

**INVESTIGATION OF TEACHERS' OPINIONS TOWARDS EFFECTS OF
E-TWINNING PROJECT ORGANIZED WITH THE PURPOSE OF GAINING
ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURE VALUES ON STUDENTS**

Süheyla YÜKSEL¹

Şenol ŞENYER²

Devlet EK MEN³

Geliş Tarihi/Received:16.12.2021 Kabul Tarihi/Accepted:20.12.2021 Elektronik Yayın/Online Published:23.12.2021

DOI: 10.48166/ejaes.1037442

ABSTRACT

At this study, teachers' opinions towards effects of an Etwinning project on students which is organized with the purpose of gaining environmental and nature values are analyzed. It is an international eTwinning project. At this project it is aimed to gain students awareness of protecting or nature and environment and bring up generations who are respectful to moral, cultural, ethical and insitutive values of society. The Project has started in september of 2019-2020 academic year and ended in June. There are more than 600 students at the Project. Students' age range is 7-11. They are at the first and fifth grade at school. Qualitative method is used and case study pattern is preferred. During data collection, focus group discussion is the preferred method. Study group consists of 10 teachers that have attended to focus group discussion. According to teachers' opinions, it is stated that students' awareness of protecting nature and environment, technological skills, creative thinking, problem solving, co-working and collaboration skills are developed.

Keywords: Environment and nature; e-twinning; project; values

¹ Teacher, Mersin Provincial Directorate for National Education, yukselsuheyla@hotmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0002-7639-0231

² Teacher, Provincial Directorate for National Education, senolsenyer@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0003-3550-2580

³ Teacher, Provincial Directorate for National Education, asminhivda@hotmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0003-4196-8168

ÇEVRE VE DOĞA DEĞERLERİNİ KAZANDIRILMASI AMACIYLA DÜZENLENEN BİR E-TWINNING PROJESİNİN ÖĞRENCİLER ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİLERİNE YÖNELİK ÖĞRETMEN GÖRÜŞLERİNİN ARAŞTIRILMASI

ÖZET

Bu çalışmada, çevre ve doğa değerlerinin kazandırılması amacıyla düzenlenen bir Etwinning projesinin öğrenciler üzerindeki etkilerine yönelik öğretmen görüşleri analiz edilmektedir. Proje uluslararası bir eTwinning projesidir. Bu proje ile öğrencilere doğayı ve çevreyi koruma bilinci kazandırmak ve toplumun ahlaki, kültürel, etik ve kurumsal değerlerine saygılı nesiller yetiştirmek amaçlanmaktadır. Proje 2019-2020 eğitim öğretim yılı Eylül ayında başlamış ve Haziran ayında sona ermiştir. Projede 600'den fazla öğrenci yer almaktadır. Öğrencilerin yaş aralığı 7-11'dir. Öğrenciler birinci ve beşinci sınıf aralığında öğrenim görmektedir. Çalışmada Nitel yöntem kullanılmış ve durum çalışması deseni tercih edilmiştir. Veri toplama sırasında odak grup görüşmesi yöntemi tercih edilmiştir. Çalışma grubu, odak grup görüşmesine katılan 10 öğretmenden oluşmaktadır. Öğretmen görüşlerine göre öğrencilerin doğayı ve çevreyi koruma bilincinin, teknolojik becerilerinin, yaratıcı düşünme, problem çözme, birlikte çalışma ve işbirliği becerilerinin geliştiği belirtilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çevre ve doğa; e-twinning; proje; değerler

INTRODUCTION

During primary school education the aim is to support childrens' all zone of development, and at a qualified education social values also must take place besides academic skills. Values education like self-confidence, taking responsibility, doing responsibilities, starting a task, comleting a task, teamwork, not telling lie and using courtesy statements bring together other skills that will be used during lifetime. A good values education affects positively not only child's personality development but also academic success. Teaching children values at school is very important in terms of forming a healthy society. Teaching values to children is as important as teaching Math and Turkish. One of the factors that complete the education process in terms of not only cognitive education but also affective education is values education.

Human values is a universal notion that has an important role to ensure continuity and keep alive society regardless of language, religion, race, living quarters and socio-cultural structure. Undoubtedly, determining the frame of the connection and interaction that someone forms with itself, with human, environment and nature and lasts lifetime will make it possible that next generations will have a nice life based on healthy bases. Protecting nature and benefiting from nature are some of human values. It is a social necessity to teach well to children during their education. Education does not aim only to make some behaviors different. Moreover, It also provides the awareness to fight against pronlems that someone faces and aims to bring in behaviors that help him/her to solve the problem. It brings together the environment education and society attendence through collaborater activities which inspire all members of school community (School education Gateway, 2020). In the event of an increase in environmental disruption, such an education underlies the improvement and protection of the environment (Yücel&Morgil, 1999:77). Environmental education improves the

information of individuals and this is the process of teaching. It improves individuals' environmental attitudes, skills of problem solving and environmental awareness. For this reason, by increasing the awareness and attitudes towards environment, an ethical behavior towards environment will be developed (Kunt & Geçgel, 2013:795). Therefore, teachers must provide lesson materials related to environment, improve the information on this subject, develop activities inspiring towards environment, take on their environment and after doing these they must develop value judgement related to environment (Şimşekli, 2004:4). Transforming the given education into attitudes and behaviors will have an important place in terms of environmental protection (Şahin and Gül, 2009:542). It is very difficult to be sensitive to the environment and to gain afterwards the awareness of leaving a livable world to new generations. Environmental awareness and information should be given to people from a younger age. The more environmentally friendly people in the future can be raised and educated starting from pre-school and primary school levels, the more environmental protection will be guaranteed (Armağan, 2006).

In this direction, the eTwinning Project "Into Space With Our Magic Tree" has prepared in order to gain students environment and nature values and it has been completed with attendance of students and teachers from different cities and countries like Mersin, Samsun, Zonguldak, Gaziantep, Italy and Poland. The aim of the project is to draw attention to importance of protecting nature and environment with our national, moral and cultural values, to develop awareness of protecting environment at primary school students and their families, to take on social values, to be aware of effects of global climate and to support foreign language learning. It is important to determine whether goals are reached or not, so at this study it is analyzed teachers' ideas towards the effects of project on students.

METHOD

Qualitative method is used and case study pattern is preferred. Focus group interview, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the research. Focus group interviews are a method carefully planned (Kruger and Casey, 2000) and conducted by a subject expert (moderator, consultant) in the light of predetermined questions in order to obtain perceptions about a predetermined topic.

Study Group

Focus group interview study group is consist of teachers who are teachers at state schools depend on Ministry of National Education. All of these teachers acted actively at the eTwinning project.

Data Collection Tool

What the effects on students of an eTwinning project organized in order to gain nature and environment values are obtained by analyzing datas got from 8 volunteer teachers via focus group interview. Accordingly, obtained datas are important in terms of forming needs analysis in that it is guide and instructive for projects that will be prepared to gain awareness of nature and environment.

Two teachers analyzed questions in terms of content validity and came to an % 100 agreement.

Analysis of Data

Teachers' views obtained by focus group interview are stated as they are without digitised. Findings are given under the determined theme. While reporting focus group interview, numbers are not important but teachers' views are (Creswell, 1998). According to Suler (1995), while analyzing focus group interviews, finding must not digitise, and must not be given percentage, frequency, statistical test or tables. Accordingly, recorded views are analyzed and given as teachers stated.

Implementation Process of Focus Group Interview

Focus group interview applied as 2 sessions via internet. First session has organised before the project and the second after the project. At the first session teachers has answered questions like “Why have you attended the project?”, “What are your expectations from project?”. At the second session, teachers answered questions like “What are the affects of project on or students?”, “What are the differences you realize at your students?”.

Project Implementation Process

Activities related to our values of patriotisimi solidarity, love, respect, tolerance, compassion, responsibility, health environmental, protection, cleanliness were held and the importance of protecting our nature and environment with our cultural heritage values was emphasized. The social media institutions of the project were created, preliminary surveys were made in the forum section, the opinion of the partners and students were taken and the business process was provided. School, province, country and student preentations of the project partners were made. Mixed country teams were formed and the students working in these teams were allowed to conduct joint research on our values in cooperation. The process was evaluated with online activities. In cooperation with TEMA, citrus seeds were planted, saplings were grown, and activities were carried out to protect our national, moral and cultural values with environment and nature-friendly activities. The projet is integrated into all courses with different disciplines.



Figure 1. Activity Examples

The project partners greeted other participants in their own language and wrote down our important values in society using Mentimeter tools. Various events were organized during the European Code Week. Visual Works containing teacher and students slogans were created using the

web 2 tool Book Creator. The collaborative work, consisting of student logos and teacher slogans was created with the Book Creator tool. Acrostic poem about the project was created and turned into a book. Virtual forest was created by the project partners and tree studies related to the forest were made by the students. A common dance activity related to values was made. Each line was played by students. The joint activity of student slogans on the world map with the Thinglink tool was created as a virtual exhibition with the Artsteps tool at the end of the project due to the Covid 19 pandemic process.

Visibility Studies

Within the scope of the project, the final products of the project, such as “project evaluation report book, joint song, joint poem, virtual forest, virtual exhibition and project calendar (Figure 5)”, in which each project partner completed by taking part and products realized month by month were revealed and displayed on the eTwinning project pages promoted by sharing links. As seen in Figure 3, a movie about our values was shown to the students. The importance of ur nature was emphasized by planting seeds and growing saplings (Figure 4). The school exhibitions on Safe Internet Use were presented to all school students and parents, as seen in Figure 2. Due to the Covid 19 Pandemic process, a virtual project exhibition and virtual forest were held, in which the products realized month by month and the project final product were presented together. Project certificates were prepared for the project partners.



Figure 2. School Exhibition

Figure 3. Watching Movie

Figure 4. Importance of Nature

Figure 5. Calendar

Professional Development

Since the founders knew web 2 tools very well, teachers who did not know how to use web 2 tools in the project group were supported to dominate the field by providing all kinds of information and promotion activities about basic coding, worksheet preparation tools and many web 2.0 tools. After the Professional development studies carried out, teachers were provided with the opportunity to learn web 2.0 tools from different fields that they can use in their lessons and projects. By sharing information with teachers in different cities and countries, new learning methods were started to be implemented in the classrooms. As a result of our activities to protect nature and the environment with

our values, necessary attempts have been made for our partners to become members of organizations such as TEMA, KIZILAY and SIFIR ATIK so that they can contribute to the development of teachers in their own schools.

PROJECT PLAN

SEPTEMBER

Teacher, school, student introduction

introductions:

All our partners have promoted themselves, their students, their schools, the city they live in, and their country.

Poster, logo, slogan works:

All our partners have done logo and poster works for our project.

Poster, logo, slogan competitions: Poster and logo competitions were organized for our project and the logo with the highest number of votes was chosen as the project logo.

Values survey of our project: While starting our project, a questionnaire was conducted on our values and our project's annual plan was prepared accordingly.

OCTOBER

Partner's Map:

Partners map has been prepared for our European partner project.

Our Thoughts About The Project

All of our partners stated their ideas and expectations when starting our project.

Parents permission petitions

All of our project partners received a petition from their parents for permission to participate in the project.

Project introduction trailer

All of our project partners have prepared our project promotion trailer using web 2 tools.

Distribution of task/Görev dağılımı

The distribution of duties of all our project partners has been made and stated on the related page.

NOVEMBER

Patriotism/Vatanseverlik

Patriotism is one of our most important values. This enthusiasm was experienced in the most beautiful way during the National Holidays and it was kept alive around us.

Our opinions about our values

Our project partners, parents and students were surveyed and asked about their opinions about the project.

Writing Common Acrostic Poem

All of our project partners wrote a common poem by using acrostic using our project name

DECEMBER

Compassion - Mercy/ Şefkat - Merhamet

Our value of compassion / compassion is a value that we constantly instill in our students and integrate into every subject in the curriculum since the first day schools are opened.

Our Values Mindmap

Collaboration in students' words about our values

New Year Card Match

Card matches were made between schools

International Human Meeting Day

20 December Human Solidarity Day importance was transferred to our students and aid campaigns were organized for those in need.

JANUARY

Cleaning - Let's do good/Temizleme - haydi iyi yapalım: It is our basic teaching that we need to keep both our body and the environment clean to be healthy.

Our Values World

Our students found quotes and Proverbs about our values and made pictures of them.

It is shown on our world map with web 2 tool.

Activities Of Mixed Country Teams

10 teams were created with our project partners, in which 10 different values were processed, and these teams continued their work with mixed students.

Our common song "Our Values"

Our song titled "Our Values" was voiced by the project students and a common product was created.

FEBRUARY

Cultural Heritage/Kültürel Miras

Our Cultural Heritage values have been instilled in our students, museums and historical sites in the region we live in have been visited.

Painting studies have been done.

Safer İnternet Day 11.02.2020

İnternet Security week has been supported by videos and visuals. Security rules and the importance of personal information have been transferred.

Value Issues Of Teams

Responsible teachers, team work subject and team officer students were determined for team work.

MARCH

Solidarity/Dayanışma

Each of our teachers shared their activities on the page about the solidarity on our page.

World Water Day/Dünya Su Günü/22.03.2020

Due to the pandemic, our 22 March World Water Day activities have been done by preparing banners with their families at home and hanging them around the sink.

Our common games about our values

Our partner teachers prepared games and competitions using web 2 tools related to our project and our students reinforced our values by playing these games.

APRIL

Let's protect our environment/ Çevremizi koruyalım

Activities for environmental cleanliness and protection of our natural environment have been carried out.

Our digital games about our values

Efforts have been made to strengthen our values with Matching Game, Word Stack and Kahoot digital games.

MAY

Democratic participation-Global climate change/Demokratik katılım/Küresel iklim Değişikliği:Poster studies were conducted on Global Climate Change and these studies were published using video and web 2 tools.

eTwinning Day 9 May 2020

May 9 eTwinning day was celebrated with various activities and our students made banners.

World Environment Day June 5

Due to the Environment Day of June 5, a virtual forest was created and published with the trees drawn by our students.

Evaluation

Project evaluation was done with surveys and monthly working activities report.

FINDINGS

Table 1. Teacher Opinions

	Teachers' Opinions Before The Project	Teachers' Opinions After The Project
1	The reason I attend this project is because I like the work on the project and matching page. I think my students will have more creativity and Express themselves more easily in their classrooms. I prefer the project to be an international project. I am also happy to join this project. I believe we will do well. I wish my project success.	I was very hopeful when I started this project. I was thinking of the environment and our values as the most important elements that we need to protect for our future. As the work progressed on the project, we produced great activities with our students on these topics. During this process, my founder friend and all our valuable project partner teachers worked unselfishly. When I looked back at the goals of the project, I observed that our students demonstrated that these goals were achieved through their behaviors and activities. Although we were away from school for a few months due to the pandemic process, I saw how my own students and other partner school students are willing to work, how determined they are to protect the environment and leave a good tomorrow to future generations. They attended the activities from their homes. They drew pictures. They make videos. They got the opportunity to know Web 2.0

	tools. In our students, we as teachers, and their parents have seen that their skills in using technology have improved. In addition, being more sensitive towards the environment and the living creatures showed me that the project achieved its goals. Finally, I am honored to work with such a wonderful founder and mutual friends, such a nice student group on such a meaningful project. I would like to thank my entire team and students.	
2	Working on our values in our project will improve students' relationships.	
3	Rapidly increasing technological developments cause negative effects as well as positive effects. Neglecting nature will mean that over time, there will be no living space for living things. Creating this awareness will enable us to raise environmentally sensitive individuals. The values that create societies and the geography they live in. The importance of these two concepts will be reinforced in our project. At the same time, it will provide children with the development of a sense of sharing, solidarity and responsibility along with our values. The two concepts in which they will be reinforced.	
4	Gaining our values to students learning more fun in the classroom. I am in this project. My students contribute to the project with our beautiful work I believe we will provide. Thanks.	The active participation of our students in the project has shown that our project has reached the desired goal. Now, my students will continue on their way as individuals who embrace their lifetime values and are more sensitive to nature. Me and my students carried out this project with great fun, so we are very happy. I would also like to thank my project founders and partners for good solidarity.
5	The project aimed to develop and reinforce the values accepted by the society by creating an appropriate school environment and to develop students' sense of responsibility.	
6	What prevent societies from breaking apart are their cultural values. Because of that I think it is really important for children, who are the future of our world, to grow up with these values and embrace them. This is why we have decided to take part in this project. I reckon that we are going to do impressive works	I personally think that our project has reached its aim of raising well-behaved individuals. With the help of the activities within the framework of our project our students has become more sensitive about environmental issues and the preservation of our moral, national and cultural values. Thanks to the project work that is done at home during quarantine also the awareness of our students' people about our values has as expected increased. By courtesy of our project founders' and partners' constructive approach towards cooperation our project has succeed. I am very happy to be a part of this project.
7	As a result of the rapid development of technology in today's conditions, the increasing pace of life and the rapid race against time, our nature is neglected by all humanity and is increasingly damaged. Children are our future. It is the duty of all educators to raise a high awareness of nature at an early age.	
8	Our values are important for protecting nature and environment. Because the pupils who know their values	Our project has reached its goal in line with the determined targets. The activities in our project

<p>they are so sensitive to their nature anyway.</p>	<p>greatly contributed to the formation of environmental awareness in our students. Our students participated in the activities of the project with great enthusiasm despite the pandemic process. In addition, our project enabled the development of the concept of values in students to a great extent. I would like to thank our project founders and partners for their help.</p>
<p>9 It is very important for me to be involved in this project based on our values AS the proverb “The tree bends when it is wet.” Wants to Express, I think that it will be easier to teach many facts and values when they are young, and to raise them at school with such projects. Our children, who are small members of the society, will have a say in the functioning of the society they live in when they grow up For this reason, it is important for them to grow up with values unique to their society. While doing this, it is necessary to give respect and tolerance to different societies in the first place. I wish success and convenience to all participants in this project, which I think will be very useful.</p>	
<p>10 My school is one of the green school of Italy, we are working on environmental sustainability and recycling. With a famous artist and painter we tried to transform trash and waste material in works of art.. Everything because the seeds planted today will become trees full of respect for the nature and the world of tomorrow</p>	

According to the opinions of the teachers in Table 1, at the end of the project, the students' awareness of protecting nature and the environment, their technological skills, creative thinking, problem solving, working together and cooperation skills have developed.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

According to the opinions of the teachers, it was emphasized that at the end of the project, the students became more sensitive to nature and the environment, and accordingly they became individuals who took care of their environmental values more. It has been observed that students develop basic human characteristics, social relations and sense of responsibility. Parallel to the result of this study, there are some studies showing that environment and nature education have positive effects on students (Özdemir, 2010; Sungurtekin, 2001; Kılıç & İnal, 2010). According to the teachers' opinions, at the end of the project, the students got to know the different cultures of the project partner countries and their communication skills with the students of different countries improved.

Our education system aims to raise individuals who have the knowledge, skills and behaviors integrated in competencies. For this reason, the students were provided to write stories and poems by applying the verbal instructions in the Turkish lesson. Regarding the Theme Acquisitions in the project, the students; They participated in certain days and weeks, club activities, school council works, and took an active role in the decision process in the works related to the project. In this direction, it was observed that the self-confidence development of the students who participated in the group work in the project activities increased. In the studies on the cultural heritage value, in the poster

and picture studies on all values, in the coding activities, the acquisition of creating visual art works from different written sources and concepts by using their imagination was applied. With the musical achievements, the common song of the project was created and sang together. As a result, it was observed that the students' ability to create common products improved. Educational films about Internet Safety, cleanliness, national and moral values were watched and project topics were reinforced. It has been observed that the students have achieved the competence of creating a virtual forest, which is the common product of the Project. At the end of the project, it was seen that the determined goals were achieved. In addition, the teachers stated that at the end of the project, the students gained basic verbal, numerical and scientific reasoning, social skills and aesthetic sensitivity that they would need in daily life.

According to the results we obtained as a result of the applications in our project, it has been seen that students and their families can be effective in protecting our nature and environment with our social values. Thanks to the activities in our project, it is thought that the values of love, respect, sharing, solidarity, benevolence, tolerance, responsibility, sompassion and environmental awareness are important in order to protect our nature and our environment with the participation of families. With our project, it has been observed that if students are given the opportunity, they can do very good work. The importance of protecting nature and the environment with our values should be emphasized in our schools and more students should be reached. It is also recommended that future studies be conducted with a larger number of students and teachers.

REFERENCES

- Armağan, F. (2006). *İlköğretim 7-8 Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Çevre Eğitimi İle İlgili Bilgi Düzeyleri (Kırıkkale İl Merkezi Örnekleme)*, (Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi), Gazi Üniversitesi, Ankara.
- Creswell, J.W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE.
- Kılıç, S., & İnal, M. E. (2010). Yükseköğretimde çevre eğitimi alan ve almayan öğrencilerde çevre bilinci: Niğde Üniversitesi örneği. *Niğde Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 3(2), 70-83.
- Krueger, R.A. (1998). *Moderating focus groups*. California: SAGE.
- Kunt, H., & Geçgel, G. (2013). Öğretmen adaylarının ağaç ve çevreye yönelik tutumlarının incelenmesi. *International Periodcal For The Languages, Literature and History of Turkish*, 793-807.
- Özdemir, O. (2010). Doğa deneyimine dayalı çevre eğitiminin ilköğretim öğrencilerinin çevrelerine yönelik algı ve davranışlarına etkisi. *Pamukkale Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, (27), 125-138 . Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/pauefd/issue/11116/132935>

School Education Gateway (2020).Konunun adı. Sınıfınızdaki küresel iklim krizini ele alma.

Retrieved from www.teachersacademy.eu

Suler, J. (1995). Using interviews in research, Erişim adresi:

<http://www.rider.edu/~suler/interviews.html>

Sungurtekin, Ş. (2001). Uygulamalı çevre eğitimi projesi kapsamında ana ve ilköğretim okullarında müzik yoluyla çevre eğitimi. *Uludağ Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 14(1), 167-178.

Şahin, K., & Gül, S. (2009). Ortaöğretim öğrencilerinin çevre bilgisi, davranışı ve duyarlılıklarının araştırılması: Samsun örneği. *Kastamonu Üniversitesi Kastamonu Eğitim Dergisi*, 541-556.

Şimşekli, Y. (2004). Çevre bilincinin geliştirilmesine yönelik çevre eğitimi etkinliklerine ilköğretim okullarının duyarlılığı. *Uludağ Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi* (17),83-92.

Yücel, A. S., & Morgil, F. İ. (1998). Yükseköğretimde çevre olgusunun araştırılması. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi* (14), 84-91.

Yücel, A. S., & Morgil, F. İ. (1999). Çevre eğitiminin geliştirilmesi. *Balıkesir Üniversitesi Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü Dergisi* (1), 76-89.