An Analysis of the Impact of eTwinning Projects on Teachers and Students in Terms of Teachers' Views

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Absract:
The aim of this research is to determine the differences between the studies carried out within the scope of eTwinning activities of 25 primary school teachers working in different branches at Kıyıboyu Primary School in Adana's Seyhan district, their contribution to the professional training of teachers, and the differences in developing the information and communication technologies skills of the students taking part in the project studies in the classroom. It was collected with a prepared teacher interview survey form. Teachers who carried out eTwinning projects stated that the projects brought positive gains for themselves and their students in different aspects. Along with the achievements of eTwinning projects, studies that encourage teachers are included. eTwinning infrastructure is used as a network-based learning environment and systematically creates the opportunity for teachers and students to do joint projects. In this research, it is aimed to obtain the opinions of teachers and students about the contributions of the projects related to eTwinning activities through a survey technique. To determine the contribution of teachers participating in eTwininning projects to their professional education and the gains achieved by the use of information and communication technologies in students, using a survey technique. In order to determine the differences between the contributions of the studies carried out within the scope of teachers' professional training to the development of the skills of the students participating in the research, the results of the eTwinning activities were collected with the teacher interview survey form prepared by the researcher. Teachers who carry out eTwinning projects stated that the projects brought positive gains to them and their students in different aspects. The eTwinning infrastructure is used as a network-based learning environment and systematically creates the opportunity for teachers and

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students to do joint projects, where schools parti cipating in eTwinning projects achieve success in international projects, students and teachers participating in the project make a visible contribution to general technological communication and development, and their English skills are academic. It seems to be developing as. It is seen that teachers and students who use web2.0 tool technologies in eTwinning projects contribute greatly to their professional development. Our teachers and students who participate in European eTwinning projects have the opportunity to get to know different cultures, and there seems to be a noticeable increase in their participation in future projects.

***Keywords**: eTwinning activities, qualitative methods, content analysis.*

INTRODUCTION

Education exists and continues at every stage of a person's life, from birth to death. Giving the individual a place in social life constantly requires new information and experiences in order to exist and to reveal his talents and skills. The economic development of the country can only occur with scientific research and technological development and innovation capacity. The development of science and technology is the most important contribution to the economy, and it can be achieved through schools that educate individuals who are solution-oriented and able to act on the problems we face from a different perspective (Aydeniz, 2017). With the industrial reform, developments in science and technology have continuously progressed, and compulsory education has become widespread in society, based on the classical education model and specially designed teaching methods. In order to engage in commercial activities, we encounter 19th and 20th century skills such as acting according to established rules, improving social life with a strong communication ability, and making decisions quickly. The skills needed to meet high-level needs with technology can only be met through education. The skills and abilities required to compete with the rivals we may encounter throughout our education life can only be acquired in schools by integrating technology into education and by developing teachers through technological in-service training and transferring them to students (Yalçın, 2018). The pervasive integration of technology into our lives has catalyzed a rapid transformation across various domains of our social existence, including social interactions, professional endeavors, and school life (Şimşek, 2022). As a result of the integration of technology and education, web-based eTwinning projects were developed, and after it was understood that they were successful after being used in many schools in Europe, teachers and students were included in the eTwinning program in our country with the lifelong learning program since 2007 within the scope of the European Commission e-learning program. projects have been carried out.

Purpose of the Study

With the development of technology in education, it is important to develop new projects and share educational practices, and it provides a platform for teachers and students to cooperate with participating schools in European countries on a specific system. eTwinning projects include teachers, students and schools among the most important elements of eTwinning projects, and while teachers are working on the project for their students, they have the opportunity to see the work of other colleagues in Europe. This study aims to investigate the contribution of the projects carried out within the scope of eTwinning activities to teachers and students. In the studies on the projects, it is observed how students in different countries interact in a cultural sense, based on student-focused activities.

Importance of Research

With the impact of technology on education, eTwinning projects appear and it is seen that teachers and students who participate in projects provide professional development, develop digital literacy, and increase their project development skills. In eTwinning projects, teachers work in coordination with other teachers who participate in the projects that teachers have done in eTwinning projects and it is seen that the effect of their professional development on their knowledge and skills gains is quite high. Başaran et al. (2020) stated that teachers who participated in the project within the scope of eTwinning activities contributed permanently to the development of their knowledge and skills, and that the gains they made during the project process increased the motivation of teachers and provided development in the use of web 2.0 tools that set an example for other teachers. Similarly, Avcı (2021) found that the approach of teachers participating in the project to other teachers, the ability to use web 2.0 tools at a good level, and cooperation with other teachers involved in the project increased motivation. eTwinning provides the necessary platform to be a part of the learning community in Europe, which collaborates, develops and shares projects, as well as providing the support needed to use active technology for information and communication.

THEORETICAL EXPLANATIONS

eTwinning Activities

eTwinning first appeared as a community of schools in Europe, starting with the European Commission's e-learning program in 2005, and has been integrated into the lifelong learning program since 2007. eTwinning is managed by "European Schoolnet", an international collaboration of 31 European Ministries of Education, which develops educational programs for teachers and students involved in the program. eTwinning is supported by 43 "National Support Services". Turkey joined the eTwinning program in 2009 and the "Turkey National Support Service" operates under the "General Directorate of Innovation and Educational Technologies of the Ministry of National Education". "eTwinning" and "Erasmus" programs are among the activities that continue to be supported by the "European Commission". eTwinning activities: "Germany, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Croatia, Croatia, Germany, Cyprus, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Malta, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland, Portugal, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Greece." It covers Member States of the European Union and does not exclude overseas countries "(Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Serbia and Turkey)" from participating.

eTwinning Projects

In the eTwinning content, teachers working in at least two different schools can use information and communication technologies to carry out the desired work by creating a project. The project partner can work on any subject they want, but they should balance the "information communication" technology activity within the program and the participating schools should prepare for the curriculum. Schools participating in the program can communicate via the internet and there are no grants and administrative conditions related to the project. In order for the project to receive the "European Quality Label" and eTwinning Award, schools from at least 2 different countries must take part in the project. eTwinning project can be carried out by at least two or more teachers, branch teachers, librarians and students in Europe. Students cannot be registered by the system, but they can be made members of the project (in the TwinSpace area) by teachers. Within the project, teachers and students from the same branch

can cooperate structurally with information communication and technologies. All schools at the level of "pre-school", "primary school", "middle school" and "high school" can participate in the program, but students must be between the ages of "3-19".

Research Questions

In this direction, the aim of the research is to determine the differences between the teachers in Seyhan district Kıyıboyu Primary School who do and do not carry out eTwinning project activities to develop information and communication technologies skills in the classroom.

1- Do you have information about eTwinning activities?
2- Have you prepared projects related to eTwinning activities?
3- Have you had any award-winning projects related to eTwinning activities?
4- Have you had an idea about "educational practices in "European" countries" in eTwinning activities?
5- Did eTwinning activities contribute to your professional development?
6- Did eTwinning activities help you improve your foreign language practice?
7- Did eTwinning projects improve students' interest in and effective use of information technologies?
8- Has there been an improvement in students' use of web 2.0 tool technologies in eTwinning projects?
9- Did eTwinning projects contribute to the recognition of different cultures by communicating with students in other schools and countries?
10- Did the motivation of the students involved in eTwinning projects increase and become more fun?

METHOD

Research Model

In this research, in general terms, it consists of a descriptive study of survey type. The results obtained were analyzed using "descriptive analysis" and "content analysis" methods. In its content, survey models are research approaches to describe the situation of the study conducted within the scope of the project as it exists (Karasar, 2000). Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used together during the research. In this way, a certain method diversification was made. Quantitative data were obtained through a questionnaire. The qualitative data collected were obtained through the teacher interview form prepared by the researchers, which can be considered to increase the reliability of the research. It states that the explanations made according to the obtained data are important in determining the accuracy and validity. The researcher, who had previously actively participated in the eTwinning project, made the necessary examinations. When eTwinning projects are active, 'TwinSpace', an area designed to work online with other project members, becomes active. After selecting Turkey on the eTwinning map, the list of schools participating in the project can be seen.

Population and Sample

There are 25 teachers in different branches in Kıyıboyu primary school in Seyhan district of Adana province where the research was conducted. The sampling group of the quantitative dimension of the research consists of 22 teachers who have knowledge about eTwinning activities by sampling technique among the existing teachers. The quantitative research was conducted by randomly selecting the data from the universe in the convenient sampling type for the research as Teachers' knowledge of eTwinning activities, the contribution of eTwinning

activities to Teachers' professional trainers and the contribution of eTwinning activities to students. The most important aim of eTwinning is to improve teachers' knowledge and skills with information and communication technology outside the existing curriculum and to make it an indispensable part of the daily course functioning structure. eTwinning appeals to the generality of those who have knowledge of information and communication technology at every stage of teaching, and there will be a usual improvement in teachers' knowledge and skills after participation in projects.

Table 1 Characteristics of the surveyed participants

Feature	Group	Number	%
Gender	Male	6	%24
	Woman	19	%76
	Total	**25**	-
Branches	Classroom Teacher	20	-
	Preschool	3	%80
	Religious Culture	1	%12
	English	1	% 4
	Total	**25**	**%4**
Year of Service	0-5 years	1	%4
	6-10 years	2	%8
	11-15 years	5	%20
	16-20 years	9	%36
	20 yıl years	8	%32

The distribution of primary school teachers according to gender, branch and years of service is given in Table-1. Of the teachers who participated in the survey, 6 (24%) were male and 19 (76%) were female. According to the branch, 20 (80%) of the teachers were classroom teachers, 3 (12%) were preschool teachers, 1 (4%) was a religious culture teacher, and 1 (4%) was an English teacher. According to the years of seniority, 0-5 years, 1 person (4%), 6-10 years, 2 people (8%), 11-15 years, 5 people (20%), 16-20 years, 9 people (36%), over 20 years, 8 people (32%) have professional seniority. In the qualitative dimension of the research, 25 teachers working in different branches participated.

Data Collection Tool

In the study, a questionnaire prepared by the researcher was used to collect data. The questionnaire content (gender, length of service and branch) consists of classification questions with the content of complementary and measurement techniques. The questionnaires prepared about complementary and assessment techniques for the questionnaire were examined (Anıl & Acar, 2008; Çepni et al., 2007; Kuran & Kanatlı, 2009). The questions in the questionnaire studies were developed by the researchers. Expert opinion was taken for the questionnaire.

Data Collection Process

There are 25 teachers working in different branches at Kıyıboyu primary school in Seyhan district of Adana province, where the research was conducted. The sample group of the quantitative dimension of the research consists of 22 teachers who have information about eTwinning activities using the sampling technique among the existing teachers. Research: A quantitative research was conducted by randomly selecting the data in the universe in a convenient sampling type for the research on teachers' knowledge of eTwinning activities, the

contribution of eTwinning activities to teachers' professional education, and the contribution of eTwinning activities to students.

Ethics Committee Approval

This research was conducted with the permission obtained by the decision of the Ethics Committee of Mersin University, dated 31/12/2023 and numbered 313.

RESULTS

Table 2 eTwinning project's contribution to attainment skills for teachers

S.No	SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESULTS	YES	%	NO	%
1	Do you know about eTwinning activities?	22	% 88	3	% 12
2	Have you prepared a project related to eTwinning activities?	15	% 60	10	% 40
3	Have you had any award-winning projects for eTwinning activities?	3	% 12	22	% 88
4	Have you had an idea about the educational practices in European countries in eTwinning activities?	17	% 68	8	% 32
5	Did eTwinning activities contribute to your professional development?	19	% 76	6	% 24
6	Have eTwinning activities helped you to improve your foreign language practice?	15	% 60	10	% 40

As a result of the survey in Table 2, 88% of the teachers had knowledge about eTwinning activities, 60% prepared projects and 12% of the projects were approved. It is seen that 68% of teachers have knowledge about educational practices in European countries, 76% contribute to your professional development, and 60% contribute to the development of foreign language practice. It has been observed that the professional development of teachers who prepared projects within the scope of eTwinning activities was positively significant. As teachers participate in eTwinning projects, their skills and abilities improve. As a result of the survey, it is thought that the eTwinning project will contribute to the technological development of teachers and their students. The use of technological networks in our daily lives is increasing day by day. The Ministry of Education provides in-service training for teachers to increase their use of computers, and since the smart boards used in classrooms are computer data-based, they contribute significantly to the development of teachers.

Table 3 The scope of eTwinning activities

S No	SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESULTS	YES	%	NO	%
1	Has there been an improvement in students' interest in and effective use of information technologies in eTwinning projects?	20	% 80	5	% 20
2	Has there been an improvement in students' use of web20 tool technologies in eTwinning projects?	21	% 84	4	%16
3	Did eTwinning projects contribute to the recognition of cultures by communicating with students in other schools and co	16	% 64	9	% 36
4	Did the motivation of the students involved in eTwinning projects increase and make the lessons more fun?	18	% 72	7	% 28

As a result of the survey in Table 3, within the scope of eTwinning activities, 80% of the students are interested in information technologies courses, 84% of them say that there is an improvement in the use of web2.0 tool technologies, 64% of the students participating in eTwinning activities contribute to the recognition of cultures by communicating with students in other schools and countries. It was concluded that 72% of the students taking part in eTwinning projects increased their motivation towards lessons. Since a technological infrastructure has been created in which students can make the most of the opportunities brought

by the technological age, students participating in eTwinning projects have made more progress in the use of web 2.0 tools, and foreign language development is progressing significantly since the equipment used is predominantly foreign words. It seems that students participating in eTwinning projects interact well with students participating in the project in different countries, develop new friendships, communicate and socialize, create a perspective for future education abroad, and in this interaction, students' interest in foreign languages increases day by day. As a result of the participation of teachers and students in eTwinning projects, it appears that they make a significant contribution to professional development and project development. For this reason, it is understood that participating in projects contributes to students' ability to use web 2.0 tools.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

When eTwinning projects are examined in general terms, it seems that it contributes to the development of project-oriented teachers' and students' technological communication and working skills by enabling international projects in schools participating in the project, and it is aimed to investigate the opinions and experiences of the project process. In the research conducted, it is seen that teachers and students participating in the project within the scope of eTwinning activities provide academic development in terms of English reading, writing and socialization in terms of communication. It is seen that the use of web2.0 tool technologies in eTwinning projects contributes to the professional development of teachers and students and that teacher who do not participate in eTwinning projects increase their interest in the projects as they see teachers who make professional development. It is seen that teachers and students participating in the eTwinning project and teachers and students working in European schools provide an opportunity to taste different cultures after communication and interaction between cultures.

The interest of the students who participate in the project in information technologies courses and their motivation for other courses increases and the lessons become more fun than before. Teachers who do not participate in eTwinning increase their desire for 21st century technology skills such as communication, creative thinking and entrepreneurship. The developing information and technological situation is possible only by raising individuals who can reason and communicate in order to form the 21st century skills necessary to adapt to sociological life. (Öztay & Öztay, 2021) The eTwinning project contributes positively to the development of creative thinking and ability in teachers and students who participate in the project. (Avcı, 2021; Başaran et al, 2020; Demir, 2019; Gündüz-Çetin & Gündoğdu, 2022). It is understood that teachers who carry out projects within the scope of eTwinning activities have improved the interest and perspectives of themselves and students in the lesson, and that their perspectives on life have changed by recognizing different cultures within the scope of the project. It is seen that teachers attended in-service training courses by the national education directorates they are affiliated with before starting eTwinning projects and have knowledge about Erasmus projects.

Within the scope of eTwinning projects, it is seen that teachers' professional skills have improved, communication, digital skills and classroom management have increased, and they have adapted more easily to distance education, which they have encountered with the COVID-19 pandemic process. From a different perspective, in the survey conducted by the European Commission on eTwinning projects in 2011, it was reported that 74% of the teachers involved in the project improved their personal knowledge and skills and 58% improved their teaching skills through the transfer of thinking and communication (European Commission, 2013). eTwinning is an innovation that structurally offers learning with its digital infrastructure. Its

content is to ensure the development of innovative pedagogical practice principles in teacher collaboration. eTwinning is one of the most important parts of education programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research conducted, it can be said that a large proportion of primary school teachers have sufficient knowledge about eTwinning activities, teachers who are deficient in this subject should be given in-service training by experts on eTwinning, and the increase in studies on the development of eTwinning projects supports "digital and innovative" "education". Continuous use of international learning opportunities with network-based infrastructure will improve the computer skills of both teachers and students, and will enable them to work in a web 2.0-based learning environment. Incentives for increasing participation in eTwinning projects are of great importance. eTwinning is a secure network that can produce projects within the scope of activities, where teachers and students in eTwinning projects cooperate internationally with project-extensive schools.

In addition to providing network-based international learning opportunities, eTwinning activities serve many areas such as "social skills, motivation, academic achievement, critical thinking" along with foreign language development. eTwinning activities have become important in educational "change and transformation". All of the projects are widely used in digital environments with Web 2.0 tools taking an important place. Peachey (2009), Web 2.0 is beneficial for projects and education. In this respect, it is important that teachers involved in eTwinning activities have a good command of Web 2.0 tools. eTwinning activities and digital literacy were found to be positive. In the study, it was concluded that teachers who participated in eTwinning projects had the opportunity to learn such as communication technology. It was concluded that the use of web 2.0 tools by teachers who carried out project studies within the scope of eTwinning activities was high. As a result, it is seen that eTwinning activities are a successful project.

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