in schools with multi-grade classes have problems with the negative transportation, climate and geographical conditions and social adaptation etc. of rural settlements such as villages. This causes them to not be able to fully dedicate themselves to their duties because they want to change their place of duty frequently due to problems (Palavan and Göçer, 2017) and this causes frequent teacher changes in these schools (Doğan, 2000).
- Children's absence from school to help their families in the village negatively affects students' school success (Gönül, 2019).

- Teachers; Not having sufficient knowledge and experience, needing guidance, having too many duties and responsibilities and needing more effort and time to prepare for the lesson are among the important problems faced by teachers working in multi-grade schools (Köksal, 2009).
- If teachers working in multigrade classes are not familiar with the village environment, they may experience problems such as difficulties in adapting to the geographical, social/cultural and transportation characteristics of the village, as well as negatively affecting their performance/efficiency at school (Sidekli, Coşkun and Aydın, 2015).

Kılıç and Abay (2009) study the problems experienced in multigrade classes; The school environment is not arranged in a way that allows students to learn by doing and experiencing, the school's equipment-material deficiencies, the teacher allocates more time and energy to preparation/planning work because he is responsible for the education of more than one class, he needs more work and patience and understanding, these schools Most of the time, teachers who are inexperienced and do not have sufficient knowledge negatively affect the professional excitement and motivation of these teachers in the first years of their duties, cause students to lose interest in lessons and prevent them from reaching all their achievements. Moreover; The structure of multigrade classes and the insufficient number of students make individual learning difficult with level and group studies (Temizyürek, 2019).

In the village, children helping their families and not being able to attend school regularly due to adverse natural conditions (Çelik and Gözler, 2013) and families' lack of interest in school (Gözler, 2009) negatively affect students' school success. Teachers who are unfamiliar with the village environment working in multi-grade schools, due to being far from the center and having negative geographical and transportation conditions, feel more left alone there and are looking for ways to ask for appointment and the students here are deprived of social activities that will improve themselves (Özdemir, Özdemir and Gül, 2020). . In studies conducted on multigrade classes, the main negative effects identified are listed as follows (Çelik and Gözler, 2013; Summak, Summak and Gelebek, 2011):

- The duties and responsibilities of the teacher are increasing.
- It is becoming difficult to achieve all the achievements in the primary school program.
- The multigrade classroom teacher cannot receive adequate guidance because he does not have many colleagues.
- In general, they do not have sufficient knowledge about multigrade classes.

- Computer and equipment equipment is scarce in schools with multi-grade classes.
- The program implemented in multigrade classes cannot fully meet the needs of the environment.
- Lack of servants in multi-grade schools takes teachers' time and energy.
- Teachers may be exposed to ethnic discrimination in the village.

2.6. Learning-Teaching Process in Multigrade Classes

The most important element that distinguishes multi-grade schools from detached schools is the learning-teaching process. In detached classrooms; In line with a program, teachers and students actively participate in course teaching and evaluation. In multigrade classes, where students of different age groups and grades are in the same environment; Since the teacher does not have the opportunity to teach different subjects to more than one class (Summak, Summak, & Gelebek, 2011), the teacher teaches the students in one class while the other class studies on their own and passively. Therefore, lessons in multigrade classes are given in two ways: with a teacher and without a teacher/with homework (Gönül, 2019).

In multigrade classes, lessons where the teacher directly participates in the lesson and participates in the learning-teaching process by interacting with the students are teacher-led lessons (Gönül, 2019). While the subject is taught in teacher-led lessons; Consideration is given to issues such as giving priority to important and difficult subjects that the student will learn for the first time, repeating incomprehensible subjects and conducting experiments with additional exercises. The teacher actively participates in the teaching of the lesson together with the students in a planned and prepared manner (Doğan, 2000). Particular attention is paid to ensure that courses such as Turkish, Mathematics and Science, where the student has difficulty in learning alone and needs support, are lessons with a teacher (Yıldız, 2011).

Since the teacher will apply different curriculum to more than one class in multigrade classes, the teacher must use his or her time in a planned, economical and effective way. In this way, the student can work individually and without difficulty under the guidance of the teacher during class time with homework (Abay, 2009). Lessons with a teacher and homework should be taught in a consistent and connected manner. While teaching a lesson with one class, the teacher should clearly explain the work/homework they will do to the other class. The studies to be done during homework time should not only be related to the subjects learned, but also include activities that require preparation for a new subject and that cannot be done easily (Köklü, 2000).

Teacher in multigrade class; While teaching with one class, he gives homework to the other class that reinforces the topics they have learned before or about the achievements they can learn individually. In schools with multigrade classes, the teaching activity based on the teacher doing preparation/planning work in advance and guiding the students in the lesson and allowing them to work on their own is called homework lessons (Samancı, 2019). In these courses, not only are students reviewed what they have learned, but also they are given the opportunity to prepare for new subjects and gain individual study skills (Gönül, 2019).

In order to get more efficiency from homework courses, it is necessary to pay attention to the following points: 1) Planning the work to be done in advance 2) Easily accessing the resources 3) Students should pay attention to the lesson with interest and patience and not disturb others while working 4) Gain the ability to use the library and equipment. 5) Suitability of the studies to the students' level 6) Having acquired the habit of reading 7) Using time effectively and efficiently 8) Expressing what they have learned 9) Checking and correcting the studies (Köksal, 2009).

The main studies that students will do on their own in multi-grade classes with homework courses are as follows: a) Subject evaluation studies b) Revision studies c) Preparation studies for the new subject d) Activities in student workbooks e) Social activity studies (Samancı, 2019). Since students work on their own in homework lessons, the teacher must thoroughly explain the work they will do to the students, give examples and inform them. Homework hours are not times when students are left unattended, but times when they are given the opportunity to learn on their own and acquire skills. Therefore, it is important to ensure that they have easy access to resources, to prepare tools and equipment, to ask for students' opinions about the work to be done and to control and evaluate the work done (Gönül, 2019).

To increase the efficiency of homework courses; In addition to being planned, the teacher should focus on activities that will make students active and enable them to learn new information. The teacher must follow and evaluate every stage of the homework together with the students, taking into account the principles of the constructivist approach. In addition, in lessons with homework, the teacher can get help from other students, but it is necessary to be careful to get help from a different student in each study so that the selected student does not go beyond the purpose of this role and have a negative/damaging effect on his/her friends (Yıldırım and Objective, 2020).

Abay (2006), activities/studies to be done in homework classes; He listed them as reading activities, writing activities, preparation for the new subject, studies in the practice garden, evaluation activities, social activity studies, classroom/school studies, re-study of the lessons learned and measurement of information.

RESULTS

Various studies have been conducted in the literature on the negativities in multigrade classes (Palavan and Göçer, 2017). In schools with multi-grade classes, there are two groups of students working with homework and a teacher during the lesson. Teachers spend time assigning homework to the homework group at the beginning of the lesson and evaluating their work at the final stage of the lesson. 40 min. The decrease in the duration of the course taught in the group that will work with a teacher can be stated as a disadvantage (Yıldırım, 2008). The disadvantage experienced in these processes increases in direct proportion to the teacher teaching two or more classes. The time allocated may decrease depending on the number of different classes.

It is becoming difficult to achieve all the goals of primary education programs. Conditions and especially lack of time make it difficult to achieve goals (Köksal, 2009). In flexible curriculums, it is very difficult to complete the objectives determined at all grade levels. This situation becomes more difficult depending on the number of classes the teacher teaches. In multigrade classroom applications, two-grade, three-grade and four-grade teaching systems are used. Although it was rarely implemented in a single class, it was not possible to achieve the set goals.

Teacher's duties, authority and responsibilities are increasing. The teacher who teaches four classes together is also the teacher authorized by the principal. The program, which was taught in independent classes, began to be implemented in multigrade classes as of the 2000-2001 academic year (Köksal, 2009). The position of principal authorized teacher brings an extra responsibility for the teacher. In addition to his teaching duties in the classroom environment, he must also be able to learn and apply administratively the work and procedures related to the school's national education.

Lack of equipment and equipment in multigrade classes creates problems both in administrative and teaching fields. Maintenance and repair of the school's building works are the responsibility of the teacher (Doğan, 2000). The difficulty of carrying out administrative work at the same time, the family's lack of interest in the school, professional loneliness,

dissatisfaction and lack of help make the multigrade classroom teacher even more difficult professionally.

The multigrade classroom teacher of the school; They have to deal with and solve problems such as painting and whitewashing, maintenance and repair of the roof, doors and windows, water and sewerage and the fuel needs of the school (Doğan, 2000). “Almost all primary schools with multi-grade classes do not have auxiliary staff. “The renovation, maintenance and repair of the school building has to be done in an organized manner together with the principal, authorized teachers and the village people in each new academic year.”

Families living in rural areas, whose livelihood depends on land and animal husbandry, benefit from the labor force of primary school age children and in village schools with multi-grade classes, students do not attend school regularly under various influences, causing them to fall behind in lessons and school work (Doğan, 2000). The program implemented in village primary schools where multigrade classes are implemented is far from meeting the needs of the village children and the village people. Social life in the city and social life in the village cannot be considered equal (Abay, 2006).

Türkiye’s social demographic structure and the fact that rural settlements were larger than the urban population until the 1970s made this practice necessary. Due to the low number of students in low-populated settlements and the impossibility of assigning more than one teacher to small classes, it has become necessary to combine more than one class and teach them as a group under the management of a teacher. Multigrade classes in Türkiye are mostly based on the village phenomenon. Multigrade classroom practice emerged as a result of a precaution considered in terms of economy (Köklü, 2000).

The main problems experienced by teachers who are new to the profession are that teachers who are new to the village environment have difficulties in getting used to this environment and their inexperience (Dursun, 2006) and that the training that classroom teachers receive in education and management at universities in multigrade schools is generally theoretical and not practical (Bingöl, 2002). The inadequacy of equipment, equipment and computers in the school causes the duties and responsibilities of principal-authorized teachers, who teach more than one class and undertake management duties, to increase (Gözler and Çelik, 2013) and to experience difficulties in carrying out their work (Tosun and Filiz, 2017; Köksal, 2002).).

Principal authorized teachers who carry out their administrative and teaching duties simultaneously in multi-grade schools; Apart from management and teaching duties, the school's cleaning, heating, renovation, maintenance and repair, etc. They also have duties and

responsibilities in different fields (Tosun and Filiz, 2017). In a study on the problems faced by teachers working in village schools, Karataş and Kınalıoğlu (2018) listed the problems of teachers as follows: Problems with students, problems due to physical conditions, problems with residence, problems with education and training, problems experienced while performing their duties, problems with transportation. problems with students' parents and the public, problems related to the insufficiency of social activities, problems related to self-education, guidance and supervision.

One of the important difficulties in schools with multi-grade classes is experienced in the implementation of the curriculum. The applied curriculum; The fact that the program is suitable for the characteristics of city schools and that its content is detailed and has different qualities makes it difficult to implement the program in schools with multigrade classes (Kılıç and Abay, 2009). In such a case, it does not seem possible for a teacher teaching students of different age groups in the same class to complete the curriculum in the same time as a teacher teaching an independent class (Gelebek, 2011). Therefore, no matter how well trained teachers are in their first years of work, their inadequacy in practice and their lack of familiarity with the village environment make it more difficult for them to achieve educational goals in addition to their other duties and this necessitates the implementation of a different curriculum (Dursun, 2006).

Gözler and Çelik (2013) listed the problems encountered in multigrade schools in their study as follows: The teacher's inability to allocate the entire lesson time to one class constitutes an obstacle to a fully effective education and the distance of the school location to the city or district center is the principal who has to carry out administrative affairs. It causes delays in teachers' sending of official letters and documents due to adverse conditions such as climate and roads, the lack of a certain allowance causes difficulties in meeting the needs of the school, parents' general lack of interest in the school, teachers having difficulty in adapting to the villages and frequently requesting appointments, due to the structure of the village. Teachers' exposure to discrimination and students' failure to attend school regularly negatively affects their school success.

In their study, Döş and Sağır (2013) stated the problems encountered in multi-grade schools; They listed the negative attitudes and behaviors of families towards education, students at different levels being educated together, the inadequacy of guidance studies and the indifference of superiors. Sağ et al. (2009) stated in their study that the important problems seen in multi-grade schools are; the need for stationery supplies, lack of internet access, difficulties in official correspondence, the need for maintenance-repair and repair of

the school and the negative physical conditions, computer and hardware deficiencies, professional loneliness and dissatisfaction, the need for guidance, lack of social interaction and communication, inadequacy of social activities, specific to disadvantaged areas. They expressed the negativities experienced (Transportation, infrastructure problems, financial difficulties, girls' education, parental indifference, etc.).

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