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Parents' and Teachers' Perspectives on Classroom Placement Decisions for Twin Children

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explore the views of preschool teachers and parents regarding the placement of twin children in the same or different classrooms during the preschool period, the decision-making processes underlying classroom placement, and the effects of these decisions on children's school experiences. The study was conducted within the framework of a qualitative research approach and employed a phenomenological design. The study group consisted of a total of 20 participants: 11 preschool teachers working in the province of Van who had experience teaching twins, and 9 parents of twin children. Data were collected through a semi-structured interview form and analyzed using thematic analysis. This research indicates that, according to parents and teachers, twin children may differ from one another in terms of their temperament characteristics, while simultaneously maintaining a strong emotional bond and close interpersonal connection. According to participants' accounts, this strong bond often serves a supportive function during school entry, facilitating adaptation to the school environment. However, participants also reported that, in some cases, it may hinder children's individuation, the development of an independent identity, and the formation of peer relationships. Parents generally prefer same-class placement, taking into account the strong attachment between siblings and the perceived benefits of classroom co-placement in facilitating adjustment and providing emotional security. In contrast, teachers tend to argue that separate-class placement may be more advantageous from the perspective of children's individual development and educational outcomes. Further longitudinal research is recommended to examine the long-term effects of same-class versus separate-class placement on twins' developmental, social, and educational trajectories.

Keywords: Twin children, classroom placement, preschool education, parents, temperament.

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Introduction

In humans, it is generally customary for a woman to give birth to a single child; however, some pregnancies result in the simultaneous development of two fetuses, leading to twin pregnancies. Twin pregnancies are classified according to their mode of formation as either monozygotic (identical) or dizygotic (fraternal) twins. Monozygotic twins arise from the division of a single fertilized ovum and are therefore genetically identical. Dizygotic twins, by contrast, result from the fertilization of two separate ova by two different sperm cells; consequently, their genetic similarity is no greater than that of ordinary siblings, and they may be of the same or different sexes (D'Alton et al., 2020).

Twin children, who share a common intrauterine environment before birth, have been reported to exhibit similar developmental experiences and close interpersonal relationships following birth, a pattern that is particularly pronounced among monozygotic twins (Marceau et al., 2016). Although twins often share the same environment and resemble each other genetically, they can exhibit differences in temperament. The nature of the relationship twins establish with one another plays a significant role in these differences. A longitudinal study on the subject indicates that differences in temperament between twins are associated with lower levels of closeness and higher levels of conflict. In this regard, having similar temperaments fosters similar behavioral and emotional responses and facilitates mutual adjustment to each other's behaviors. Conversely, temperamental differences can hinder mutual adjustment and increase the likelihood of conflict in the relationship between twins. Temperamental differences occur in both monozygotic (identical) and dizygotic (fraternal) twins, suggesting that the quality of the relationship between twins cannot be explained solely by genetic factors and that individual differences can also play a significant role in shaping that relationship (Segal et al., 2024). The nature of the relationship between twins necessitates that twin development be evaluated by considering not only individual characteristics but also the close bond shared between the twins themselves. Indeed, Fraley and Tancredy (2012) demonstrated that twin relationships can be viewed as attachment relationships and that twins are more likely to form attachments to one another compared to non-twin siblings. Attachment is an individual's tendency to establish and maintain closeness with a specific person. In this context, the person with whom closeness and trust are established is someone the individual perceives as more competent than themselves in coping with environmental threats and challenges. According to Bowlby, attachment behaviors are particularly pronounced during early childhood. The presence of a familiar, accessible person capable of providing support when needed is a crucial factor contributing to an individual's sense of security (Bowlby, 1982). This sense of security enables the child to explore their environment using the attachment figure as a "secure base." The trust a child develops regarding the attachment figure's availability and responsiveness in times of need forms the foundation of secure attachment (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Laible and Thompson (1998) indicate that secure attachment relationships can play a significant role in the development of children's emotion-understanding skills during the preschool years, particularly regarding the comprehension of negative emotions. This finding highlights the importance of attachment relationships for a child's developmental characteristics during the preschool period and underscores the need to examine the factors that influence the formation of attachment patterns. In this context, O'Connor and Croft (2001), who examined the attachment patterns established by twins with their parents, revealed a significant degree of similarity in the twins' attachment patterns. However, differences in attachment observed among some twins indicate that individual and non-shared experiences can also influence the quality of attachment relationships (O'Connor & Croft, 2001). Furthermore, twins who are discharged from

the hospital later than their co-twins have been reported to exhibit higher rates of withdrawal, depressive symptoms, and difficulties in adapting to their classmates (Hay & O'Brien, 1987). Overall, being born as a twin does not constitute a substantial neurodevelopmental disadvantage compared with singleton birth; however, minor differences may emerge in certain developmental domains (Fontana et al., 2023). Research has shown that twins are more likely to display asocial and anxious behaviors (Eley et al., 2003; Gülkök & Güven, 2025) and that shared fears are more commonly observed among them (Kuzmina & Pugacheva, 2023).

A considerable proportion of the current body of knowledge regarding the developmental characteristics of twins is derived from twin studies. Such studies provide a unique framework for understanding the relative contributions of genetic and environmental factors to human development, as well as the ways in which these factors interact. Contemporary perspectives emphasize that development is shaped through the reciprocal interplay of heredity and environment, while twin research designs offer important methodological advantages in elucidating this complex interaction (Baştemur, 2019). A review of the literature on twin studies indicates that research has predominantly focused on identifying genetic influences, whereas environmental factors have generally received secondary attention. Consequently, studies that comprehensively examine gene–environment interactions remain relatively limited (Baştemur & Kurşuncu, 2020). In recent years, international research on preschool-aged twins has primarily focused on developmental characteristics (Fontana et al., 2023; Kuzmina & Pugacheva, 2023; Rice et al., 2026; Xiang et al., 2022), the social relationships of twins (Liu et al., 2022; Schäufele & Datler, 2026), and their school experiences (Kuzmina & Praizendorf, 2022; Lindley, 2024). Studies conducted in Türkiye appear to address twins largely within the fields of birth/neonatal development and genetics (Baştemur & Kurşuncu, 2020; Topcuoğlu et al., 2014; Yıldız et al., 2022), as well as in research focusing on psychosocial development, the twin bond, individuation, and social relationships (Baştemur, 2019; Mukaddes et al., 1999).

Studies specifically addressing the classroom placement of twin children remain scarce (Özer, 2023), and the issue has not yet been sufficiently examined through a multidimensional perspective that simultaneously incorporates both teacher and parent viewpoints. Moreover, the literature has not sufficiently addressed, the factors influencing parents' and teachers' preferences for same-class or separate-class placement, or the processes through which such decisions are formed. The present study is expected to contribute to both the scholarly literature and educational practice by elucidating the rationale behind classroom placement decisions and examining the perceived consequences of these decisions for children's school experiences.

The primary purpose of this study is to explore the views and experiences of preschool teachers who have taught twin students and parents of twin children regarding the placement of twins in the same or different preschool classrooms, the processes through which placement decisions are made, and the perceived consequences of these decisions on children's school experiences. In line with this overarching aim, the present study seeks to:

1. Describe, from the perspectives of teachers and parents, the temperament profiles of twin children and the nature of the attachment relationship between co-twins;
2. Identify how decisions regarding the placement of twin children in the same or separate classrooms are made and examine the individual, familial, and institutional factors that influence these decision-making processes;

3. Investigate, based on the views of parents and teachers, the effects of same-class versus separate-class placement on twin children's school experiences and patterns of classroom interaction.

Limitations

This study is limited to the views of 11 preschool teachers and 9 parents in the province of Van. Therefore, the transferability of the findings to different contexts should be evaluated within this framework, and the findings should be interpreted as the outcomes perceived by the participants. Furthermore, the children's experiences are represented indirectly through the interpretations of teachers and parents, rather than through their own direct narratives.

Method

Research Design

This study employed a phenomenological research design. Phenomenology is a qualitative research approach that seeks to understand how individuals experience particular phenomena, how they construct meaning from these experiences, and how they perceive the world around them. Within this approach, researchers focus on participants' subjective experiences of a phenomenon and aim to uncover the underlying structures of meaning embedded in everyday life. Through the systematic examination and description of lived experiences, phenomenological inquiry provides a holistic understanding of participants' experiential worlds (Robson, 2015). The primary rationale for employing a phenomenological approach in this study is to treat decisions regarding the placement of twins in the same or different classes not merely as an educational practice, but as a phenomenon involving distinct experiences and the varying meanings attributed to them by parents and teachers. Accordingly, the study aims not only to identify the participants' preferences for same-class or separate-class placement but also to uncover the underlying experiences and the meanings ascribed to those experiences. Consistent with the purpose of the study, the present research sought to explore the views and experiences of preschool teachers who had experience teaching twin children and parents of twins regarding the placement of twins in the same or separate preschool classrooms, the processes through which classroom placement decisions are made, and the perceived effects of these decisions on children's school experiences.

Participants

The study group consisted of 11 preschool teachers who had experience working with twins educated in the same and/or separate classrooms and 9 parents of these children, resulting in a total of 20 participants. The parent and teacher participants represented matched cases, with teachers providing perspectives on the same twin children whose parents participated in the study. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling strategy commonly employed in qualitative research. Purposive sampling was selected to reach teachers and parents with direct experience of the class placement processes of twins. In this way, the aim was to obtain in-depth and rich data—grounded in the participants' experiences and aligned with the research design— relevant to the research questions. This approach involves the deliberate selection of individuals who are expected to provide rich, relevant, and in-depth information concerning the phenomenon under investigation (Christensen et al., 2015).

For the parent group, the primary inclusion criteria were being the parent of twin children and having children currently enrolled in a preschool education institution. For the teacher group, eligibility criteria included having previous experience teaching twin students, currently teaching twins, or being the teacher of the twins whose parents participated in the study. The principal

criterion guiding participant selection was direct experience with the phenomenon under investigation. In this context, the study aimed to explore not only the views of teachers and parents but also their observations and lived experiences. Through the analysis of data obtained from both teachers and parents, it was anticipated that diverse perspectives regarding the classroom placement of twin children would be identified.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participating parents and their twin children

Participant	Parent	Children's Gender	Children's Age	Zygosity (Monozygotic/Dizygotic)	Classroom Placement
P1	Mother	Female/Male	6 years	Dizygotic	Same classroom
P2	Mother	Female/Female	4 years	Monozygotic	Same classroom
P3	Father	Female/Female	6 years	Dizygotic	Same classroom
P4	Mother	Female/Female	5.5 years	Monozygotic	Same classroom
P5	Mother	Female/Female	6 years	Monozygotic	Same classroom
P6	Mother	Female/Female	4 years	Monozygotic	Separate classrooms
P7	Mother	Male/Male	5.5 years	Dizygotic	Separate classrooms
P8	Mother	Male/Male	5.5 years	Monozygotic	Same classroom
P9	Mother	Male/Male	5 years	Dizygotic	Same classroom

As shown in Table 1, a total of nine parents participated in the study. The majority of the participants were mothers (eight mothers and one father), while the gender composition of the twin pairs varied and included female–female, male–male, and female–male twins. The children ranged in age from 4 to 6 years, representing different developmental stages within the preschool period. In terms of zygosity, both monozygotic and dizygotic twins were included in the study. This diversity contributed to capturing a range of experiences related to the developmental and social characteristics of twin children. It was further observed that the majority of the twins attended the same classroom, whereas a smaller number were placed in separate classrooms. This distribution suggests that parents possessed varied experiences and observations regarding the classroom placement of twin children.

Table 2. Demographic and professional characteristics of participating teachers

Participant	Gender	Years of Professional Experience	Experience with Twin Students	Classroom Placement
T1	Female	13 years	Second experience	Same classroom
T2	Female	12 years	Second experience	Same classroom
T3	Female	3 years	Second experience	Separate classrooms
T4	Female	2 years	Second experience	Separate classrooms
T5	Female	8 years	Third experience	Separate classrooms
T6	Female	15 years	Second experience	Same classroom
T7	Female	4 years	Second experience	Separate classrooms
T8	Male	2 years	Second experience	Same classroom
T9	Female	3 years	Second experience	Same classroom
T10	Female	18 years	Second experience	Same classroom
T11	Female	4 years	Second experience	Same classroom

As shown in Table 2, the majority of the 11 teachers who participated in the study were female, with only one male teacher included in the sample. The teachers' professional experience ranged from 2 to 18 years, indicating that the study reflected the perspectives of both novice teachers and those with extensive professional experience. All participating teachers had experience teaching twin students on at least a second occasion. Examination of classroom placement contexts revealed that the study included teachers who had worked with twins educated in both the same classroom and separate classrooms. This diversity enabled teachers to develop different perspectives regarding twins' social adjustment, individuation, academic development, and classroom interactions, thereby enriching the study's dataset.

Data Collection Instrument

A semi-structured Interview Form was used as the data collection instrument in this study. Through the Interview Form, participants' experiences and views regarding the education of twin children in the same or separate classrooms were examined in depth within the framework of developmental domains such as peer relationships, sibling interactions, socio-emotional development, school adjustment, and academic skills. Semi-structured interviews provide researchers with the opportunity to request additional clarification, adapt the wording of questions, and maintain flexibility in the sequencing of questions while adhering to a predetermined interview framework (Akman Dömbekci & Erişen, 2022).

The Interview Form used in the study was developed by the researchers based on the relevant literature, and the opinions of three experts in early childhood education were sought to evaluate its content validity. Based on the feedback received from the experts, the order of certain

questions was revised, and some statements were reformulated to improve clarity and comprehensibility. Subsequently, a pilot study was conducted with a preschool teacher who had previously worked with twin children and a parent of twins in order to assess the comprehensibility and applicability of the Interview Form. Following the feedback obtained from the pilot implementation, the necessary revisions were made and the Interview Form was finalized. In this way, it was intended to enhance the content validity of the data collection instrument and minimize potential problems that might arise during the data collection process.

Data Collection Procedure

The research data were collected using the semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers. The interviews were conducted face-to-face at times and locations preferred by the teachers and parents, taking into account participants' accessibility and preferences. Each interview lasted approximately 20–40 minutes. During the interviews, participants were provided with the opportunity to elaborate in detail on their experiences and evaluations regarding the education of twin children in the same or separate classrooms. Data saturation was taken into account when determining the number of participants for the study. Saturation refers to the stage in the data collection process where the information obtained begins to show significant similarity, no meaningful new findings regarding the study's subject and objectives emerge from further interviews, and it is consequently decided that there is no need to collect additional data (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). As the interviews progressed, it was observed that the frequency of new codes emerging in relation to the research questions decreased and that the information obtained largely repeated the codes and categories identified in earlier interviews; accordingly, the data collection process was concluded with a total of 20 participants, as the data obtained from the teacher and parent participant groups were deemed sufficient to explain the phenomenon under investigation with adequate diversity and depth. When deemed necessary, probing and follow-up questions were employed to obtain richer and more comprehensive data. With participants' consent, all interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim in preparation for data analysis. Throughout the data collection process, the principles of voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and privacy were strictly observed. Participants were explicitly informed that all data collected would be used solely for scientific purposes. Furthermore, to protect participants' identities, codes were used in place of real names during the reporting process (e.g., P1/P2 for parents and T1/T2 for teachers). Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Van Yüzüncü Yıl University Social and Human Sciences Publication Ethics Committee (Date: 4 June 2026; Approval No: 2026/11).

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis approach. In line with the study's phenomenological design, thematic analysis was selected to identify common and divergent patterns of meaning within the participants' narratives and to construct themes that reflect their experiences. Thematic analysis is a theoretically flexible and widely used qualitative data analysis method that enables the identification, analysis, and reporting of meaningful patterns (themes) within a dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the present study, the analytical process was not based on a predetermined coding framework. Rather, codes and themes were developed inductively and in a data-driven manner from participants' statements. As noted by Braun and Clarke (2006), inductive analysis refers to a coding process that is guided by patterns of meaning emerging from the data itself rather than being constrained by researchers' prior assumptions or predefined categories. Accordingly, the analysis began with the transcription of

interview recordings, followed by repeated readings of the transcripts to ensure familiarity with the dataset. Subsequently, meaningful segments of data relevant to the research questions were coded inductively without reliance on a predefined coding framework. The initial codes were then compared in terms of similarities and differences and grouped under potential themes. These themes were subsequently reviewed by the researchers to assess the extent to which they adequately represented the dataset. During the processes of naming and defining themes, patterns that most accurately reflected participants' experiences and interpretations regarding the education of twin children in the same or separate classrooms were identified and reported. The analysis was conducted at a semantic level and followed a data-driven approach grounded in a realist epistemological stance that sought to represent participants' experiences and views as directly as possible (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The coding and theme-development processes were independently reviewed by two researchers, and disagreements were resolved through discussion until consensus was reached.

Trustworthiness

Several measures were implemented to enhance the trustworthiness of the study. In this regard, the strategies recommended by Creswell and Poth (2018) were followed. These strategies included data triangulation, member checking, expert review, and rich description. Multiple sources of data were utilized throughout the research process, and interviews were conducted with both parents and teachers. This approach facilitated the diversification of findings through data triangulation. The interviews were conducted collaboratively by two researchers, and the data collection and analysis processes were carried out in a coordinated manner. Two researchers actively participated in the data collection, analysis, and interpretation stages of the research process. One of the researchers had prior experience working with twins for a year while serving as a preschool teacher. The other researcher is an expert in the field of early childhood education and possesses experience working in preschool educational institutions. The researchers' professional knowledge and experience in early childhood education contributed to an understanding of the educational experiences and classroom placement processes of the twins involved in the study. Following transcription, member checking was conducted to verify the accuracy of participants' statements. Rich and thick descriptions were generated by incorporating participants' direct quotations into the analysis. The codes and themes derived during the data analysis process were evaluated collaboratively by the researchers, and care was taken to ensure that the interpretations aligned with the participants' statements and the research questions. In addition, an independent expert in the field was consulted during the coding process, and an expert review was conducted to further strengthen the credibility of the findings.

Findings

The findings obtained from the study are presented within a thematic framework. First, teachers' and parents' views regarding the temperament characteristics of twin children and their attachment to one another are presented. Subsequently, the decision-making processes concerning the placement of twin children in the same or separate classrooms and the factors influencing these processes are examined. Finally, the perceived consequences of same-class and separate-class placement on twins' school experiences and classroom interactions are evaluated in terms of school adjustment, social relationships, individuation, and peer interactions.

Temperament Characteristics of Twin Children and Their Attachment to One Another

An examination of parents' views regarding the temperament characteristics of their twin children revealed that the majority of participants (P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P8, and P9) believed that their children displayed different temperament characteristics. Parents typically described one twin as more social, outgoing, adaptable, and occasionally more dominant, whereas the co-twin was characterized as more reserved, calm, emotional, easygoing, or introverted. One parent reported that their children did not exhibit notable differences in temperament and demonstrated similar behaviors and reactions. This finding suggests that parents generally perceive their twin children as individuals with distinct temperament characteristics.

When parents' views regarding attachment between twin children were examined, all participants except one reported the existence of a noticeable sibling bond between their children. Participants coded as P1, P2, P3, P6, P8, and P9 described this attachment in terms of protecting one another, providing support, missing one another when apart, and serving as a source of security during adaptation to new environments. Participants P4 and P5, on the other hand, stated that the bond between their twin children was extremely strong. In contrast, participant P7 reported not observing a pronounced attachment pattern and attributed this to the fact that the children were dizygotic twins. Some parents expressed their views regarding their children's temperament and attachment as follows:

"They seem exactly the same. The bond between them is so extraordinary. I don't know how to explain it—if one of them loses a tooth, the other loses the very same tooth. If one trips over a carpet, the other will trip over the same carpet, even if it happens the next day." (P5)

"Their temperaments are completely opposite. One is very calm, while the other is extremely active. One enjoys writing and drawing, whereas the other prefers fixing things, hitting, breaking, and taking things apart. He also tends to interfere a lot with his sibling's play." (P7)

"One is ambitious, the other is not. One is slower, the other faster; one is more meticulous, while the other is more untidy." (P6)

"One of them is more social, whereas the other mainly plays with their sibling and is not as sociable. One is more active and has greater difficulty adjusting. For example, screen exposure affects that child much more. The other is hardly affected by screens at all. That child is more organized, follows rules better, and is generally more orderly. One also sleeps less than the other." (P9)

Regarding whether twin children exhibit similar or different temperament characteristics, teachers generally reported that twins tend to display distinct temperament profiles, although they emphasized that these differences may vary depending on the context. Among the participating teachers, T2, T4, and T7 described the twins as having contrasting personalities and indicated that one twin was more dominant than the other, resulting in the more submissive twin remaining in the background. At the same time, T2 and T8 stated that twins may exhibit similar behavioral patterns in certain areas, such as social adjustment, everyday behaviors, and emotional responses. In particular, they reported that behaviors such as jealousy and difficulties with sharing were observed in both children. Teachers T1, T6, and T10 emphasized that twins' temperaments should not be viewed as either similar or different in a fixed sense, but rather as exhibiting a context-dependent pattern that varies according to circumstances. Direct quotations from the teachers are presented below.

"...As I said, this child actually has a very dominant personality, but when they are with their twin, they can remain somewhat in the background. However, in the classroom, this is a child who is able to make plans with peers, carry them out, and generate solutions when faced with a problem." (T3)

"The twins in my class are both calm girls. One has a more irritable and strong-willed personality, whereas the other is gentler and more compliant. One performs exceptionally well academically, while the other is more average, I would say." (T9)

"The twins in my classroom generally get along well, but because they are in the same class, they are constantly attached to one another. They continually imitate each other's behaviors and attitudes." (T10)

Decision-Making Processes Regarding Classroom Placement of Twin Children: Family- and School-Based Determinants

Teachers' and parents' views regarding the factors influencing decision-making processes related to the classroom placement of twin children are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Factors influencing decision-making processes in the classroom placement of twin children

Theme	Category	Codes	Participants
Factors Influencing Preference for the Same Classroom	Child-related factors	Attachment to the co-twin / reluctance to separate	P4, P5, P8, T2, T11
		Feeling secure	P4, P8
		Facilitating school adjustment	P3, P4, P8, T2, T3, T9
		Consistency in eating habits and daily routines	P5, P9
		Providing academic support to one another	P1, P3, T8, T9
		Age-related considerations	P3, P7, P8
		Supporting the sibling	P1
	Family-related factors	Convenience in transportation	P1, P3, P5
		Ease of monitoring homework and classroom activities	P1, P3
	Institution-related factors	Absence of an alternative classroom	P2
		Teacher performance and instructional quality	P3, P9
Factors Influencing Preference for	Child-related factors	Dominant sibling overshadowing the other twin	P2, P6, P7, T1, T3, T7, T10

Separate Classrooms		Developing an independent social network / self-confidence	P7, T1, T4, T5, T6, T7, T10
		Sibling jealousy	P6, T4, T6, T8
	Family-related factors	Seeking professional advice	P6
		Negative experiences / sibling conflicts	P6, P7
	Institution-related factors	School policy requiring separate classroom placement	P7

Note. P = Parent participant; T = Teacher participant.

The findings indicate that decisions regarding the classroom placement of twin children are shaped by a combination of child-related, family-related, and institution-related factors. Among the factors supporting placement in the same classroom, the most frequently cited child-related reasons included reducing separation anxiety, facilitating school adjustment, and enabling twins to provide academic support to one another. In contrast, preferences for separate classrooms were primarily influenced by concerns about preventing one dominant sibling from overshadowing the other, promoting the development of independent social networks and self-confidence, and reducing sibling jealousy.

Family-related factors favoring same-class placement included the practical advantages associated with educational routines and daily family functioning, the stronger attachment typically observed among younger children, and greater convenience in transportation. Parents who preferred separate classrooms reported making this decision in response to previous negative experiences, a desire to minimize sibling conflict, and, in a limited number of cases, recommendations from professionals.

Regarding their own preferences, seven teachers indicated that they would favor placing twins in separate classrooms, whereas three preferred same-class placement. One teacher did not express a definitive preference, arguing that the most appropriate arrangement depends on the individual characteristics of the children and the specific circumstances. Overall, the findings suggest that although teachers acknowledge the possibility of short-term adjustment difficulties, most believe that separate classroom placement is more beneficial for twins' long-term development.

Parents reported that young children often perceive the presence of their co-twin as an important source of security, which reduces separation anxiety and facilitates the transition to school. However, parents who had placed their children in separate classrooms (P6 and P7) noted that although the children initially experienced some difficulty with separation, these challenges were temporary. According to these parents, the children adapted quickly and gradually began to establish independent friendships and social relationships. One parent explained that despite preferring separate classroom placement, the children had been placed in the same classroom because only one preschool classroom was available.

The following quotations illustrate parents' perspectives:

"My daughter is more reserved than my son. I felt that she might struggle on her own, whereas when her brother is with her, she becomes much more confident. For example, she is less

shy and expresses herself more easily when her sibling is nearby. That is why I wanted them to be in the same classroom. Although that was not the only reason. Our school is also somewhat far from home, and when, for instance, their teachers are absent or unavailable, it is easier for me not having to manage separate arrangements for each child." (P1)

"We did not request that they be placed in the same classroom; in fact, we did not want that at all. However, because there was no alternative classroom, they ended up together. For us, being in the same classroom has brought no advantages—only disadvantages. They are currently together because there is only one classroom available, but they will attend separate classes in the future. The reason is that they affect each other too much emotionally. If one child is more active or successful in a particular area, that child can overshadow the other, who may then begin to feel inadequate." (P2)

"My children are extremely attached to one another. Because of that attachment, I had no choice but to place them in the same classroom. They simply do not want to be separated." (P5)

According to the teachers, the attachment between twins serves a protective and supportive function during the initial stages of school adjustment. However, they emphasized that this process cannot be explained solely by classroom placement; rather, individual and environmental factors, such as children's temperament characteristics, family-derived habits, and prior experiences, also play a determining role in adaptation. Direct quotations from both teachers and parents regarding twins' classroom placement and school adjustment are presented below.

"Actually, I think being in the same classroom is better for them. Usually, one twin is more self-confident and self-assured, while the other tends to depend on that sibling. For example, last year my student and her twin were in separate classrooms. My student did not have any problems, but her sibling constantly wanted to come to her. They were somewhat dependent on one another at the beginning. Not excessively, but there was still a certain degree of attachment. This year, being in the same classroom, they adapted much more quickly." (T1)

"To be honest, we experienced some difficulties during the orientation process. Other children are only separated from their families, whereas these children are separated both from their families when they arrive and from each other once they enter the school. Naturally, this made the initial stages quite dramatic for them. However, later we observed that it was actually a much healthier arrangement. One twin is inevitably more active, while the other is more passive. Typically, one child imitates or is directed by the other. At least, we were able to overcome that pattern. The children gradually began to express their own ideas and implement their own decisions. Once they became accustomed to the situation, completed the orientation process, and adapted to the school environment, the subsequent period was excellent." (T3)

"Having them in separate classrooms definitely makes things easier for them, for us, and for the parents. We do not completely separate them from their sibling. If they want to see each other, we allow it. During the initial adaptation period, there can be some difficulties because they want to see their sibling. However, after adaptation, this need disappears. Once the child establishes a routine, they know which classroom their sibling is in and no longer feel the need to see them." (T5)

Perceived Consequences of Same-Class and Separate-Class Placement on Twins' School Experiences and Classroom Interactions

Table 4. Perceived consequences of same-class and separate-class placement on twin children's school experiences and classroom interactions

Theme	Category	Codes	Participants
Same-Class Placement	Advantages	Facilitating school adjustment	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P8, P9, T2, T3, T4, T6, T10
		Enhancing feelings of security and reducing loneliness	P1, P4
		Supportive sibling relationship	P2, P9, T2, T3
		Learning through sibling modeling	P1, P5
	Disadvantages	Hindering individuation	P3, P4, P5, T2, T8, T11
		Creating comparison and performance pressure	P1, P2
		Jealousy and interference with peer relationships	P3, P9, T2, T8, T11
		Excessive attachment and diminished individuality	T2, T8, T11
		Difficulties with sharing	T4, T8
Separate-Class Placement	Advantages	Promoting individuation	P3, P6, P7, P9, T1, T2, T3, T5, T7
No Observable Effect		Opportunities to participate in different activities	P7, T9
		Increased self-confidence	T6
	Disadvantages	Missing the co-twin / separation anxiety	P3, T6, T10
	—	No noticeable impact observed	P7

Note. P = Parent participant; T = Teacher participant.

Parents' and teachers' views regarding the effects of same-class and separate-class placement on twin children's school experiences and classroom interactions are presented in Table 4. According to the findings, participants identified same-class placement as advantageous for reasons such as facilitating school adjustment, fostering a sense of security, providing sibling support, and enabling siblings to model one another. A common view among parents (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P8, and P9) was that placing twins in the same classroom particularly facilitates adjustment during the initial stages of schooling.

Participants also reported several disadvantages associated with same-class placement, including difficulties in achieving independence, comparison and pressure, jealousy and interference with peer relationships, excessive attachment, and reduced individuality. Unlike parents, preschool teachers emphasized that children placed in the same classroom often develop

excessive dependence on one another, which may consequently diminish their individuality. In addition, competition, jealousy, and difficulties with sharing were identified by some teachers as further disadvantages. Overall, teachers tended to view separate-class placement as more conducive to supporting twins' individuation processes and facilitating the development of independent social relationships.

Participants further indicated that placement in separate classrooms may enable children to engage with different peer groups and activities, develop their own preferences, move beyond a shared "twin identity," and make their individual characteristics more visible, thereby contributing to increased self-confidence. Taken together, teachers' accounts suggest that decisions regarding whether twin children should be placed in the same or separate classrooms should be made on the basis of the child's individual characteristics and needs, guided by the principle of the best interests of the child. Indeed, teachers who reported that same-class placement did not create any difficulties attributed this outcome to the children's personality and temperament characteristics and emphasized that no single approach can be generalized to all twin pairs.

Participants' views are illustrated through the following excerpts:

"I have never observed any disadvantages of having them in the same classroom. The main advantage was during the initial period when they entered a completely unfamiliar environment. Their trust in each other helped them adapt more easily—they would comfort one another, stay close, and play together. If I had placed them in separate classrooms, I think they would constantly have been worried about each other." (P4)

"I have not observed any disadvantages of placing them in separate classrooms. On the contrary, I have seen many benefits. It turned out to be a positive experience. They became even more attached to one another in a healthy way and started missing each other more. They immediately hug each other when school ends and always have something to tell one another. I am very satisfied with the arrangement. Their conflicts have decreased somewhat, and they seem to get along better now. Each of them has also developed different friendships. Overall, it has been a better experience for us." (P6)

"Their temperaments are completely different. One is dominant, while the other is shy. The dominant one tends to interfere a lot. At school, they usually try not to keep them together because one constantly tells the other how things should be done—'No, not like that; you should do it this way.' That is why being in separate classrooms is beneficial." (P7)

"We did not experience any adjustment problems when they were in the same classroom. Perhaps because they are girls, they were generally quite compatible. I never encountered any major difficulties. Occasionally, there was some sibling jealousy, but both children have their own personalities. Personally, I believe that being in separate classrooms can be very valuable for enhancing children's self-confidence. However, both of my students already have healthy levels of self-confidence, so I did not observe any problems in their case." (T6)

"In my opinion, being in separate classrooms has positive effects. When they are not together, they are more likely to establish friendships with other children and participate in different play activities. When they are placed in the same classroom, they generally play only with each other and attempt to continue the same interaction patterns they have at home." (T7)

"The same classroom is not ideal. At the beginning of the school year, the twin students were the last and most difficult children to adapt. Because they communicated only with each other and not with anyone else, their adjustment to the classroom environment was extremely

challenging. Establishing friendships was also very difficult for them. Even now, they remain highly selective in their friendships. They have not developed relationships with the entire class because they seem to operate with the mindset that 'we are enough for each other.'" (T11)

Discussion

The primary aim of this study was to examine teachers' and parents' views and experiences regarding the placement of twin children in the same or separate classrooms, the processes through which these decisions are made, and the perceived consequences of such decisions for children's school experiences. The findings indicate that teachers and parents hold similar views concerning twins' individual characteristics and the dynamics of the relationship between co-twins. Both parents and teachers reported that twins generally possess different temperament characteristics, that one twin often assumes a more dominant role, and that twins tend to be strongly attached to one another. Burlingham (1949) suggested that, from an early age, one twin may assume a more dominant and directive role, whereas the other may adopt a more compliant and less prominent position. This dominant–submissive pattern develops through reciprocal interactions between twins and may lead one sibling to exert a determining influence on the other's behaviors, preferences, and social relationships. In particular, twins have been reported to exhibit more pronounced behavioral responses when parents devote greater attention to one sibling than the other (Şipal et al., 2016). It is natural for parents to display differential treatment toward their children. A study examining differences between monozygotic twins during the preschool period found that mothers exhibited distinct parenting behaviors toward genetically identical twins, particularly with respect to socio-emotional adjustment. In that study, the twin who received greater parental support and less punishment demonstrated more prosocial behavior and a more positive emotional disposition than the co-twin (Deater-Deckard et al., 2001). Parenting twins represents a unique experience that entails responsibilities and arrangements distinct from those associated with parenting a single child; consequently, family dynamics and parenting practices may also be shaped in different ways (Mukaddes et al., 1999). In contrast to the dyadic parent–child interaction characteristic of families with a single child, twin families involve a triadic interaction system comprising the parent and both twins (Robin & Casati, 1994). Upon school entry, this relational structure becomes even more complex. When twins reach preschool age, families and schools are confronted with critical decisions regarding classroom placement, the support of socio-emotional development, and the management of the unique dynamics inherent in twin relationships (Segal & Russell, 1992).

The findings of the present study indicate that decision-making processes concerning the classroom placement of twin children are perceived to be influenced by multiple factors. These include child-related, family-related, and institution-related factors. Both parents and teachers reported that same-class placement was perceived to facilitate twins' adjustment to school. Parents generally preferred same-class placement because of concerns related to school adjustment, separation anxiety, and practical considerations that facilitate the organization of daily life. According to parents, being in the same classroom strengthens feelings of security between siblings and facilitates mutual support and assistance. Starting school is a significant transitional period for children, involving new social relationships, unfamiliar environments, and different expectations-things they have not encountered before. During this process, the presence of a twin sibling-someone familiar and trusted-can help reduce uncertainty and anxiety regarding the new setting and situation, facilitate a smoother adjustment to the classroom or school, and encourage participation in the group. Indeed, a recent study (Garon-Carrier et al., 2021) involving a sample of 560 pairs of twins demonstrates that being in the same class has no negative impact on children's

social development; on the contrary, educating twins together is associated with modest positive effects on their classroom behavior and social functioning. Many parents prefer to keep twins together during the early years of schooling because separation is often perceived as a potential risk factor (Staton et al., 2012). Similarly, Markodimitraki et al. (2015) reported that parents of twins generally prefer to keep their children together, largely because siblings provide support to one another and function better when they are together. However, Segal and Russell (1992) argued that classroom placement decisions should not be governed by a standard rule; rather, each twin pair should be evaluated according to its own individual characteristics, and mandatory separation policies should be avoided. Teachers, by contrast, predominantly argued that twins should be educated in separate classrooms, emphasizing that such an arrangement would better support children's individuality.

Jones and De Gioia (2010), based on interviews with teachers, reported that teachers' views regarding twins vary according to their experiences with twin children. Previous research has further suggested that both placement arrangements possess advantages and disadvantages across different developmental domains (Alexander, 2012), and that substantial differences of opinion exist among administrators, teachers, and parents regarding the separation of twins (Gordon, 2014). These two different-parents' and teachers' differing views on classroom placement-perspectives indicate that decisions regarding classroom placement for preschool-aged twins require a simultaneous assessment of both the security and support provided by the sibling relationship and the development of individuation and independent social relationships. Lindley (2024) noted that twins possess a distinctive pattern of social bonding and interaction; while same-class placement may support this bond, it may simultaneously pose certain risks for individual development. Twins' social development and friendship formation constitute a unique developmental domain in which strong attachment and the need for individuation coexist.

In this regard, Baştemur (2019) demonstrated that the twin bond, particularly among monozygotic twins, remains a salient feature from childhood through adolescence. Twins frequently identify their co-twin as their closest friend, and sharing the same school, classroom, living environment, and social network tends to strengthen this bond further. However, some studies have reported that classroom sharing does not adversely affect twins' social development or academic achievement (Tully et al., 2004; van Leeuwen et al., 2005). Moreover, Garon-Carrier et al. (2021) found that educating twins in the same classroom may be associated with moderately positive outcomes in terms of school behavior and social functioning.

Overall, the findings of the present study indicate that, based on parents' and teachers' accounts, twin children may differ substantially in their temperament characteristics while simultaneously maintaining a strong emotional bond and close interpersonal connection. The findings further suggest that distinct dynamics emerge when decisions are made regarding whether twins should be placed in the same or separate classrooms at school entry. National legislation governing preschool and primary education in Türkiye does not contain specific, standardized procedures regarding the placement of twins in the same or different classes. While existing regulations cover enrollment, age categories, and class formation processes, they do not contain a specific provision regarding the class placement of twins (Ministry of National Education Regulation on Preschool Education and Primary Education Institutions, 2014). This suggests that decisions concerning the class placement of twins may be shaped by school- and local-level practices as well as parental preferences. Parents generally favor same-class placement, emphasizing the attachment between siblings and the supportive benefits of classroom co-placement. Teachers, by contrast, tend to evaluate the issue from the perspective of children's

individual development and educational outcomes and therefore often consider separate-class placement to be more appropriate.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that decisions regarding the placement of twin children in the same or separate classrooms should give particular consideration to children's individual characteristics and developmental needs. When making decisions regarding class placement for twins, factors such as their level of attachment to one another, their influence on each other, whether one sibling tends to dominate or direct the other, their individual differences, and their school adjustment characteristics should be evaluated collectively. It is recommended that a decision-making process be established for preschool institutions in which teachers, parents, and school administrators jointly evaluate class placement decisions for twins. Furthermore, given the limited availability of professional guidance on this issue, parents and school administrators are encouraged to seek expert consultation when making placement decisions. Given the absence of a standard practice or educational policy regarding the placement of twins in the same or different classes, it is recommended that education policymakers develop guiding principles to assist parents, school administrators, and teachers during the class placement process. This study involved interviews solely with teachers and parents. It is recommended that future research examine the effects of placing twins in the same or different classes by also considering the children's own experiences and behavioral observations. Finally, research in this area remains relatively limited. Future studies should employ larger samples, investigate diverse educational contexts, and, in particular, utilize longitudinal research designs to examine the long-term effects of same-class and separate-class placement on twins' developmental and educational outcomes.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors conducted the study collaboratively and declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Ethics

The ethics application for the study was made on 19/05/2026 and the research was carried out with the approval of Van Yuzuncu Yil University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee dated 03/06/2026 and numbered 2026/11-25.

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