IOJPE

ISSN: 1300 – 915X
www.iojpe.org

International Online Journal of Primary Education *2022, volume 11, issue 1*

A CASE STUDY ON SPECIALIZATION MODELS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHING

Burak CESUR
Res. Assist., Faculty of Education, Gaziantep University, Turkey
ORCID: http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5788-8512
burakcesur@gantep.edu.tr

Canay DEMİRHAN İŞCAN
Assoc. Prof. Dr., Faculty of Educational Sciences, Ankara University, Turkey
ORCID: http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5548-4717
cdemir@education.ankara.edu.tr

Received: January 05, 2022 **Accepted:** May 17, 2022 **Published:** June 30, 2022

Suggested Citation:
Cesur, B., & Demirhan İşcan, C. (2022). A case study on specialization models in primary school teaching. *International Online Journal of Primary Education (IOJPE), 11*(1), 205-231.
https://doi.org/10.55020/iojpe.1053854

Abstract

The aim of the present study is to evaluate specialization models in primary school teaching based on the opinions of teachers and academicians studying teacher education. The research is considered to be important in that it is one of the first studies in the national literature on the related issue and it reveals advantages and disadvantages of each model. Multiple case-holistic design, one of the qualitative research methods, was followed in the study since it focuses on data obtained from primary school teachers working in private schools that adopt different specialization methods as well as academicians specializing in the field of teacher education. In order to receive opinions from participants, two different data collection tools were used, which were the Private School Teacher Interview Form and the Academician Interview Form. 33 participants were interviewed using the determined data collection tools in the 2018-2019 academic year. A content analysis method was used in the analysis of the obtained qualitative data. According to the results of the study, advantages and disadvantages of each model were identified. It was recommended as a result of the study that it might be effective to use departmentalized classroom models and looping models simultaneously in order for the students to establish positive relationships with teachers and for teachers to develop professional knowledge and skills.

Keywords: Primary school teaching, specialization, self-contained classrooms model, departmentalized classrooms model, looping model.

INTRODUCTION

Human beings have had the need for learning and knowing since their creation, at times benefiting from their own knowledge to fulfill this need and other times consulting others with knowledge. The relationship between the ones with and without knowledge evolved into a relationship of teacher-learner in time. Afterwards, formal education processes that include teacher-student relationships were formed. In this process, the professional and personal characteristics of teachers have played an important role in constructing effective learning experiences for students. Throughout their learning experiences, students are directly and indirectly affected by teachers' thoughts, emotional reactions, values, and habits while acquiring certain skills, knowledge, and attitudes (Darling & Hammond, 1999). These elements exert their positive or negative effects more on students, especially at the primary school stage. Teachers and students spend an important part of the day by interacting with each other on the primary school stage (Gözütok, 2007). Within this context, it is possible to state that teachers, who interact intensely with children during the primary school stage, play a huge role in shaping children's futures and enabling them to develop healthy personalities (Senemoğlu, 2013). Based on this reality, predictions about the society of the future can be made by looking at the qualifications of primary school teachers who train the people that will create the society of the future.

Primary school teachers must have certain fundamental professional skills in order to carry out effective teaching, such as monitoring student progress, enriching the teaching-learning processes by taking into account students' learning styles, diversifying teaching materials based on student needs, preparing learning activities in accordance with the objectives, selecting different teaching strategies, methods, and techniques according to the subject, and using alternate methods. Considering that the teaching profession requires specialized knowledge and skills (MoNE, 2017), primary school teachers are expected to be in charge of the teaching of more than one course, to teach different grade levels each year, and to improve themselves holistically and in multiple ways in the context of professional skills and specialized knowledge as a result of taking care of young learners. However, in the primary school stages of various countries (Sweden, Germany, Japan, China, Israel, the USA) (Cristone & Shneyderman, 2004; Grant, 1996), courses and the grade levels taught by primary school teachers differentiate, thus affecting the process of training primary school teachers. The models applied to primary school teachers' specialization in the teaching of certain courses (s) or grade levels (s) were examined by reviewing international literature. The application of each model was classified and presented in Table 1. On the other hand, when the national literature is examined, it is seen that the mentioned models have no equivalents in Turkish terminology. Within this framework, it was necessary to create Turkish terms for each model by reviewing the related studies and using them in the current research. In this direction, Turkish equivalents for each model were created by obtaining expert opinion. Additionally, "specialization" was used as an umbrella term to cover each of the models mentioned.

Table 1. Specialization models in primary school teaching.

Model	Application of the Model
Self-Contained Classrooms Model / Generalist Teacher Model	➢ A primary school teacher teaches the core courses (Turkish, Mathematics, Life Studies, Physical Sciences) and branch courses (Music, Painting, Physical Education, etc.) only at a single grade level continuously or for a particular duration, or a branch teacher teaches branch courses (Music, Painting, Physical Education, etc.).
Departmentalized Classrooms Model	➢ A primary school teacher teaches a single grade level or different grade levels by specializing in one or more courses. a) A primary school teacher teaches more than one course at each grade level during the academic year and rotates through different grade levels. b) A primary school teacher teaches more than one course at each grade level during the academic year, and students rotate through classes. c) A primary school teacher specializes in a single course and teaches the course that s/he specializes in to only a single grade level. d) A primary school teacher specializes in a single course and teaches the course that s/he specializes in to each grade level.
Looping Model/ Multi-Year Teaching Model/ Two-Cycle Teaching Model/ Teacher Rotation Model	➢ A primary school teacher proceeds with the same group of students for at least two years and teaches the core courses (Turkish, Mathematics, Life Studies, Social Studies, etc.) and branch courses (Music, Physical Education, English, etc.) or a branch teacher teaches branch courses (Music, Physical Education, English, etc.). e) A primary school teacher teaches core courses (Turkish, Mathematics, Life Studies, and Physical Sciences) and branch courses (Music, Physical Education, English, etc.) to students in the first and second grades, or as a second stage teacher to students in the third and fourth grades. f) A primary school teacher proceeds with the same group of students throughout the primary school, teaching the core courses (Turkish, Mathematics, Life Studies, Social Studies, etc.) and branch courses (Painting, Music, etc.) or a branch teacher teaches branch courses (Painting, Music, Physical Education, etc.).

Source. Anderson, 1962; Lobdell & Van Ness, 1963; Otto, 1931; Shane, 1960

Table 1 explains the self-contained classroom model, the departmentalized classroom model, and the looping model and the way they are applied. According to Table 1, the looping model has two different types of applications, the departmentalized classroom model has four different types of applications, and the self-contained classroom model has one type of application. In the current study, two types of applications within the looping models were named "two-cycle teaching model" (model e) and "looping model where the same teacher teaches 1st–4th grades" (model f) in Table 1, and they were discussed separately.

Lobdell and Van Ness (1963), who define self-contained classrooms as a model in which a primary school teacher teaches the core courses (Turkish, Mathematics, Life Studies, Physical Sciences) and branch courses (Music, Painting, Physical Education, etc.) only at a single grade level continuously or for a particular duration, and a branch teacher teaches branch courses (Music, Painting, Physical Education, etc.), advocate that it is the most appropriate model in the sense that permanent learning is enabled, continuity in the relationship between the teacher and student, social and emotional development of the students is monitored holistically, and interdisciplinary studies are carried out. McGrath and Rust (2002) define the self-contained classroom model as a student-centered model. Focusing on the departmentalized classroom model, Otto (1931) defines it as a model in which the primary school teacher teaches a single grade or several grades by specializing in a particular course or courses. Anderson (1962) emphasizes that a departmentalized classroom model could be effective for teachers to reinforce their subject matter knowledge and develop teaching skills, and for students to choose the best role model for themselves among many teachers with whom they interact. Defined as "the teacher's proceeding with the same group of students for at least two years," the looping model is expressed with various terms such as "Multi-Year Teaching Model", "Two-Cycle Teaching Model", and "Teacher Rotation Model" (Burke, 1997; Christone & Shneyderman, 2004; Grant, Johnson, & Richardson, 1996). The looping model provides opportunities for students and teachers alike, such as recognition of the strengths and weaknesses of the students, diversification of teaching, and a greater amount of time allocated for learning. To illustrate, a 3rd grade student who has not been able to achieve learning outcomes may make up for the learning loss under the guidance of a teacher who recognizes the student's strengths and weaknesses (Roberts, 2003). In this model, the long-lasting teacher-student relationship affects the academic performance of the students and job satisfaction of teachers positively. Besides, the looping model is supported by many researchers, since more effective classroom management is ensured, more information about students is obtained, students are monitored holistically, and stronger teacher-parent communication is built (Burke, 1997).

When the related international literature is examined, it is seen that various studies have been carried out with the purposes of determining which model is the most appropriate and effective one for students, specifying the decision criteria in putting the specialization models into effect, revealing the advantages and disadvantages of each specialization model from the viewpoint of teachers and students, and determining the effects of these models on the teacher-student relationship and students' academic success (American Association of School Administrators, 1965; Anderson, 1962; Berry & O'Connar, 2010; Gerretson & Schofield, 2008; Hill & Jones, 2018; Hood, 2009; Martin, Fergus, & Noguera, 2010; Markworth, Brobst, Ohana & Parker, 2016; Myrberg, Johansson, & Rosen, 2019; Parker, Rakes, & Arndt, 2017; Reitz, 2012; Strohl et al., 2014).

In their study in which academic success levels of 200 5th and 6th grade students studying in schools with self-contained and departmentalized classroom models were compared based on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP), McGrath and Rust (2002) found that students studying in schools that apply self-contained classroom models are more successful in courses related to science and language. Moore (2008), who compared standardized test scores of 5th grade students studying in schools with self-contained and departmentalized classroom models, found that the students studying in schools with departmentalized classroom models had higher mathematics scores compared to those in schools that applied the self-contained classroom model. Myberg, Johansson, and Rosen (2019) investigated the relationship between teachers' specializing on a subject matter and students' reading

success and revealed a positive relationship between teachers' specializing on a subject matter and the reading success of students in the classes where these teachers teach. In their study carried out with the aim of revealing the beliefs of principals towards specialization models applied in primary schools and their decision-making processes about these applications, Parker et al. (2017) concluded that personal experiences, perceptions, and contextual dynamics are influential in the decisions made on the application of these models. Mark et al. (2016) conducted a study on the opportunities and limitations created by teachers' specialization on a subject matter in the primary school stage and found out that specializing on a subject matter provides opportunities for concepts such as time planning, professional development, and pedagogical time, while it causes limitations regarding certain issues such as the absence of collaboration with other teachers about the subject matter or the fact that it does not provide teachers with flexibility. In a study conducted by Liu (2011) on the applicability of the departmentalized classroom model in primary schools, advantages of this model were identified as teachers being able to teach more effectively by specializing on a course based on their interests and gaining time while preparing lesson plans, as well as easing the process students go through when transitioning to secondary education; on the other hand, disadvantages were identified as an absence of a departmentalized classroom model. Minott (2016) carried out a study to present experiences about teacher perceptions of the departmentalized classroom model and the effects of this model on the emotional needs of students, establishing that teachers had a positive perception of the departmentalized classroom model and that this model did not have any negative effect on meeting the emotional needs of students. Freiberg (2016) also studied teacher and student attitudes towards the departmentalized classroom model and detected that the teachers and students held positive attitudes towards this model. In order to support the results on student attitudes, opinions were also gathered from students who studied in a school with a self-contained classroom model in the 3rd grade and then transferred to a school that applied a departmentalized classroom model in the 4th and 5th grades. According to the results, a majority of the students stated that it was exciting to meet more than one teacher and that it was easier to access information. In their research, Cristone and Shneyderman (2004) determined the advantages of the looping model as strengthening the teacher-student relationship, supporting the slow learners, and gaining the teacher time in the second year, while mentioning the disadvantages as not being able to have a command of the syllabi of many courses and disagreements between teacher and student.

Very few studies were found in the Turkish context about the specialization models in primary school teaching. In a study conducted by Güzelbey (2006) about changing the primary school stage into two separate areas of specialization as 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade teaching and 4th and 5th grade teaching, it was concluded that principals and teachers held positive opinions about this change. However, in time, concerns were addressed about the possibility that subject matter knowledge and general knowledge levels of teachers might decline, and they would generally prefer teaching at the 4th and 5th grade levels. In their research on training teachers for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades and for 4th and 5th grades separately, Tok and Bozkurt (2010) expressed various reasons why it might be more efficient for teachers to be trained in a way that would prepare them for two different stages (for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades and for 4th and 5th grades separately), such as: difficulties that teachers face in adapting to 1st grade again after the 5th grade; being able to communicate with children; catching up with the changes; and designing activities; teachers' being unable to qualify for every course; inability to retain information; and hindering students' personal growth with a single teacher. Başaran and Güçlü (2020) concluded in their study on which teacher should teach which courses in primary school that it would be more appropriate for primary school teachers to teach courses other than music, visual arts, games and physical activities, foreign languages, and religion and ethics.

In recent years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of private schools in Turkey. According to the formal education statistical report published by MoNe, while the number of private primary schools was 335 in 1997, it increased to 835 later in 2009, and reached 1618 in 2018 (MoNe, 2018). According to these statistics, it can be seen that the number of private schools that offer primary school education has nearly quadrupled in the past 20 years. In this competitive environment, private schools, which have been in search of making a difference, have carried out many practices, innovations, and

regulations. One of these innovations is the application of different specialization models in primary school teaching. However, each applying a different specialization model, private schools do not provide information as to which scientific knowledge or data they base their applications on. Benefitting from the viewpoints of teachers, who are the most important shareholders of education, and academicians working in the field of teacher education, contributing to the literature with this kind of study is considered to shed light for both practitioners and researchers. It is critical to identify the benefits and drawbacks of specialization models in primary school teaching and conduct an assessment of the issue. In addition, determining the grade levels and courses to be taught by the primary school teachers will have a profound influence on the teacher training process. This research has been required since there are very few studies focusing on the advantages and disadvantages of specialization models in the national literature. In this direction, taking into account the advantages and disadvantages of specialization models in primary school teaching, it is aimed to offer recommendations for the primary school teacher training process.

Within this context, the research problem is to determine the opinions of various participant groups on specialization models in primary school teaching and to evaluate specialization models based on these opinions. Based on the research problems, answers to the following research questions have been looked for:

1. What are the opinions of academicians studying teacher education about specialization models?
2. What are the opinions of primary school teachers working in private schools in which different specialization models are applied to specialization models?
3. What are the recommendations offered by primary school teachers and academicians studying teacher education about the teacher training process within the context of specialization models in primary school teaching?

METHOD

Research Design

This research was designed as a case study, which is one of the qualitative research approaches. A case study can be described as collecting in-depth and detailed information about a circumstance or more than one circumstance in its limited context, using various data collection tools (observation, interviews, documents, etc.) and examining that circumstance by defining it under certain themes (Creswell, 2013). The circumstances examined in this study were determined by evaluations of specialization models conducted by primary school teachers working in schools using various specialization models and academicians studying teacher education. Additionally, because each of the participant groups whose opinions were gathered about specialization models in primary school teaching was determined as a unit of analysis, this study is described as a multiple case-holistic design. In multiple case-holistic designs, each case is evaluated holistically in itself, and later, the cases are compared with each other (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

Participants

Participants of the study are 21 primary school teachers working in private schools in Ankara and 12 academicians working in the field of teacher education. Thus, data was obtained from two different data sources. Since people with certain characteristics were preferred while creating the participant groups, criterion sampling was utilized. The main understanding that lies in the use of the criterion sampling method is that cases that meet a set of pre-determined criteria are investigated. The criteria or the criterion mentioned here can be determined by the researcher (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). The criterion for the teachers was to be working in private schools where self-contained classroom models and two-cycle teaching models are applied, while the criterion for the academicians was to be studying in the field of teacher education. Teacher participants were comprised of a total of 21 primary school teachers, 8 of them working in private schools that apply the self-contained classroom model and 13 of them working in private schools that apply the two-cycle teaching model. Six of the teachers teach 1st grades;

five of them teach 2nd grades; another six teach 3rd grades; and four of the teachers teach 4th grades. The professional seniority of the participating teachers varies as well, with two having 0–4 years of experience, four having 5–9 years of experience, seven having 10–14 years of experience, and eight having 15 years or more of experience. In terms of working in a school with the applications of the self-contained classroom model and the two-cycle teaching model, eight primary school teachers had an experience of 2-4 years, seven teachers had an experience of 5–9 years, and six of them had an experience of 10 years and above. There are a total of 12 faculty members working in 4 different universities in Ankara in the field of teacher education, 11 of whom are female and 1 is male. In the process of including academicians in the study group, it was determined as a criterion that they are experts in teacher education and/or have worked in the field of primary education. Five of the academicians work in the field of curriculum and instruction, and seven academicians work in primary education. Among participants, 3 academicians have 5–9 years of professional seniority, 4 academicians have between 10–19 years, 2 academicians have 20–29 years, and 3 academicians have a professional seniority of 30 years or more.

Data Collection Tools

The semi-structured interview forms were used, which were prepared by the researcher to collect data from two different participant groups, one of them being primary school teachers, and the other group was comprised of academicians. Expert opinions were received from two academicians from the field of education programs; one academic working in the field of assessment and evaluation; and one academic working in Turkish education; with the purpose of ensuring content validity and face validity by evaluating the data collection tools in terms of expediency, language and expression, and technical properties. Interview forms were restructured by the researcher in accordance with expert opinions. Other than the actual participants, restructured interview forms were piloted on two primary school teachers and one academic. After the pilot interviews, some of the questions were excluded from the interview forms, changes were made in the instructions, and the order of questions was revised.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection phase of the research was conducted in the second semester of the 2018–2019 academic year. The Private School Teacher Interview Form was initially used with 21 primary school teachers working in private schools that use self-contained classroom models and the two-cycle teaching model. lasted approximately 25–30 minutes, and all interviews were completed in 5 weeks. Afterwards, interviews were conducted with academicians. Data was collected from 12 academicians through an Academician Interview Form. All interviews lasted approximately 25–30 minutes, and all were completed in 2 weeks. Interviews were conducted by the researcher himself. Besides, the fact that the researcher had a 4-year experience of teaching in a school that applied the self-contained classroom model contributed to the quality of interviews. Because it was not possible to contact a school that applies a departmentalized classroom model, data about this model was limited to the opinions of teachers working in a school with other models and academicians.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in qualitative research differs from that of quantitative research. Qualitative research involves a process in which researchers interact with the participants intensively and for long periods. They continuously have direct contact with the participants and the research environments, and they reflect the perspectives gained in the field into the research. Considering the position of the researcher in the process, the necessity of giving detailed information about the researcher emerges (Creswell, 2013). The researcher worked as a primary school teacher in a school that applied the self-contained classroom model between the years 2015–2019. In this direction, the researcher's perspectives on the evaluation of specialization models in primary school teaching were shaped by his own personal experiences. The researcher decided on this study after considering that specialization models applied in his own school during the years he worked there as a teacher had various effects, especially on teachers and students. Interviews were conducted by the researcher himself in the school environment

where specialization models were applied and in the offices of the academicians. In this process, the researcher only asked the questions and adopted an attitude of not affecting the participants.

Data Analysis

Content analysis was used in the analysis of qualitative data obtained. The main objective of content analysis is to uncover unnoticed concepts, relations, and themes by running an in-depth data analysis in order to explain the gathered data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In the present study, coding was carried out according to the concepts drawn from the data. The research questions and theoretical framework were considered in the first stage, and data were coded with words that are related to each other. In the second stage, commonalities were detected by noticing the meaningful relationships between the codes, and codes were categorized according to the sub-problems of the research. In the third stage of the analysis, the codes and categories obtained were defined without giving any place to the researcher's own opinions and comments in a way that could be understood by the readers, and they were later explained. In the last stage, relationships were tried to be detected between the findings with the aim of giving meaning to the data, and certain results were drawn. During the analysis, academicians were coded as A-1, A-2,… and private school teachers were coded as PST-1, PST-2,... PST-21. In addition, the themes and codes of the findings related to each research question are presented in detail.

Validity and Reliability

In order to ensure validity and reliability in qualitative studies, strategies such as persuasiveness, transmissibility, and consistency need to be used (Shenton, 2004). Certain points were paid attention to ensure persuasiveness. These can be expressed as receiving expert opinions while preparing the interview forms, increasing the number of participants to start repetition in data, and increasing the duration of interaction during the interviews. Similarly, participant opinions were presented with direct quotations from the participants while presenting the results and the triangulation method was used. In the current research, data sources triangulation was used by choosing primary school teachers working in private schools in which different specialization models (self-contained and looping models) are applied and academicians studying teacher education and/or primary education as data sources. Data triangulation is considered to be important since multiple realities may be reached by revealing the differing experiences and perceptions with the inclusion of participants with different characteristics (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). With the aim of ensuring the transmissibility as a factor of the external validity of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 2013), a purposive sampling method was used while choosing the participants, and the research procedure was explained in detail. Another researcher also conducted content analysis and coded the data in order to ensure consistency of the results obtained as a result of qualitative data analysis. Consistency in the research was calculated by detecting the number of "agreements" and "disagreements" for each code created by both researchers and using Miles and Huberman's (1994) formula (Reliability= Number of Agreements / [Number of Agreements + Number of Disagreements] x 100). Regarding the coding of data obtained from teachers and academicians, the agreement percentages of the codes created by the researcher and the field expert were determined to be 73% for the teachers and 76% for the academicians. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), an agreement percentage of 70% or above for the lists of codes created by the researchers indicates a sufficient reliability value.

RESULTS

The results of the study were presented in the light of the research questions created in accordance with the aim of the research.

What are the opinions of academicians studying teacher education about specialization models?

Answers to the research question, "What are the opinions of academicians studying teacher education about specialization models?" were sought. In line with the research question, results were presented regarding the models preferred by academicians, the reason for these preferences, and the effects of specialization models on teachers and students.

IOJPE
ISSN: 1300 – 915X
www.iojpe.org
International Online Journal of Primary Education 2022, volume 11, issue 1

The Specialization Models Preferred by Academicians and the Reasons for These Preferences

The specialization models preferred by the academicians are presented in Figure 1.

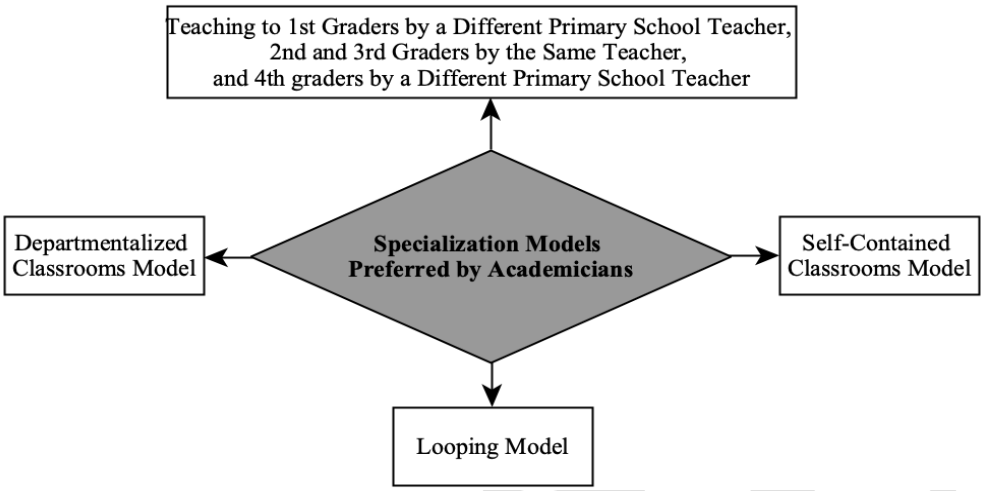

Figure 1. Models preferred by academicians.

More than half of the Academicians (n: 8/12) preferred the Looping Model, whereas the Self-Contained Classroom Model and the Departmentalized Classroom Model were preferred by 1 academician each. Besides, while one of the academicians offered a model that had not been specified by the researcher, another academician did not state any preference because of the thought that each model might have advantages and disadvantages in its own context. The reasons for the preferences of academicians shown above are presented in Figure 2.

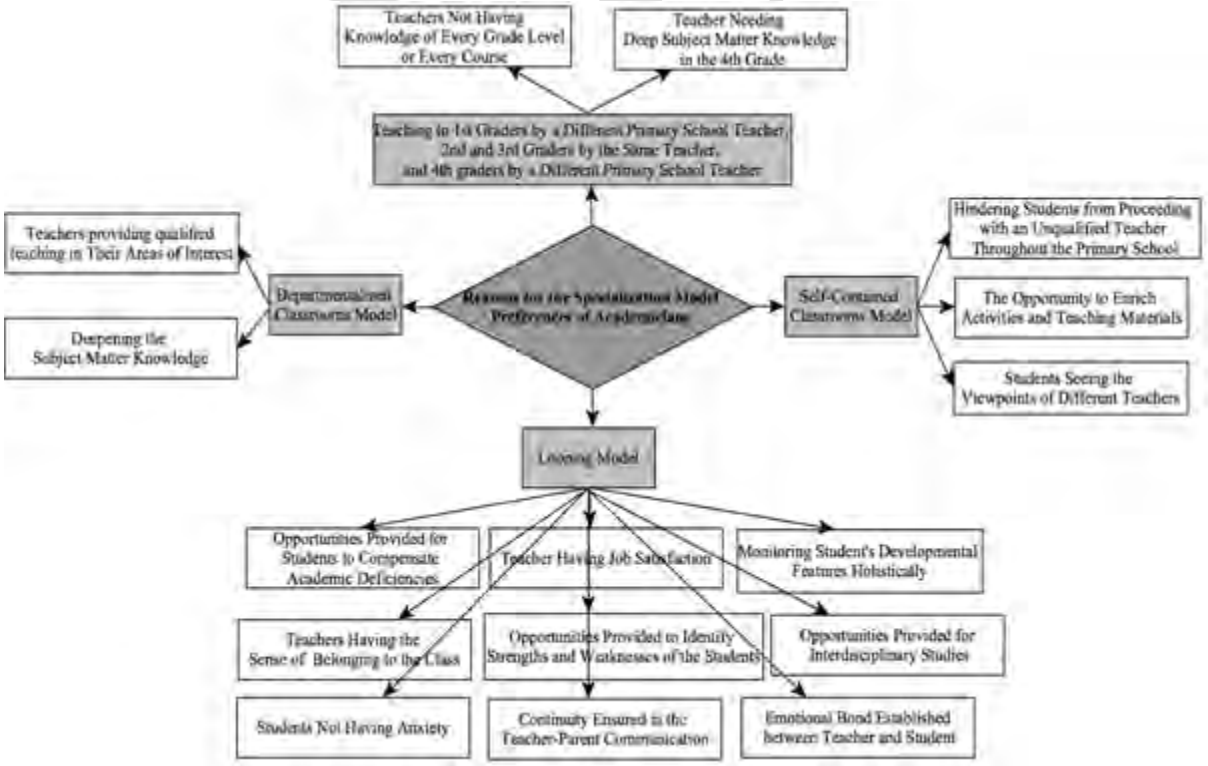

Figure 2. Reasons for model preferences of academicians.

According to Figure 2, the reasons for specialization model preferences of teachers were evaluated from the viewpoints of teachers and students. Academicians preferring the Departmentalized Classrooms Model and Self-Contained Classrooms Model (n: 2/12) generally mentioned reasons for teachers' professional knowledge and skills, such as providing qualified teaching, deepening subject matter knowledge, and enriching activities and teaching materials. On the other hand, frequently mentioned reasons by the academicians who preferred the Looping Model (n: 9/12) are recognizing and monitoring students holistically, strengthening teacher-parent communication, establishing an emotional bond between teacher and student, teachers having a sense of belonging to the class, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the students, and students not having anxiety over changing teachers in each academic year. One of the academicians who preferred the Looping Model emphasized the importance of teachers' recognizing students' strengths and weaknesses, monitoring, and guiding them in order for qualified learning to occur and summarized thoughts on the issue as follows:

> …The only name that remains in primary school students' minds when they grow up is the name of their primary school teacher. The main reason for this is the quality of time spent. The more a student spends time with his/her teacher, the more qualified the interaction gets. When there is specialization at the course level, a student meets his or her teacher for 30 or 40 minutes a day. Hence, there is no commitment in this case. For example, if you could not get to the student in first grade, you have three more years to get to that student. On the other hand, when you are a branch teacher, your only goal would be to cover course topics in 40 minutes. (A-1)

A-4 offered a model as "teaching to 1st graders by a different primary school teacher, teaching to 2nd and 3rd graders by the same teacher, and teaching to 4th graders by a different primary school teacher". A-4 justified the model s/he proposed with the following opinions:

> …Teaching of first reading and writing in the 1st grade is a very particular area. School maturity, development of lacking skills, behavioral rules, reading and writing processes, and creating school and class routines for the students who come here is an area of specialization on its own. Therefore, I think the first grade should be separated from the other grades. For example, in the USA, I met teachers who told me that they worked as reading experts for 3rd graders for 12 years when I asked their names. In the 3rd grade, we reach a level where we realize whether there is a problem or not, the tendencies of students, and the progress of students. I think at the 4th grade level, there could be a different branching since the 4th grade is a preliminary grade for secondary school and requires serious subject matter knowledge. (A-4)

Academicians' Thoughts about the Effects of Specialization Models on Teacher and Student Dimensions

The effects of specialization models on teacher dimension are classified into three areas, according to data obtained from academicians: "professional knowledge and skills," "personal characteristics," and "attitudes toward school. "The effects of specialization models on student dimensions are classified as "academic success," "teacher-student relationship," and "process of secondary school adaptation." Academicians (n: 8/12) stated that the application of the self-contained classroom model or departmentalized classroom model will provide positive outcomes in terms of a teacher's professional knowledge and skills, for circumstances such as having a command of syllabi, gaining time in planning teaching, archiving teaching activities, deepening the subject matter knowledge, and managing behaviors and reactions according to age groups. According to A-5, the most significant contributions of the application of departmentalized and self-contained classroom models to teachers are in the dimensions of "having a command of syllabi" and "deepening subject matter knowledge."A-5 expressed his or her opinions as follows:

> …I think the most important contribution to the application of departmentalized and self-contained classroom models is about syllabi. Our teachers do not read the plans. Learning outcomes should be known very well. For example, there is a learning outcome in the 4th grade called "intertextual reading." I heard that there are teachers who do not know about this. This means that teachers will be unable to adequately implement the plans. Needs to have a certain degree of competency in the context of syllabi, and I believe that this will be the biggest advantage in this system. (A-5)

A-4, who expressed that the individual differences of students can be better noticed with the application of departmentalized or self-contained classroom models, explained as follows:

> …I think our profession and that of psychologists are very similar. They gain experience as they encounter various cases, just as we do. As a teacher teaches the same course or at the same level of grade for a long time, the possibility of coming across various cases increases. Hence, he/she becomes more experienced. For example, a first-year teacher may panic and become anxious about what to do when he or she encounters a student who is having difficulty reading. On the other hand, a teacher who has experience in 1st grade teaching knows what to do and can manage the stress in the same situation. (A-4)

Some of the academicians (n: 4/12), on the other hand, emphasized that in the event that the looping model was applied, the teacher's professional knowledge and skills would develop in terms of recognizing, monitoring, and assessing the students; maintaining the classroom routines; planning interdisciplinary activities; and applying the spiral programs effectively. A-6 highlighted that the programs in primary school have a spiral structure and stated that teachers need to make a connection between the syllabi of the courses taught by them and the syllabi of other courses in an upper or lower grade. A-11 discussed that one of the vital professional skills of primary school teachers is recognizing the students and monitoring their development. A-11 expressed the importance of monitoring the students in the primary school stage with the following remarks:

> …In the case that the self-contained classroom model is applied, information exchange and sharing among teachers should be at a high level and the information about the strengths and weaknesses of the students, thus their background stories, should be transferred to upper grade levels realistically. (A-11)

Likewise, A-2 expressed that it is impossible to guide the students without knowing them, their family, and their social environment, adding:

> …Let's say you have specialized in 2nd grade teaching, and you have significantly improved a student who was not very good. It is not certain what will happen or what kind of teacher the student will come across in the 3rd grade. It is necessary to perceive the child as a whole and monitor his/her development. (A-2)

Academicians (n: 3/12) noted that departmentalized and self-contained classroom models will contribute more to personal characteristics and skills such as self-efficacy, self-confidence, intrinsic motivation, collaboration, and communication. For instance, A-3 explained that the confidence of teachers would increase in the self-contained classroom model, stating that "it is an expected result for the teacher to gain confidence due to teaching to the same grade level every year and getting better at the things that repeat after a certain period of time." A-11 figured that the application of departmentalized or self-contained classroom models could develop the collaboration and communication skills of the teachers with the following remarks:"... it will be a system in which other teachers will also have an idea of the class, and teachers will be in a position to communicate with each other about the students and in collaboration." A-9 expressed opinions that the teachers' self-efficacy belief levels could increase in departmentalized and self-contained classroom models by stating:

> …Maybe the area that the teacher is into should be given a chance. For instance, if the teacher does not like the Life Studies course, the time s/he allocates to that course declines, as well. Or s/he may be doing the lesson superficially. I think that at this point, it is important to keep in mind the proposition that if you are good at an area, you make that area better, according to self-efficacy theory. (A-9)

Although academicians verbalized that departmentalized and self-contained classroom models could contribute to the personal characteristics of the teachers, they expressed that these models could create negative circumstances in teachers' attitudes towards school. According to A-8, "in the application of self-contained classrooms, leaving the decision of which grade levels the teachers will teach to the school administration means forcing the teachers." This situation causes the teacher to lose motivation, become unhappy, and question this system. " At this point, academicians suggested the necessity of allowing the teachers to decide on the grade level or the course themselves. Similarly, according to Symlie (1992), the important point is that the school administration should not be the decision maker in

determining the model to apply but should be consulted by the teachers, who are one of the most important shareholders. Through ensuring teachers' participation in decision-making, the validity of the decision can be ensured. At the same time, teachers' commitment to the decision and their motivation to apply it could increase. Academicians (n: 4/12) put forward that the application of looping models will give teachers dynamism in different grade levels each year; it will prevent them from becoming monotonous and routine; and it will develop a sense of responsibility. A-2 stated that teaching the same course at the same grade level each year will force the teacher to become monotonous after a while and using the same materials and activities every year will blunt their creativity.

Academicians (n: 5/12) specified that in the case of applying the looping model, a teacher's attitude towards school would not be expected to be negative, since a sense of belonging and ownership could develop in the teacher. Burke (1997) also expressed that the formation of a long-lasting teacher-student relationship would lead to positive experiences such as teachers' developing classroom management skills, having a deeper knowledge about students, and feeling a sense of belonging to the class.

Half of the academicians (n: 6/12) advocated looping models and 3 of them supported departmentalized and self-contained classroom models for students' academic success. Three academicians did not present any opinion, reasoning that a separate scientific study should be conducted for this issue. Academicians (n: 3/12) were of the opinion that in the departmentalized and self-contained classroom models, factors such as development of teachers' skills in teaching a subject, seizing the learning opportunities, deepening of the subject matter knowledge, and gaining experience in a specific course or grade level could indirectly affect students' academic success positively. A-4, who specified that departmentalized classrooms models, self-contained classrooms models, or the model s/he proposed (different teachers teaching in the 1st and 4th grade, the same teachers teaching in the 2nd and 3rd grade) should be applied, with the consideration that the teacher's "teaching skills" would develop, also alleged that these models would affect students' academic success positively, presenting the opinions below:

> …The application of the self-contained classroom model, the departmentalized classroom model, or the model I suggested will definitely affect the academic success of the students. For example, a friend of mine who works at a school where specialization is applied told me that he/she uses a rhythm and a story that he/she developed while teaching names-pronouns-adjectives. He/she also told me that when he/she asks his/her former students who are now in secondary school about what they remember about this topic, they say that they remember the stories and music. I think that a teacher's skills and distinctive teaching methods are developed by teaching a specific topic continuously at the same grade level. (A-4)

Additionally, A-9 stated that teachers with good subject matter knowledge seize the "learning opportunities" in the classroom very well. Likewise, A-11 put forward that "gaining experience" for a long time in a specific course or grade level will ease the detection of students' mislearning, alternative conceptualization, the subjects they have difficulties in, and the points in which they make the greatest number of mistakes, adding that this would hence increase students' academic success. Yearwood (2011), who found out that departmentalized classroom models have a positive contribution to students' academic success, compared the mathematics success of 2152 5th grade students who studied in schools with applications of departmentalized and self-contained classroom models and determined as a result of the study that there was a statistically significant difference in the success rates of students who studied in schools with a departmentalized classroom model. Academicians (n: 6/12), who thought that the looping model might be effective in providing academic success, highlighted the importance of positive factors such as teachers recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of students; students knowing the routines of the teacher; the opportunity to monitor and assess the student; the sufficient amount of time for compensating learning deficiencies of students; and emotional bonding between teacher and student. A-1 expressed that one of the most important factors which is overlooked is the issue of "teachers recognizing the students" and explained the role of this issue in increasing the students' academic success as:

> …The student gets to know the teacher too. He/she knows about the teacher's likes, dislikes, and things that the teacher cares about. On the other hand, if the teacher is replaced every year, it takes nearly half a

> semester for the student to get to know the new teacher. When this happens, the student behaves accordingly. He/she knows when to study and what to study. In contrast, having different teachers may lead to confusion in the student's mind. It could be hard to control too many variables for a student at that age. Also, it could decrease a student's success level. (A-1)

Although A-6 believed that there were too many variables predicting her academic success, s/he believed that monitoring and assessing the student, particularly young learners who lack self-control, by a teacher throughout primary school would result in the student's success.A-10 emphasized that the fundamental variable that affects academic success in primary school is the emotional bond between the teacher and student, adding that a looping model could support the increase in students' academic success levels. Expressing the importance of recognizing students' developmental characteristics, interests, and needs and monitoring students in increasing their academic success, A-12 explained the importance of looping model application as shown below:

> …Replacing the teacher every year affects the student's success negatively since the new teacher does not know about the student's weaknesses. In addition, it is an opportunity to improve students' academic deficiencies. Not every student is able to achieve the learning outcomes at their level. For example, a 1st grade student's deficiency in writing can be overcome in the 2nd grade by the same teacher. On the other hand, if the teacher changes, it could take a long time for the new teacher to notice such a deficiency. (A-12)

The opinion of A-12 that the looping model might be beneficial in terms of overcoming academic deficiencies is supported by Grubb's (2007) expression that, along with the stability between teachers and students in schools that apply the looping model, teachers will have more knowledge about students, and they will have more opportunities to solve learning problems.

For the teacher-student relationship, 9 of the academicians think that looping models may be effective; 2 of them advocate departmentalized and self-contained classroom models; and 1 of them supports his/her own model. Academicians (n: 2/12) reflected that with the application of departmentalized and self-contained classroom models, factors such as students seeing different role model teachers, having equal opportunities, and adapting to changes easily may be effective. For instance, A-11 put forward that students adapt to people and events more easily than adults. Therefore, in the self-contained classroom models, it will not take a long time for students to adapt to the teacher. Besides, A-11 expressed that the application of departmentalized and self-contained classroom models would provide equality in opportunity for students, mentioning the problem of qualified teachers in our country:

> …On the other hand, specialization in certain grade levels can provide equality in opportunity for the students who are obliged to have teachers below a certain quality level for 4 years. I say this because quality concerns are on our agenda. In this context, I approve of applying self-contained or departmentalized classroom models. The primary school experience of a student who happens to have an unqualified teacher in the 1st grade is almost wasted. (A-11)

Because of the long duration of interaction between the teacher and student in the self-contained classroom model, Hood (2009) stated that the important features of this model are building strong relationships and the opportunity to provide stability and consistency. On the other hand, Anderson (1962) expressed that in the departmentalized classroom model, teachers who are experts in their field will have a reference framework to assess student development and they may be more competent in interpreting students' usual behaviors. Academicians (n = 9/12) who think that the most important effect of the looping model can be seen in the context of the teacher-student relationship brought up things like providing continuity in teacher-student communication, having quality time, students accepting the teacher as an authority, teachers managing behaviors, and building emotional bonds.A-5 determined that it is important to undergo processes such as behavioral problems encountered frequently in primary school, adaptation to school, and teacher-parent communication with a single teacher throughout primary school. Similarly, considering that pre-school education is not compulsory, A-7 expressed that the first person that the students encounter after their parents is the teacher. Therefore, it is important that the students love their primary school teacher and accept him/her as an authority figure.

Accordingly, in cases where the teacher is replaced every year or each course is taught by a different teacher, it can be said that it may be difficult for students to embrace teachers and accept them as authorities. Jacoby (1994) alleges that the teacher-student relationship is a case that gains strength in time in the classroom, and in classes where the looping model is applied, shy students get more willing in time to express their thoughts. Burke (1996) put forth that in the looping model, a strong, extensive, and meaningful relationship can be built between the teacher and student, and this improves students' learning by increasing their motivation. All academicians are of the opinion that the application of departmentalized or self-contained classroom models will provide convenience for students in the process of passing to secondary school. It is also stated in the literature that one of the biggest advantages of the departmentalized classroom model is that it prepares the students for secondary education (Chan & Jarman, 2004).

What are the opinions of primary school teachers working in private schools in which different specialization models are applied to specialization models?

Answers to the research question of "What are the opinions of primary school teachers working in private schools in which different specialization models are applied?" were sought. In line with the research question, results were presented regarding the models preferred by primary school teachers, the reason for these preferences, and the effects of self-contained classrooms and two-cycle teaching models on teachers and students.

The Specialization Models Preferred by Private School Teachers and the Reasons for These Preferences

The Specialization models in primary school teaching preferred by the private school teachers are presented in Figure 3.

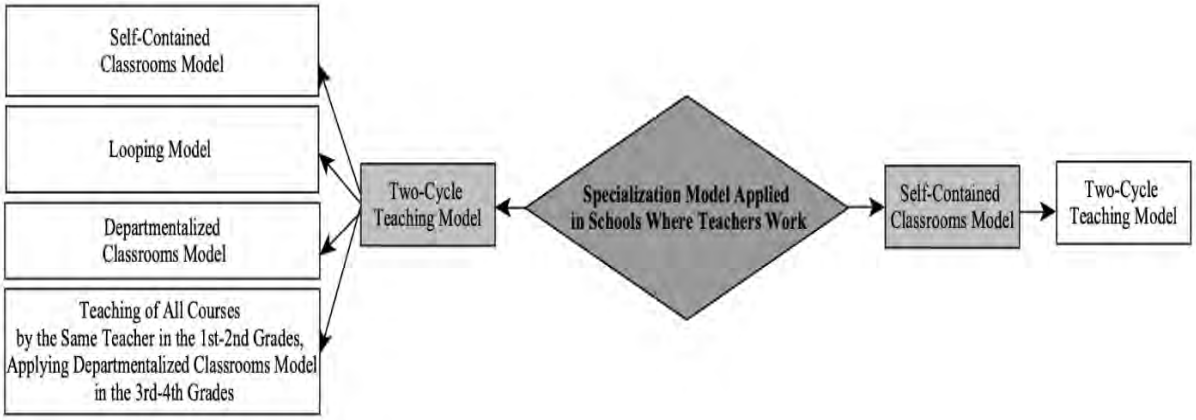

Figure 3. Specialization models preferred by private school teachers.

As can be seen in Figure 3, all the teachers working in the private school where self-contained classrooms model is applied expressed their opinions that two-cycle teaching model should be applied. On the other hand, it is seen that nearly half of the teachers (n: 5/13) working in the private school where two-cycle teaching model is applied preferred the looping model in which a teacher teaches all the course in the 1st-4th grades. It is an important result that all the teachers preferring this model have been teaching to 1st and 2nd graders for the last 4 years. Some of the teachers (n: 5/13) proposed different models that are not encountered in the literature. The model proposed by the teachers which involves teaching by a different teacher in the 1st grade, by the same teacher in 2nd and 3rd grades, and a different teacher in the 4th grade is the same as the model offered by the academicians. Another model proposed by teachers is one which includes teaching by the same teacher in 1st-2nd grades and applying departmentalized classrooms model in the 3rd-4th grades. None of the private school teachers preferred the model applied

in their own schools. The reasons for the preferences of teachers and the models they proposed are presented in Figure 4.

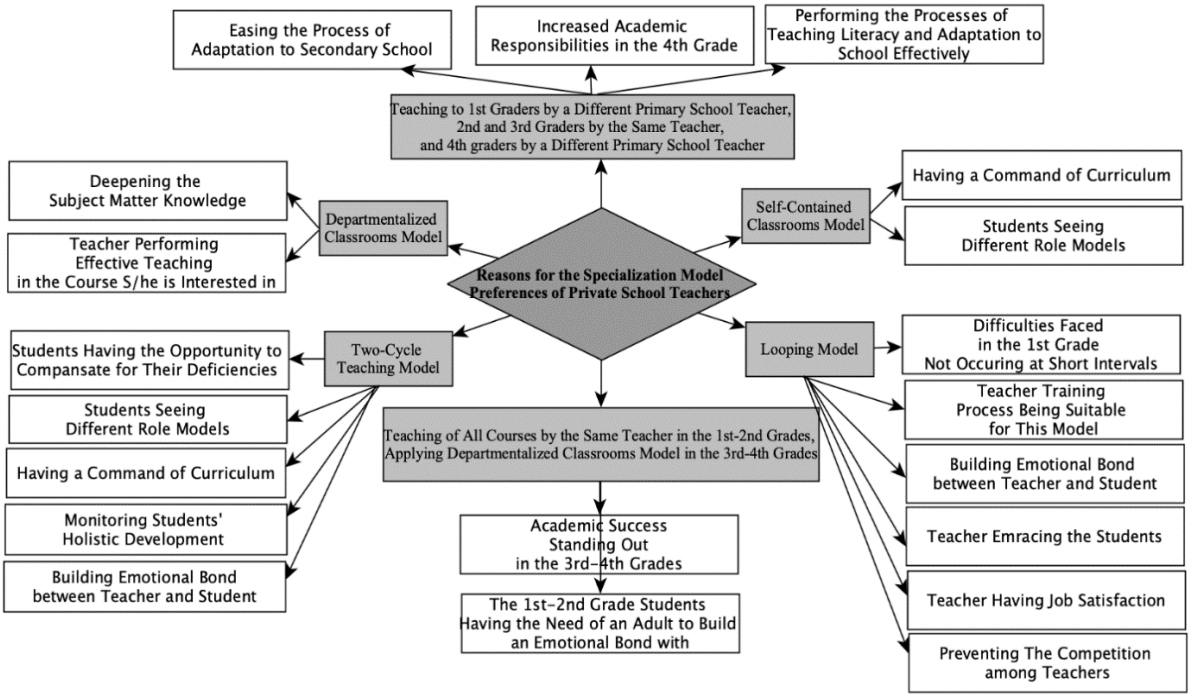

Figure 4. Reasons for model preferences of private school teachers.

According to Figure 4, the common point of the models proposed by the teachers, which are different from the literature, is an increased academic responsibility in the 4th grade and the fact that teachers teaching at this grade level should be well equipped. It can be seen that the teachers (n: 14/21) who regard the emotional bonding between the teacher and student as important preferred the looping model.

On the other hand, teachers (n: 3/13) preferring the departmentalized and self-contained classroom models supported their opinions for certain reasons, such as students seeing different viewpoints in general, teachers deepening their subject matter knowledge, teachers failing to satisfy the needs of many courses, and teachers having a good command of syllabi. According to PST-1, who proposed a new model that involves the teaching of all courses by the same teacher in the 1st–2nd grades and applying a departmentalized classroom model in the 3rd–4th grades, students need to commit to a teacher in the 1st–2nd grades in terms of controlling their emotions and behaviors, feeling safe, and adapting to school. PST-1 added that since the 3rd–4th grades require greater academic responsibilities and they gain self-awareness and independence, branching could be considered in these levels. Emphasizing that teachers give more place in their schedules to the courses they are interested in, and they teach them more effectively, eagerly, and with high motivation in these courses, PST-3 put forth that branching at the course level would contribute to teachers' teaching skills. PST-2 stated that because of the processes such as first reading-writing and adaptation in the 1st graders, and the need for deepening in subject matter knowledge in the 4th grade, these grade levels in the primary school stage are critical, which creates the need for teachers to have a separate area of specialization. On the other hand, PST-8 expressed that the self-contained classroom model would be efficient since it provides the opportunities for monitoring student development in all courses, having a good command of the syllabi of the courses at that grade level, and increasing the quality of the activities with each passing year. In addition, PST-8 highlighted that this model would contribute in terms of the aspects to pay attention to in the program applied as well as the official program. PST-14, who thinks that there needs to be a change of teachers in primary school for students to gain different perspectives, explained the reasons for preferring the two-cycle teaching model, as indicated below:

> …in the two-cycle teaching model, the teacher can act flexibly since he/she knows about the next year's program, subjects, and learning outcomes. For example, in the 2nd year, he/she can teach the topic that was not covered in the 1st year. The teacher can have the opportunity to observe the student more. Students' acknowledging different points of view thanks to teacher replacement is also important. (PST-14)

The reasons provided by private school teachers for preferring the two-cycle teaching model can be counted as; training the primary school teachers at a level to make them capable of teaching all courses in all grade levels (PST-4), building an emotional bond between teacher and student and teachers embracing the students (PST-10), preventing the polarization among teachers (PST-13), monitoring students' cognitive and affective development and evaluating the learning outcomes (PST-5).

Private School Teachers' Thoughts about the Effects of the Self-Contained Classroom Model on Teacher and Student Dimensions

The effects of the self-contained classroom model on teacher dimension were classified into three areas based on data obtained from private school teachers who teach in schools with self-contained classroom models: "professional knowledge and skills," "personal characteristics," and "attitudes toward school. "The effects of the self-contained classroom model on student dimensions were also divided into three categories: "academic success," "teacher-student relationship," and "process of adaptation to school". The effects of self-contained classroom model on teacher and student dimensions are presented in Figure 5.

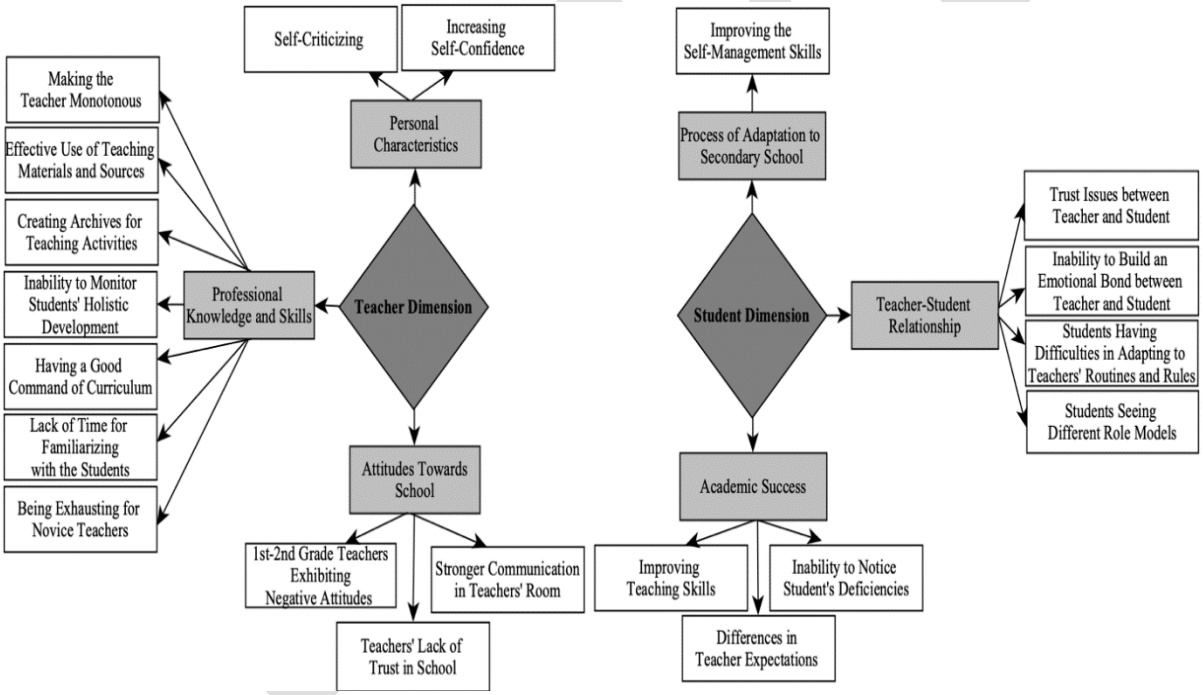

Figure 5. Effects of self-contained classrooms model on teacher and student dimensions.

A majority of teachers (n: 6/8) stated that the self-contained classroom model contributes positively to teachers' professional knowledge and skills. PST-14, who believes that the positive contributions of the self-contained classroom model are in the areas of "revising lesson plans and activities" and "having a good command of the curriculum and subjects," adding: A majority of teachers (n: 6/8) stated that the self-contained classroom model contributes positively to teachers' professional knowledge and skills. PST-14, who believes that the positive contributions of the self-contained classroom model are in the areas of "revising lesson plans and activities" and "having a good command of the curriculum and subjects," adding:

> …Having a good command of the program makes it easier to manage the whole process. You can also give yourself feedback on the activities. For example, when you carry out an activity for a year, you can

> evaluate whether the activity is suitable for the students and how much it contributes to the students' learning process. Also, you can change, revise, or improve the activity and apply it again next year. Do you know what math subjects 4th grade students should be learning in November? (PST-14)

There were also teachers (n: 3/8) who expressed concern that the self-contained classroom model would have a negative impact on their professional development.PST-17 regarded this model as negative in terms of the short duration of recognizing, monitoring, and assessing the students. Again, most teachers (n = 5/8) stated that no relationship exists between the application of this model and the personal development of the teachers. On the other hand, PST-16 expressed that the fact that teachers see the points they need to improve every year, adapt themselves to new situations, and self-criticize is a contribution of the self-contained classroom model to the personal development of the teachers. It has been seen that regarding teachers' attitudes towards school, teachers who teach lower grades (1st–2nd) had negative perspectives and teachers who teach upper grades (3rd–4th) had positive perspectives. PST-15 put forward that it could blunt the abilities of the teachers and make them monotonous to get unaware of other courses while specializing in a single course and to do similar things all the time, expressing:

> …I have specialized in 4th grade, but I have no knowledge at all of the other grade levels. I only went to the 4th grade. I do not know what happens in the other grade levels. I have teacher friends who teach other grade levels, which I do not see. Even so, this affects teaching skills negatively. Think of a factory where a product is loaded at the first stage, then at the second stage it is loaded again, and then it moves to the fourth stage and is loaded again. The teachers become robotized as they do the same thing every year. (PST-15)

Students and parents compare the teachers, and this influences the teachers' performances, expressing that the teachers get competitive while trying to prove that they are "better" than the other teachers who teach the same students and that they do not reflect the students' actual academic success rates.

> …For sure, a competitive environment is created among the teachers. For example, when a student moves from your 3rd grade to 4th grade, the teacher of that grade gives you feedback about the student's deficiencies. At this point, communication breakdowns among the teachers occur. For example, the teachers who teach for the first three years are surprised when their unsuccessful students receive certificates of high achievement in the 4th grade. In the end, it turns out the 4th grade teacher gave undeserved high marks to make himself/herself look like a better teacher. This happens very frequently. (PST-19)

According to data obtained from private school teachers, the self-contained classroom model may have both negative and positive effects on teacher dimension. Self-contained classroom model has positive effects on teachers' professional knowledge and skills, such as revising the activities, having a good command of the syllabi, effective use of materials and sources, and internalizing the course subjects, it also has negative aspects such as making the teacher monotonous, involving exhausting processes for novice teachers, the absence of enough time to familiarize with the students, and the inability to monitor students holistically. Within the context of personal characteristics, the self-contained classroom model provides opportunities in that teachers gain self-confidence and they self-criticize. As to the teachers' attitudes towards school, 1st grade teachers who work in private schools that apply the self-contained classroom model stated that teaching to the 1st graders every year exhausts them and this causes them to hold negative attitudes towards school. Besides, they emphasized that since they spend time with the same group of students for only one year, the school's administration does not reassure them about working in the school for longer periods.

Teachers (n: 5/8) who vocalized that there are many factors that affect students' academic success expressed their opinions that a self-contained classroom model might have positive and negative influences on academic success. In general, primary school teachers (n = 6/8) think that a self-contained classroom model affects teacher-student relationships negatively. PST-17 explains that the success expectancy of the teacher from the student is one of the most important variables in academic success and that replacing teachers every year affects students' academic success negatively.

> …It is important that it affects the students in monitoring them. At this point, the student is affected negatively. For example, the 1st grade teacher gives importance to writing. The students improve themselves in this subject. Then, the 2nd grade teacher says writing and spelling rules are not important for him/her. At this point, the student is also negatively affected. The student, going through this contradiction, may not acquire certain skills and learning outcomes for the sake of meeting the expectations of teachers, and this results in the failure of the student. (PST-17).

PST-18 stated that teachers who specialize at grade level improve in terms of teaching of the course subjects, and this has a direct positive effect on students' academic success. Further explaining

> …I believe that this application greatly contributes to the teaching skills of the teacher. For example, I know better than any other teacher how to teach the subject of angles in the 3rd grade mathematics course in the best way possible; which points students mostly have difficulties with; which activity is the most effective and efficient one for a certain topic; what kind of methods and techniques should be used; and which assessment and evaluation method is best suitable for a subject. This is because I have been teaching at this grade level for years. This improves the academic success of the students; do you not think so? (PST-18)

PST-14, who shared positive opinions about the teacher-student relationship, put forth that the main aim of teaching is to make students independent, and it would yield negative results to become dependent on the teacher, especially in terms of students' affective development and in their future lives. According to PST-15 and PST-21, students adapt to new circumstances and environments, and it does not take a long time for them to get used to their new teacher. PST-15 reflects on the issue as follows:

> …does a firefighter emotionally bond with the house that s/he extinguishes? Does a doctor emotionally bond with his/her cancer patient before operating? Why should a teacher do so? A teacher is not a father or a mother. It is necessary to act professionally if this is a profession. (PST-15)

According to PST-14, in the self-contained classroom model, the replacement of teachers every year plays a significant role in students' taking responsibility and leading a learning life as an independent individual. On the other hand, PST-14 pointed out that the application of the self-contained classroom model has negative impacts regarding the issue of familiarizing with students. In this sense, explaining that a teacher with a concern about managing to proceed with the curriculum on time would not have time to allocate for familiarizing with the students, PST-14 highlights that the deficiencies of students are not noticed by the teacher in this process, and students pass to the upper grade without achieving certain learning outcomes.

All the teachers (n = 8/8) are of the opinion that this model eases the process of adaptation to secondary school. PST-21 remarked that it develops students' self-management skills so they are not dependent on a single teacher and can keep in step with different conditions, which also eases the process of passing to secondary school.

Private School Teachers' Thoughts about the Effects of the Two-Cycle Teaching Model on Teacher and Student Dimensions

The effects of the two-cycle teaching model on teacher dimension were classified into three areas based on data obtained from private school teachers who teach in schools that use the two-cycle teaching model: "professional knowledge and skills," "personal characteristics," and "attitudes toward school". The effects on student dimensions were also classified into 3 areas: "academic success", "teacher-student relationship", and "process of adaptation to school". The effects of the two-cycle teaching model on teacher and student dimensions are presented in Figure 6.

IOJPE
ISSN: 1300 – 915X
www.iojpe.org
International Online Journal of Primary Education 2022, volume 11, issue 1

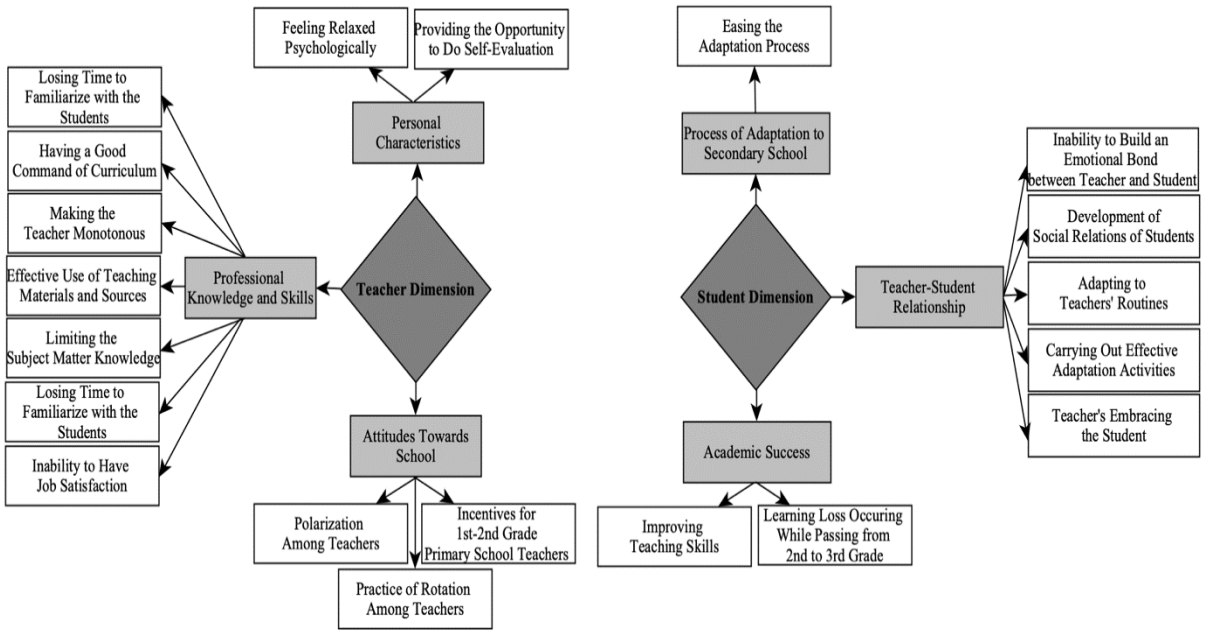

Figure 6. Effects of two-cycle teaching model on teacher and student dimensions.

The majority of teachers (n: 8/13) working in schools where a two-cycle teaching model is used expressed their belief that this model contributes positively to teacher professional development. Some students expressed the contribution of the two-cycle teaching model to their professional knowledge and skills with the remarks below:

> …on the other hand, it also has positive sides. It contributes greatly to the planning process. For example, I prepare the students for the 4th grade. I know what to pay attention to. I have the opportunity to diversify the methods and techniques according to student age and subjects I teach. (PST-7)

> …We have a chance to realize our failures since we teach at the same grade level every other year. In addition, we can estimate the behavior of the students in the grade levels we teach. We know where, when, and what the students will do. This eases the process from our perspective, for sure. **(PST-2)**

On the other hand, PST-1 and PST-3 explained that although this model is efficient in terms of professional development of the teacher, it could restrict the teacher:

> I believe that this is a nice application. When you teach the 1st-2nd or the 3rd-4th grades continuously, you can evaluate and reapply an activity you did the previous year. You can also change an activity that failed. In this regard, it supports the professional development of a teacher; however, in a way, it also blunts the abilities of teachers. For example, after teaching the3rd and 4th grades for years in an institution, and when changing that institution, a teacher might have a hard time teaching the 1st or 2nd grades since s/he have not taught in these grades for years. S/he might have forgotten how to teach the subject. In fact, this situation restricts the teacher in every sense. (PST-1)

> I think this application restricts the teacher in terms of subject matter knowledge. Because I do not know anything about the 1st-2nd grade subjects. For some time, they made students write in cursive italic handwriting, then they moved to writing in basic letters, and letter groups have changed. I am not familiar with these subjects at all. I do not know whether the methods for teaching the sounds that we learned in university are still used. (PST-3)

In addition, PST-5, who have taught to 3rd–4th graders in schools where a two-cycle teaching model is applied, stated that the first semester of the 3rd grade is spent on familiarizing with the students, and this process is time lost since teachers try to keep up with the program. PTS-3 also shared opinions and expressed that the teachers do not have job satisfaction in this model, and this situation causes them to hold negative perspectives towards the profession. A majority of the teachers (n = 5/13) expressed that

there is no relationship between the specialization model and teachers' personal characteristics. Some of the teachers (n: 3/13) working in private schools that apply the two-cycle teaching model emphasize that it has various effects, such as gaining self-confidence, feeling relaxed psychologically, and being able to self-evaluate. PST-8 regards the greatest aspect of this model in terms of teachers' personal development as gaining self-confidence. According to PST-8, this model gains the teachers' confidence since it enables them to: know which activities are effective for which subjects; guess the questions to come from students; know which questions to ask students; restructure the course benefiting from their experiences; have knowledge about students' developmental characteristics based on student age; and communicate with the parents effectively in this matter. PST-12 also puts forward that it gives teachers the opportunity to do self-evaluation about positive or negative attitudes, behaviors, plans, and activities that they have undertaken in the previous years.

A majority of the teachers (n: 5/6) working in schools that apply the two-cycle teaching model as 1st–2nd grade teachers continuously expressed that this model negatively affects the teachers' attitudes towards school and certain arrangements should be made. Some of the recommendations presented by teachers are: periodical rotation among 1st–2nd grade teachers and 3rd–4th grade teachers (PST-8; PST-9); providing moral and material support for the 1st–2nd grade teachers (PST-12); and consulting teachers for their preferences about the grade level to teach (PST-11). PST-6 explained that this model causes polarization among teachers and that this situation prevents teachers from working in the school happily, stating:

> …a kind of polarization occurs between the teachers. If such an application is going to be used, a unit responsible for the coordination among all the grade levels is necessary in the school. This unit should ensure coordination among all the grade levels. For example, this unit should be able to tell 3rd-4th grade teachers how the 1st-2nd grade subjects are covered, and we should act accordingly. We have 3rd graders who say they have never seen base-ten blocks. In this case, I deduce that their teacher only wrote the information on the board without any modelling. The student memorized it all. Because of this situation, I have difficulties in introducing the material. Labelling can be seen among teachers as '1st-2nd teachers' or '3rd-4th teachers'. Teachers may be describing each other as successful or unsuccessful. (PST-6)

Majority of the teachers (n = 8/13) presented opinions that the two-cycle teaching model has positive influences on students' academic success. PST-12 thinks that academic success is more important in the 3rd and 4th grades, and this model increases the academic success levels because it gives the same teacher the opportunity to make up for the deficiencies of students. PST-8 explained how the experience of teachers makes the teaching-learning process more qualified.

> …you can guess the subjects in which students may have difficulty in. This aspect of the process improves as you use your experiences and contribute more to the student. For example, I have noticed that the 2nd grade students have had difficulties in the 'time' subject for 3 years. At this point, when you think about how to teach better, you come up with a solution. I believe that it affects the students positively in every academic aspect. (PST-8)

Some of the teachers (n: 3/13) determined that this model would affect students' academic success negatively, while others (n: 2/13) did not present opinions, thinking that it would be wrong to comment on this issue without first conducting a study on it. PST-4 expressed that absence of communication between 1st-2nd grade teachers and 3rd-4th grade teachers has negative effects on students' academic success:

> …there is an abrupt transition in our school. This creates a gap from time to time. The reason for this gap is that the expectations of 3rd–4th grade teachers and those of 1st–2nd grade teachers of the students are very different. This originates from the lack of communication between teachers. For example, I carried the 2nd graders to a certain level. There is no problem if the 3rd grade teacher builds up to this level, but the teacher does not start at the point where s/he should. S/he gets their own way, believing the child should be at a different level, and that is how a learning gap is created. Teachers should form unity in a vertical direction. (PST-4)

Teachers (n: 6/13) who teach in the 1st-2nd grade level shared their opinions that this model affects teacher-student relationship adversely. PST-4 stated that replacement of the teacher causes shy students

or those with problems in social relations to get traumatized and deny the situation. Opinions of PST-12 about the negative effects of this model on teacher-student relationship are presented above:

> …this is the situation that I have most frequently problems with. The 1st–2nd grade teachers are stricter about rules. We all suffer the consequences. I do not want to cope with behavioral problems while teaching the 3rd grade. I want to focus on the academic part, but unfortunately, this is not the case. While the teacher is more dominant in the class in 1st and 2nd grade, we teach most of the things in 3rd and 4th grade. They see us as a guide and them as parents. The students have difficulties at this point. We face attitudes such as "I do not like my teacher; I do not want to go to school." (PST-12)

Teachers (n: 5/13) who teach in the 3rd–4th grade level expressed that students adapt to changes and new conditions quickly, so replacement of teachers does not affect the teacher–student relationship negatively. For instance, PST-1 emphasized that an emotional bond between the teacher and student can be built in a short time and a teacher can build trust in a year. PST-2 said students like every teacher, and they learn different things from each. PST-8 highlighted that the teacher knows how to approach a student s/he has just met. All of the teachers (n: 13/13) working in schools that apply the two-cycle teaching model stated that this model eases the process of adaptation to secondary school and it is a preliminary preparation for secondary school.

What are the recommendations offered by primary school teachers and academicians about the teacher training process within the context of specialization models in primary school teaching?

Answers to the research question of "What are the recommendations offered by primary school teachers and academics studying teacher education about the teacher training process within the context of specialization models in primary school teaching?" were sought in this chapter.

Recommendations about the Process of Primary School Teacher Training within the Context of Specialization Models

The results of the teacher training process were classified as "recommendations about self-contained classroom models", "recommendations about departmentalized classroom models" and "recommendations about looping model" based on data obtained from teachers and academicians. Recommendations about the process of primary school teacher training within the context of specialization models are presented in Figure 7.

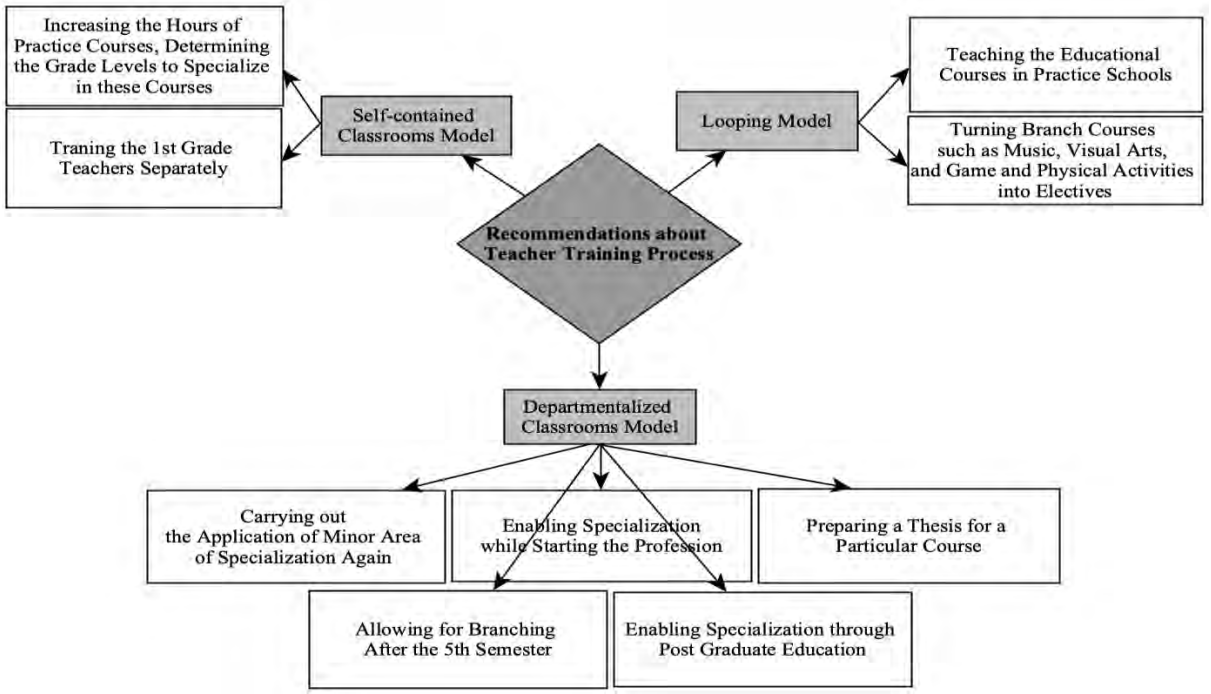

Figure 7. Recommendations on teacher training process.

When Figure 7 is examined, many recommendations have been made about the process of training primary school teachers. Recommendations about the self-contained classroom model can be specified as training the 1st grade teachers separately, increasing the course hours of teaching practice and school experience courses, and allowing the teacher candidates to decide on the grade levels in which they want to specialize in these courses. To illustrate, private school teacher PST-6 stated the necessity of starting the teaching practice and school experience courses as of the 3rd semester and enabling students to specialize in a grade level of their choice in practice schools. Likewise, academician A-4 is of the opinion that, in accordance with the specialization model s/he proposed, 1st grade teaching should become a separate specialization area, similar to pre-school teaching. Therefore, 1st grade teachers should be trained in a separate undergraduate program. Recommendations presented by participants about the departmentalized classroom model include restructuring the Division of Classroom Education, preparing a thesis for one of the four courses (Mathematics, Turkish, Social Studies, and Science), enabling branching through post-graduate education, carrying out the application of minor areas of specialization, giving the educational sciences and general knowledge courses in the first two years of undergraduate education, and giving subject knowledge in a course in the last two years. Drawing attention to the process of teacher training in 1998, academician A-4 expressed that in the case of specialization at course level, teacher candidates can do a minor and they can prepare a thesis or a graduation project within their minor. According to A-5, in the case that the departmentalized classroom model is applied, general knowledge and professional knowledge courses should be given in the first two years of undergraduate education, and teachers should be given the choice of selecting a branch as of the 3rd year, enabling them to take courses on their own branches. Private school teacher PST-15 explained the necessity that courses about the areas that teachers want to specialize in should be offered as elective courses in the undergraduate program. According to PST-15, teacher candidates should be given the opportunity to carry out studies not only on theoretical but also practical aspects of these courses. Regarding the looping models, participants recommended that the general process of current teacher training may continue. However, practice should be given weight besides theoretical courses; branch courses such as music, visual arts, and games and physical activities should be turned into electives; and educational courses should be taught in practice schools. For instance, PST-21 emphasized that because syllabi at the primary school level are created in a spiral way that allows for carrying out interdisciplinary studies, primary school teachers need to have knowledge about all grade levels and all courses. PST-8 expressed that teacher candidates should be trained in the existing teacher training programs. However, after graduation, primary school teachers can be provided with area specialization through a master's degree in departments such as Mathematics Education, Turkish Education, Social Sciences Education, and Science Education.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

According to the results, a majority of academics and primary school teachers preferred looping models. The main reasons for preferring these models can be summed up as recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of students, monitoring and evaluating students holistically, and building emotional bonds between the teacher and student. Poulou (2007) also emphasized the importance of the relationship status between teacher and student, which can be indicated as teachers' perceptions about social-affective development, creating an atmosphere of mutual trust, students' accepting the teacher as the authority, establishing an emotional bond, and keeping in long-term interaction and communication with students' social-affective skills. A positive teacher-student relationship directly affects the process of students' adaptation to school, the development of their social and affective skills, and their academic success (Ewing & Taylor, 2009; Rudasill, Reio, Stipanovic & Taylor, 2010). Chirichello and Chirichello (2001) expressed that in the looping model, students are able to overcome emotional problems such as self-defense, anxiety, and shyness. Groves (2000) stated that students continuing with the same teacher for long periods gain confidence; besides, this has positive contributions to their socio-affective, cognitive, and language development. It is one of the remarkable results of the study that teachers working in private schools that apply the self-contained classroom model and two-cycle teaching model

did not prefer the models applied in their own schools. For instance, the reasons for the teachers working in schools that apply the self-contained classroom model to prefer the two-cycle teaching model include having the chance to compensate for the academic deficiencies of students; having a good command of syllabi; establishing an emotional bond between teacher and student; maintaining the routines, etc. Most teachers who continuously teach at the 1st–2nd grade level in schools that use the two-cycle teaching model preferred the looping model in which the same teacher teaches at the 1st–4th grade level. Teachers who continuously teach at the 1st–2nd grade level include not having job satisfaction because of teaching at the same level all the time, thus exhibiting negative attitudes towards school; burnout and exhaustion; having to deal with adapting to school every two years and the process of first reading and writing; and polarization among teachers. Considering these circumstances, solutions offered by private school teachers for these problems are: leaving the selection of the grade level to specialize in to the teacher and doing this on a voluntary basis; rotating among grade levels at certain intervals; providing a salary supplement for the 1st grade teachers; and bringing incentive regulations.

It was expressed by the participants that the self-contained classroom model, departmentalized classroom model, and looping model might have more positive effects on teachers' professional knowledge and skills in general. However, there are also teachers who state that these models have disadvantages in terms of their professional knowledge and skills. These teachers emphasized that teaching the same courses at the same grade levels every year may have disadvantages for teachers, such as having difficulties in making different students adapt to new rules and routines; having negative attitudes towards school; and losing time to familiarize with the students. Private school teachers also elaborated on the drawbacks of the self-contained classroom model, referring to not taking any responsibility for student failure; students making comparisons among teachers; parents qualifying the teachers as "good" or "bad"; lack of communication between parents and teachers; polarization among teachers; competition created; and, as a result, losing motivation. One of the suggestions presented by most teachers in order to prevent this situation and increase motivation is that there should be rotation at certain intervals among the grade levels that they teach. In self-contained classrooms, departmentalized classrooms, and looping models, it is seen as advantageous for students to see the perspectives of different teachers, have equal opportunities, and discover new interests and skills. Participants generally agreed that students could adapt to secondary school faster as a result of applying these models. Similar results were achieved in a study conducted by Freiberg (2016), in which it was determined that the application of the departmentalized classroom model accelerated the process of adaptation to secondary school.

Another result of this study is that advantages and disadvantages are different for the models e and f among the looping models (see Table 1). To illustrate, not having a good command of the program, failing in subject matter knowledge, losing time while preparing lesson plans every year, making it difficult to adapt to secondary school, and training with the perspective of a single teacher were the factors evaluated as negative in the looping model in which the same teachers teach in the 1st–4th grades, while the same factors were evaluated as positive in the two-cycle teaching model. In this sense, the advantages and disadvantages of the two-cycle teaching model for teachers and students differ from the results determined in the literature on looping models. Another issue is that in the international literature, positive sides of the self-contained classroom model were determined as recognizing strengths and weaknesses of students and their learning styles; having flexibility in planning the lessons; establishing close relationships and emotional bonds with students; meeting students' social and psychological needs; and carrying out interdisciplinary studies (Berry & O'Connar, 2010; Bezeua, 2007; Cook & Rushton, 2007; Chang, Munoz & Koshewa, 2008; Hood, 2009; Martin et al., 2010; McGrath & Rust, 2002; Schonert-Reichl & Zakrzewski, 2014). It can be seen that the advantages of the self-contained classroom model determined in this study do not coincide with those of international studies, except for "carrying out interdisciplinary studies". The advantages of self-contained classrooms models shown in the international literature as having job satisfaction (Strohl et al., 2014), monitoring the affective, social, psychological, and intellectual development of students holistically (Berry & O'Connar, 2010; Martin, et al., 2010), establishing a strong relationship between teacher and student (Bezeua, 2007; Hood, 2009),

recognizing students' strengths and weaknesses and personality traits (McGrath & Rust, 2002), and being able to meet the needs of the students (Reyes, Brackett, Rivers, White, & Salovey, 2012) have been determined as the advantages of looping models in this study. The reason for determining the advantages of the self-contained classroom model as such in the international literature might be that primary school teachers are with the students all day long and they teach the core courses. Another important factor may be that only the departmentalized classroom model and the self-contained classroom model have been contrasted in the studies in the international literature (Jack, 2014; Liu, 2011; Hill & Jones, 2018; McGrath & Rust, 2002; Myrberg et al., 2019; Minott, 2016; Parker et al., 2017; Reitz, 2012; Strohl et al., 2014). On the other hand, in the current research, it was found that the advantages and disadvantages of self-contained classroom models and departmentalized classroom models overlap more based on participant opinions. Regarding the two-cycle teaching model, advantages and disadvantages different from the literature were determined in this research, which can be counted as "not having job satisfaction", "polarization among teachers", "negative attitudes of 1st–2nd grade teachers towards school", "having a good command of the program", "deepening the subject matter knowledge" for teachers, and "gaining perspectives from different teachers" for students.

Apart from the specialization models in the literature, recommendations offered by some of the academicians and primary school teachers are among the important results of the study. For instance, a new model of "teaching by a different teacher in the 1st grade, by the same teacher in the 2nd and 3rd grades, and a different teacher in the 4th grade" was suggested by participants. The main reasons for suggesting this model can be counted as enabling adaptation to school and first reading-writing, gaining students certain traits such as socializing and following the rules, increased academic knowledge in the 4th grade, the process of transition to secondary school, subjects becoming more and more difficult, and the preadolescence period. A second different model proposed by the teachers was "teaching by the same teacher in the 1st–2nd grades and departmentalization at the course level in the 3rd–4th grades." Teachers who advocated for this model believe that behavioral characteristics of the first–second grades, as well as monitoring the processes of first reading–writing and adaptation to school, are essential; students in the third–fourth grades can keep up with changes; they become more independent and their self-management skills develop; and teachers should specialize in only one course.

Academicians and primary school teachers made suggestions about the teacher training process in line with the specialization models that they prefer. Academicians who preferred the departmentalized classroom model expressed that general knowledge and professional knowledge courses should take place in the 1st and 2nd years of undergraduate education; and in the 3rd and 4th years, teacher candidates should be given courses on subject matter knowledge, and they should be given the opportunity to specialize in courses of their preference. It may not be suitable to leave the choice of the courses to specialize in only to the teacher candidates themselves. It plays an important role in teacher training to take into consideration the opinions and observations of teacher candidates' advisors; their success in the course on the area to specialize in; their interest and skills in the course; and their performance in the studies carried out in the related course. Another recommendation by teachers who preferred departmentalized classroom models was that the Department of Primary Education in faculties of education should be restructured, and instead of the Division of Classroom Education, train teachers in various branches such as "Primary School Mathematics Teaching", "Teaching of Reading", "Teaching of Writing", and "Primary School Science Teaching". Another suggestion offered by teachers was to make graduate study compulsory and enable teachers to specialize in a course in this process. A suggestion for a new model, different from those in the literature on specialization models in primary school teaching, was made by the participants as "training the 1st grade teachers separately, similar to pre-school teaching." In the case that the 1st grade teachers are trained separately, connections may be built between pre-school education and the 1st grade by enabling teacher candidates to take courses from the department of pre-school teaching.

Recommendations

According to the results of the study, various recommendations have been developed for practitioners and researchers. MoNE could pilot self-contained, departmentalized, and looping models; receive opinions from shareholders; carry out research on the schools with different model applications; or benefit from the research reports on this issue. Private schools that apply self-contained classrooms, departmentalized classrooms, or two-cycle teaching models should clearly indicate in their vision and missions why they choose to apply these models; what motivations are behind the application of these models; how they enable teachers' specialization; and the benefits of the models they apply in terms of teachers, students, and parents. Other studies should be conducted on the process of primary school teacher training in the case of the application of a different specialization model in primary school teaching. Studies can be carried out on how each model affects teacher competencies, which include professional and personal characteristics of teachers, using questionnaires and observations, which were not used in the present study. It can be examined as a different research topic how specialization models affect teachers' self-efficacy, job satisfaction, workload, professional motivation, and their attitudes towards the school and the profession. Through longitudinal studies in schools with different specialization models, teacher-student relationships, students' attitudes towards school, their cognitive, social, and affective development, as well as their learning levels may be examined. New studies that give place to the opinions of parents and school administrations can be carried out. The effects of different specialization models on students' academic performance can be compared using a mixed-methods study that combines qualitative and quantitative data or an experimental research.

Ethics and Conflict of Interest

The ethical committee approval was obtained for this research from the Ankara University Social Sciences Sub-Ethics Committee with the decision number 05-147 dated April 22, 2019. In addition, National Education approval was obtained for this research from the Ankara Provincial Directorate of National Education with the decision numbered 14588481-605.99-E.8599195 dated April 30, 2019. This study was conducted as part of a Master Thesis titled “The Evaluation of Models of Specialization in Primary School Teaching in Terms of Teachers, Students, and Academics' Opinions” and presented at the 19th International Primary Teacher Education Syposium, in Şanlıurfa, Turkey (November 12–14, 2021).

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

REFERENCES

American Association of School Administrators. (1965). Departmentalization in elementary schools. E*ducational Research Service,* (No. CIRC-7) Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED017329.pdf

Anderson, R.C. (1962). The case for teacher specialization in elemantary school. *The Elemantary School Journal, 62*(5), 253-260.

Başaran, M., & Güçlü, F. (2020). İlkokulda derslerin branş veya sınıf öğretmenleri tarafından işlenmesine ilişkin öğretmen görüşleri [Teachers' views regarding the teaching of courses in primary school by branch or primary school teachers]. *Turkey Education Journal*, *5*(2), 444-459.

Berry, D., & O’Connor, E. (2010). Behavioral risk, teacher-child relationships, and social skill development across middle childhood: A child-by-environment analysis of change. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 21(1), 1–14.

Bezeau, L. (2007). Educational administration for Canadian teachers (Chapter 8). Retrieved February 29, 2018, from http://www.unb.ca/education/bezeau/eact/eact.htm

Bridges, S., & Searle, A. (2011). Changing workloads of primary school teachers: “I seem to live on the edge of chaos.” *School Leadership & Management*, *31*(5), 413 – 433.

Burke, D. L. (1996). Multi-year teacher/student relationships are a long-overdue arrangement. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 77(5), 360-361.

Burke, D. L. (1997). Looping: Adding time, strengthening relationships. Eric Digest. Champaign, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education (ERIC Identifier ED414098)

Chan, T. C., & Jarman, D. (2004). Departmentalize elementary schools. *Principal*, *84*(1), 70-72.

Chang, F. C., Muñoz, M. A., & Koshewa, S. (2008). Evaluating the impact of departmentalization on elementary school students. *Planning and Changing*, *39*(3), 131-145.

Chirichello, M., & Chirichello, C. (2001). A standing ovation for looping: The critics respond. *Childhood Education*, *78*(1), 2-10.

Christone, P., & Shneyderman, A. (2004). Looping: An empirical evaluation. *International Journal of Educational Policy, Research, & Practice*, *5*(1), 47–61.

Cook, A., & Rushton, B. S. (2007*). Student transition: Practices and policies to promote retention*. Boston MA: Harvard Publishing.

Creswell, J. W. (2013*). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1999). Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence. *Educational Policy Analysis Archives, 8*(1), 1–46.

Dilci, T., & Kalkan, G. D. (2013). The problems that primary school teachers'encounter in the first five years in their professions. *Çukurova University Faculty of Educational Journal*, *42*(1), 127-140.

Dunn, M., (1952). Should there be any set type of elementary school organization?. *Elementary School Journal, 53*(4), 199-206.

Elkind, D. (1988). Rotation at an early age. *Principal*, *67*(5), 11-13.

Epstein, J. L., & Dauber, S. L. (1991). School programs and teacher practices of parent involvement in inner-city elementary and middle schools. *The Elementary School Journal*, *91*(3), 290–305.

Ewing, A. R., & Taylor, A. R. (2009). The role of child gender and ethnicity in teacher–child relationship quality and children's behavioral adjustment in preschool. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 24*(1), 92-105.

Freiberg, E. J. (2016). *The relationship between academic performance and elementary student and teacher attitudes towards departmentalizing*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). The University of Arizona, United States. Retrieved form http://hdl.handle.net/10150/319905

Goldhaber, D., Cowan, J., & Walch, J. (2012). Is a good elementary teacher always good? Assessing teacher performance estimates across subjects. *Economics of Education Review*, *36*, 216-228.

Gözütok, F. D. (2007). *Öğretim ilke ve yöntemleri* [Teaching principles and methods]. Ankara: Ekinoks Publishing.

Grant, J., Johnson, B., & Richardson, I. (1996). *The looping handbook: Teachers and students progressing together.* Peterborough, NH: Crystal Springs Books.

Groves, S. (2000). An exploration of ideas, issues and trends in education; Keeping Teacher, Students in the ''Loop''. *The Los Angeles Times,* 2–5.

Grubb, N. (2007). Dynamic inequality and interventions: Lessons from a small country. *Phi-Delta Kappan*, *89*(2), 105-114.

Güzelbey, B. B. (2006*). İlköğretim 1.2.3. sınıf öğretmenliği ile 4.5. sınıf öğretmenliğinin uzmanlık alanına dönüştürülmesine ilişkin bir araştırma (Gaziantep örneği)* [An analysis of the teachers and the school directors opinions about the transformation of 1.2.3. class and 4.5. class teaching into two specialized fields in primary schools (a case study in Gaziantep province)] (Unpublished master's thesis). Gaziantep University, Turkey.

Helen, G., Janet, B., & Kathleen, S. (2008). A case for content specialists as the elementary classroom teacher, *The Teacher Educator*, *43*(4), 302-314.

Hill, A. J., & Jones, D. B. (2018). A teacher who knows me: The academic benefits of repeat student-teacher matches. *Economics of Education Review*, *64*, 1-12.

Hood, L. (2009). "Platooning" instruction: Districts weigh pros and cons of departmentalizing elementary schools. *Harvard Education Lette*r, *25*(6), 1-6.

Jack, D. M. (2014). *Self-contained versus departmentalized settings in urban elementary schools: An analysis of fifth-grade student mathematics performance.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Mercer University, Georgia, United States.

Jacoby, D. (1994). Twice the learning and twice the love. *Teaching Pre K-8*, *24*(6), 58-59.

Lacina-Gifford, L. (2001). The squeaky wheel gets the oil, but What about the shy student. *Education*, *122*(2), 320-321.

Liu, F. (2011). Pre-service teachers' perceptions of departmentalization of elementary schools. *International Journal of Whole Schooling 7*(1), 40-52.

Lobdell, L. O., & van Ness, W. J. (1963). The self-contained classroom in the elementary school. *The Elementary School Journal*, *63*(4), 212-217.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2013*). The constructivist credo*. California, CA: Left Coast Press.

Lowery, N. (2002). Construction of teacher knowledge in context: Preparing elementary teachers to teach mathematics and science. *School Science and Mathematics, 202*(2), 68–83.

Markworth, K. A., Brobst, J., Ohana, C., & Parker, R. (2016). Elementary content specialization: Models, affordances, and constraints. *International Journal of STEM Education, 3*(1), 1-19.

Martin, M., Fergus, E., & Noguera, P. (2010). Responding to the needs of the whole child: A case study of a high-performing elementary school for immigrant children. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, *26*(3), 195-222.

McGrath, C. J., & Rust, J. O. (2002). Academic achievement and between-class transition time for self-contained and departmental upper-elementary classes. *Journal of Instructional Psychology, 29*(1), 40-43.

McPartland, J. M. (1990). Staffing decisions in the middle grades: Balancing quality instruction and teacher/student relations. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *71*(6), 465-469.

MoNE (2017). *Öğretmenlik mesleği genel yeterlikleri* [Teaching profession general competencies]. Retrieved from http://oygm.meb.gov.tr

MoNE (2018). *Milli eğitim istatistikleri (örgün eğitim, 2018/19)* [National education statistics (formal education, 2018/19)]. Retrieved from https://sgb.meb.gov.tr/www/icerik_goruntule.php?KNO=361

Meeks, R., & Smoot, S. (2008). Does looping enhance student achievement? *The Corinthian: The Journal of Student Research at GCSU*, *10*(9), 65-75.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.), California: Sage Publications.

Minott, R. C. (2016). *Elementary Teachers' Experiences of Departmentalized Instruction and Its Impact on Student Affect* (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation). William Howard Taft University.

Moore, D. W. (2008). *Classroom organizational structures as related to student achievement in upper elementary grades in Northeast Tennessee public schools*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). East Tennessee State University, Tennessee, United States. Retrieved from: http://gradworks.umi.com/33/23/3323683.html

Myrberg, E., Johansson, S., & Rosén, M. (2019). The relation between teacher specialization and student reading achievement. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 63*(5), 744-758.

Otto, J. H. (1931). Specialization in teaching in elementary school. *Elementary School Journal*, *32*(1), 17-21.

Parker, A., Rakes, L., & Arndt, K. (2017). Departmentalized, self-contained, or somewhere in between: understanding elementary grade-level organizational decision-making. *Educational Forum*, *81*(3), 236-255.

Poulou, M. (2007). Personal teaching efficacy and its sources: Student teachers' perceptions. *Educational Psychology*, *27*(2), 191-218.

Rasmussen, K. (1998). Looping: Discovering the benefits of multiyear teaching. *Education Update*. *40*(2), 3-4.

Reitz, C. D. (2012). *Elementary classroom organization delivery model and its effect on student achievement* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). State University, United States. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10919/77314

Reyes, M. R., Brackett, M. A., Rivers, S. E., White, M., & Salovey, P. (2012). Classroom emotional climate, student engagement, and academic achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *104*(3), 700–712.

Roberts, J. M. (2003). *A comparative study of student performance in elementary looping and conventional classrooms in selected northern California schools.* (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation*).* University of La Verne, La Verne, California.

Rudasill, K. M., Reio, T. G., Jr, Stipanovic, N., & Taylor, J. E. (2010). A longitudinal study of student-teacher relationship quality, difficult temperament, and risky behavior from childhood to early adolescence. *Journal of School Psychology*, *48*(5), 389-412.

Schonert-Reichl, K., & Zakrzewski, V. (2014). How to close the social-emotional gap in teacher training. Greater Good Science-based practices for a meaningful life*, 6,* 2016.

Senemoğlu, N. (2013). *Gelişim öğrenme ve öğretim kuramdan uygulamaya* [Development. learning and teaching: From theory to practice] Ankara: Yargı Publishing.

Shane, H. G. (1960). Grouping in the elementary school. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, *41*(7), 313-319.

Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, *22*, 63-75.

Strohl, A., Schmertzing, L., Schmertzing, R., & Hsiao, E. (2014). Comparison of self-contained and departmentalized elementary teachers' perceptions of classroom structure and job satisfaction. *Journal of Studies in Education*, *4*(1), 109-127.

Smylie, M. A. (1992). Teacher participation in school decision making: Assessing willingness to participate. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *14*(1), 53–67.

Tok, H., & Bozkurt, A. (2010). Sınıf öğretmenlerinin 1. 2. 3. sınıflar için ayrı ve 4. 5. sınıflar için ayrı yetiştirilmeleri konusunda sınıf öğretmenlerinin görüşlerinin değerlendirilmesi. [Evaluating class teachers' opinions about training class teachers as a first level (1st, 2nd 3rd Grades) and as a second level (4th, 5th grades) teachers differently]. *Gaziantep University Journal of Social Sciences, 9*(2), 759-778.

Wilkins, J.L. M. (2010). Elementary school teachers' attitudes toward different subjects. *Teacher Educator*, *45*(1), 23-36.

Yearwood, C. (2011). *Effects of departmentalized versus traditional settings on fifth graders' math and reading achievement*. (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation). Liberty University, United States.

Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2013). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri* [Qualitative research methods in social sciences]. Ankara: Seçkin Publishing.