A Comparative Study of eTwinning Projects from the Perspectives of Turkish and European Preschool Teachers

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Abstract
The aim of this study is to examine the views of preschool teachers in Turkey and Europe on eTwinning projects comparatively and to determine the extent to which teachers' experiences are similar and different. It is expected that the findings will motivate preschool teachers and administrators to develop eTwinning projects. In this study, case study method was used as a qualitative research design. Thirty two preschool teachers from Turkey and Europe were reached through convenience sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods. A semi-structured interview form was used as a data collection tool. The first part of the interview form included general information questions about the teachers and the second part included questions about the teachers' views on eTwinning projects. From the data obtained, it was determined that Turkish teachers created more codes than their European colleagues, however, teachers in both groups generally had positive views about eTwinning projects and took part in these projects voluntarily.
Keywords: eTwinning, Project, Preschool, Comparison in Education

Introduction

With the rapid development of technology, the use of online learning platforms has increased significantly. These platforms offer individuals opportunities to develop themselves in different fields (Zengin & Can, 2010). Online education opportunities, which can manage the participation and time constraints limited by traditional learning methods in a more flexible way, provide flexibility to individuals without being dependent on a curriculum and make significant contributions to learning processes (Halttunen & Jarvelin, 2005; Miyazoe & Anderson, 2010). Individuals can work at their own pace and choose appropriate times for their studies. This allows for a better balance between work life and other responsibilities. Moreover, online learning platforms offer a wide range of educational opportunities. Without geographical location or time constraints, people can study a variety of subjects from anywhere in the world. This gives the possibility to expand learning opportunities and share different cultures, perspectives and experiences.

eTwinning is an informal platform created by the European Commission in 2004 for schools to carry out joint projects. In 2005, it was officially established at a conference held in Brussels (Gilleran, 2007). eTwinning is a platform open to educators and other school staff involved in the education and training process from basic to high school level. eTwinning is a platform that enables communication and collaboration, including all methods, pedagogical approaches, communities of practice and the process of transforming new

ideas into value-creating products used in a particular field. This platform enables educators to create projects, exchange ideas, develop international collaborations and increase students' cultural awareness. Countries and schools participating in eTwinning can share projects, collaborate and communicate with other educators. This platform helps teachers to share educational materials and provide students with engaging and interactive learning experiences. In addition, eTwinning provides teachers with professional development opportunities and gives them the opportunity to take part in projects across Europe. eTwinning is an important platform that facilitates international collaboration and encourages the exchange of knowledge and experience among educators in Europe. Through this, teachers can provide students with a richer and more diverse learning experience and adopt a more conscious approach to cultural diversity.

Turkey joined eTwinning projects in 2009 with the aim of contributing to teachers' professional development, exposing students to different cultures and harmonizing with the EU. According to MoNE, 2021 data, 54,863 schools, 265,896 teachers and 46,691 projects from Turkey are registered on the platform. eTwinning's number of schools and members has increased significantly over time. As of 2021, there are more than 200,000 schools from all over Europe registered on eTwinning. As of September 30, 2022, the European Commission merged the eTwinning and School Education Gateway platforms and made them available to teachers through a new education platform called ESEP (European School Education Platform).

In a study on the benefits of eTwinning conducted with teachers in 2013 by the eTwinning Turkey National Support Service, it was found that eTwinning increases teachers' ability to use information and communication technology, collaboration and motivation, supports their foreign language development and encourages them to use different learning models, educational methods and techniques. Gheorghe focused on the effects and importance of eTwinning projects on e-learning and found the following findings:

• Teachers involved in eTwinning projects

emphasize the importance of using the online tools they have learnt in their classrooms.

• Teachers who participate in collaborative work with eTwinning projects state that their ICT usage skills and professional motivation have increased.

Velea (2012) emphasizes the importance of eTwinning applications for teachers to gain experience in the use of ICT in education. By participating in the eTwinning European community, teachers experience new tools and project activities enable them to recognize new teaching strategies. These studies show that eTwinning enables teachers to gain experience in the use of ICT and to explore new teaching strategies. In addition, it is also reported that teachers who participate in eTwinning projects increase their skills and motivation to use ICT in educational practices. eTwinning is a collaborative platform that contributes to the professional development of teachers.

Recent research emphasizes the importance of digital literacy skills in eTwinning projects. Today, as the importance of technology in our lives increases, teachers involved in eTwinning projects need to have high digital skills. In these projects, teachers are introduced to new methods and techniques and diversify activities using web 2.0 tools. eTwinning projects provide an opportunity for teachers to include student-centered activities. In these projects, students actively participate, conduct research, share ideas and come up with creative solutions. In this way, students' critical thinking skills, communication skills and collaboration abilities are developed. Collaborative work increases teachers' motivation in eTwinning projects. By collaborating with colleagues from different countries, teachers can increase their cultural awareness and gain an international perspective. In these projects, teachers share their experiences, learn from each other and contribute to their professional development.

Importance of the Study

It is important to investigate preschool teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards eTwinning projects comparatively for the following reasons: Understanding preschool teachers' perceptions of eTwinning projects can provide valuable insights into

how these projects are integrated into the curriculum and classroom activities. Finding the benefits and drawbacks of current procedures can help educators create more potent teaching methods. By making sure that they are in line with the requirements and preferences of preschool teachers and kids, it may be utilized to enhance the planning and execution of future initiatives. Identify challenges or concerns that teachers may face with eTwinning projects, shedding light on barriers they face, such as technical issues, limited resources or time constraints. Identify areas where teachers are less confident or need additional training, enabling the development of targeted professional development programs. It can contribute to the formulation of educational policies at institutional, national and international levels. The international comparison may provide insight into the extent to which preschool teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards eTwinning projects vary across different countries. Thus, some encouraging findings can be obtained for project development.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to comparatively analyse the perceptions and attitudes of preschool teachers towards eTwinning projects in Turkey and Europe, and to determine the extent to which teachers' experiences and outcomes in the project development and implementation processes are similar and different. It is expected that the findings will be a source of data for the literature and an incentive for preschool teachers and administrators to develop eTwinning projects.

Method

Research Design

This study used a case study, one of the qualitative research methods. The case study is one of the most frequently preferred designs among the qualitative research methods that are used to define the details of an event, to develop possible explanations for an event, and to evaluate an event (Gall et al., 1996 as Cited in Büyüköztürk et al., 2014). The reason why the case study was preferred as a design in this research is that it deals with the feelings, thoughts, perceptions and experiences of individuals (Gurbuz & Sahin, 2018).

In this study, the feelings, thoughts, perceptions and experiences of preschool teachers from Turkey and mostly from the eastern part of European countries who constitute the study group, about the situations they experienced during the preparation, development, implementation and completion phases of the eTwinning project are taken and these processes and general evaluations are analysed. As Stake (1995) and Creswell (2007) emphasize a case study examines, analyses and describes one or more situations in depth. This study will contribute to the literature by comparatively analysing more than one situation.

Study Group

In this research, the study group was formed through convenience sampling, which is one of the purposive sampling methods. This sampling method was preferred to make the research quick and practical. Convenience sampling is a sampling method used to create a study group that is easy to reach. (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

In this study, 16 preschool teachers from Turkey and 16 preschool teachers from other European countries participated. The distribution of the sample consisting of 32 teachers in total according to countries and gender is given in Table 1.

Table 1 Sample Distribution

Countries	N	Gender	
		Female	Male
Turkey	16	14	2
Romania	6	6	0
Serbia	2	2	0
Italy	2	2	0
Slovakia	1	1	0
Bulgaria	1	1	0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	1	0
Albania	1	1	0
Lithuania	1	1	0
Spain	1	1	0
Total	**32**	**30**	**2**

Data Collection Tool and Process

In this study, a semi-structured interview form was used as a data collection tool. The interview form

consists of eight general information questions about the teacher and eight questions designed to assess the benefits of eTwinning projects for teachers, pupils and school culture from the teacher's perspective. Before formulating the interview questions, the literature on eTwinning projects was analysed and a comprehensive research on the subject was carried out. In addition, a demo study was carried out with a pre-school teacher who had previously run seven eTwinning projects, in order to test the relevance of the questions for the purpose of the study. When the interview form was finalised, it was first translated into English by a language expert for foreign participants and then translated into other languages using Google Translate and Deepl translation applications. In the interview form prepared for the foreign participants, the questions were included in both English and their own language, and it was easy to answer in the language of their choice. The interview form was sent to all participants via Google Forms.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected on a country-by-country basis and the participants' responses were translated into Turkish using both Google Translate and Deepl translation applications and compared. Since it was found that there was no significant difference when comparing the translations, the translations made with Google Translate were accepted as the main response.

In qualitative research, the concepts of credibility and consistency are preferred to validity and reliability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Whittemore et al (2001) stated that the principles of credibility, authenticity, criticality and internal integrity are essential as primary validity criteria in qualitative research. For the credibility of the study, the number and characteristics of the participants, the sampling method, the data collection instrument and the data analysis procedures should be described in detail (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Credibility can also be expressed as a conscious effort by the researcher to create confidence that the meaning of the data is interpreted correctly. Authenticity is the researcher's effort to reflect the perspectives of all participants and awareness of details (Whittemore et al., 2001;

as cited in Yaşar, 2018). Criticality is the evaluation of data without distortion and the presentation of evidence in an unbiased manner (Maxwell, 1992). Internal integrity is the repeated and cyclical checking of findings (Whittemore et al., 2001). In order to increase the level of validity of this study, the principles of credibility, authenticity, criticality and internal integrity were followed and computer software was used to analyse the data. Teachers' responses to the interview forms were coded using free coding. In addition to the numerical tables, the participants' statements were also included as quotations.

Findings

In the first part of the interview form used as a data collection tool, the responses to the eight questions designed to collect general information about the teachers are presented in Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5. The information about the country code –initial, country, gender and professional seniority of the teachers participating in study is given in Table 2:

Table 2 Study Group

Country Codes and Teacher Initials	Country	Gender	Professional Seniority
TR-AA	Turkey	Female	11
TR-MA	Turkey	Female	7
TR-ET	Turkey	Female	16
TR-AC	Turkey	Male	16
TR-AŞ	Turkey	Male	25
TR-SA	Turkey	Female	20
TR-GA	Turkey	Female	17
TR-HK	Turkey	Female	20
TR-AB	Turkey	Female	15
TR-RAÖ	Turkey	Female	32
TR-HH	Turkey	Female	10
TR-NKO	Turkey	Female	12
TR-EÖ	Turkey	Female	27
TR-EB	Turkey	Female	20
TR-NY	Turkey	Female	11
TR-DS	Turkey	Female	12
BH-NA	Bosnia Herzegovina	Female	18

BU-GK	Bulgaria	Female	14
LI-LD	Lithuania	Female	13
RO-TR	Romania	Female	41
RO-BE	Romania	Female	15
RO-IF	Romania	Female	22
RO-RI	Romania	Female	21
RO-AIC	Romania	Female	8
RO-MM	Romania	Female	13
SE-SMC	Serbia	Female	9
SE-GNM	Serbia	Female	9
SL-EAC	Slovakia	Female	12
IT-AT	Italy	Female	20
IT-SA	Italy	Female	14
SP-AA	Spain	Female	15
AL-AE	Albania	Female	15

The results of the survey are presented below, in order to obtain general information about their participation in eTwinning projects, the awards they have received, the training they have received related to the project, and the status of their schools as eTwinning Label schools. Table 3 shows the number of eTwinning projects, the number of national awards and the number of international awards of Turkish and European teachers participating in the study:

Table 3 Number of Projects, Number of National Awards and International Awards

	Number of Projects	Number of National Awards	Number of International Awards
Turkey	188	144	104
Europe	101	85	74

Table 4 presents the findings on whether or not the Turkish and European teachers participating in the study received training on the eTwinning projects:

Table 4 Status of eTwinning Training

	Yes	No
Turkey	10	6
Europe	3	13

Table 5 shows the results on whether the schools where the Turkish and European teachers participating in the study work have an eTwinning label or not:

Table 5 School's e Twinning Label Status

	Yes	No
Turkey	11	5
Europe	6	10

According to the data obtained from the questions in the first part of the interview form, a general analysis of Tables 3, 4 and 5 show that the number of projects, the number of national awards, the number of international awards, the number of eTwinning trainings and the number of eTwinning labels of the schools where they work is higher for Turkish teachers compared to their European colleagues.

In the second part of the interview form used as a data collection tool, the findings about eTwinning projects from the perspective of the teachers participating in the study were analysed through content analysis. In addition, this section presents the teachers' opinions directly by including the most salient quotations from the teachers' responses to each question. For ethical reasons, the teacher initials given in Table 2 were preferred to teacher names while quoting.

Table 6 shows the analysis of the responses to the question "Do you think that eTwinning projects contribute to the development of school culture in the institution where you work? Explain in detail, with examples, what kind of contributions they make".

Table 6 Contributions of eTwinning Projects to School Culture

Categories	Codes	Turkey	Europe
Positive	Makes the school recognised	5	0
	Makes it possible to recognise the cultures of different countries	4	1
	Provides an opportunity for cooperation	4	2
	Provides cultural interaction	3	2
	Interaction with schools from different countries	3	1
	Provides interaction between teachers	2	3

Positive	Encourages the use of information technology	2	1
	Supports the development of pupils	2	0
	Promotes the development of foreign languages	2	0
	Encourages the production of projects	2	0
	Improves the quality of education	2	0
	Interacts with schools from different provinces	1	0
	Learning about the educational activities of different countries	1	0
	Provides an opportunity to promote our culture	1	0
	Gaining discipline	1	0
	We have learnt new things	1	4
	It also motivates my colleagues	1	0
	Strengthens communication	1	0
	Improves communication between teachers and parents	1	0
	Provides an opportunity to learn about local culture	1	0
	Provides an opportunity to learn by doing and experiencing	1	1
	Increases student motivation	1	0
	Provides professional development for teachers	1	2

Positive	Increases motivation to work	1	0
	Facilitates learning	0	1
	Contributes in every area	0	2
	Total	**44**	**20**
Negative	Does not contribute to school culture	1	0
	Total	**1**	**0**

In the second part of the interview form, the teachers' answers to the first question were grouped into two categories, positive and negative. In the positive category, Turkish teachers created a total of 44 codes, while European teachers created a total of 20 codes. In the negative category, a Turkish teacher created only 1 code while European teachers did not create any codes. Turkish teachers have mostly said "it helps the school to be recognised", while European teachers have said "we learn new things". Some of the teachers' statements in response to the first question are given below:

- TR-AŞ: "*Thanks to eTwinning projects, interpersonal communication in the organisation has been strengthened and the digital skills of the staff have been improved.*"
- TR-RAÖ: "*Our pupils have had the opportunity to get to know different cultures and the school has increased their interest in foreign languages.*"
- TR-HH: "*It increased cooperation and motivation in the institution. It encouraged teachers to do creative projects.*"
- TR-NY: "*It improved the quality of education in the school, our school became a more popular and higher quality institution.*"
- BH-NA: "*These projects bring us together with other schools where we can cooperate, develop our profession and share our experiences.*"
- LI-LD: "*It develops innovation in our school.*"
- *RO-MM: "We learn new knowledge and new methods from every country.*"

Table 7 shows the analysis of the responses to the question "Do you think that eTwinning projects contribute to your professional development as a teacher? Explain in what way and in what areas they contribute".

Table 7 The Effect of eTwinning Projects on Teachers' Professional Development

Categories	Codes	Turkey	Europe
Positive	I've learnt Web2-3 and technology tools	9	5
	I've learnt about different studies, new methods and techniques	4	6
	Provided the opportunity to interact with other teachers	3	5
	Provided an opportunity to monitor progress	3	0
	Broadened my perspective	2	0
	Contributed to cooperation	2	1
	Learning about the education systems of different countries	1	2
	Activities strengthen my relationship with my pupils	1	0
	Improved my ability to find solutions to problems	1	0
	Achieved goals	1	0
	I've learnt to use new teaching resources	1	0
	I had the opportunity to see the activities of different countries	1	0
	I've learnt interactive teaching	1	0
	Contributed to my personal development	1	6
	Improved my language and communication skills	1	2
	Made me aware of myself	1	0
	Helped me to be equipped	1	2
	Increased my professional confidence	1	1
	Enabled me to be an effective teacher	1	0
	I've learnt how to code	1	0
	Increased my management skills	0	1
Total		**37**	**31**

In the second part of the interview form, teachers' responses to the second question were only categorised as positive. In the positive category, Turkish teachers created a total of 37 codes while European teachers created 31 codes. While Turkish teachers have mostly said "I've learnt Web2-3 and technology tools", European teachers have said "I've learnt different studies, new methods and techniques" and "It contributed to my personal development". Some of the teachers' statements in response to the second question are given below:

- TR-AA: "*We take examples from education systems in different countries. I prepare activities for my students with web2 tools, so that education is not only in the classroom. Doing unusual activities with my students strengthens the bond between us.*"
- TR-AŞ: "*It contributes to me in areas such as personal development, language skills, learning new concepts and self-realisation.*"
- TR-NKO: "*It has enabled me to colour the educational process in a way that attracts the interest of my students.*"
- TR-EB: "*It helped me to build cooperation, to follow innovations in education, to get out of the vicious circle of being a teacher and to broaden my perspective on my profession.*"
- TR-NY: "*It made me feel more effective as a teacher.*"
- RO-TR: "*It contributed to innovative methods, interaction with different cultures, digital skills, communication skills, project management skills.*"
- RO-RI: "*It has definitely contributed to my professional and personal development. I am more confident in my own abilities and I can apply everything I have learnt in my classroom.*"
- IT-AT: "*I think it has contributed a lot to me and my students. I am learning different languages, working*

together and learning new methods."

- SL-EAC: "*I have learnt how to use technology in education.*"

Table 8 shows the analysis of the responses to the question "What do you think eTwinning projects bring to your pupils in terms of cognitive, affective and social aspects?"

Table 8 The Impact of eTwinning Projects on Pupils' Development

Categories	Codes	Turkey	Europe
Cognitive	Improves technology skills	3	2
	Teaches different concepts and skills	2	0
	Increases student attention span	1	0
	Develops problem solving skills	1	0
	Develops innovation and creativity	1	1
	Develops meta-thinking skills	1	0
	Teaches safe internet use	1	0
	Enables students to participate more effectively in class	1	0
	Improves speaking skills	0	1
	Improves memory development	0	1
	Provides general cognitive development	0	3
	Total	**11**	**8**
Affective	Improves expression and communication skills	7	1
	Raises awareness of ecology	3	0
	Increases their interest	1	0
	Increases student awareness	1	0
	Increases sense of responsibility	2	1
	Increases the student's self-confidence	2	3
	Teaches them to finish what they start	2	0
	Gives a different perspective	1	0
	Increases motivation	1	0
	Provides affective development	0	3
	Total	**20**	**8**
Social	Celebrates different cultures and people	3	6
	Encourages cooperation	3	5
	Provides social development	0	3
	Provides socialisation for the student	3	1
	Develops students' empathy	1	0
	Enables peer learning	1	0
	Total	**11**	**15**
	General Total	**42**	**31**

In the second part of the interview form, the teachers' responses to the third question were classified into three categories: cognitive, affective and social. In all categories, Turkish teachers created a total of 42 codes, while European teachers created 31 codes. Turkish teachers have mostly said "Improves expression and communication skills" while European teachers have said "Celebrates different cultures and people". Some of the teachers' responses to the third question are given below:

- TR-MA: "*Cognitively, the pupils' attention span increased. They gained the ability to explore new environments, meet different people, self-confidence and the ability to finish what they started.*"
- TR-AS: "*They learned different concepts, gained social skills and developed empathy.*"
- TR-GA: "*They gained high level thinking skills through different applications.*"
- TR-RAÖ: "*They had the opportunity to identify and*

learn Web2 tools. They learned how to use the Internet safely and how to access useful information."

- TR-HH: "*It increased the motivation of my students, gave them the ability to communicate and gave them the opportunity to get to know different cultures.*"
- TR-NKO: "*They have learnt that they can communicate with their foreign peers despite the language difference.*"
- TR-EB: "*They gained awareness on many issues such as love for science, love for nature and animals, recycling.*"
- BH-NA: "*They learned self-expression skills, memory development, completing tasks, socialising and communicating with students of other nationalities.*"
- RO-RI: "*Working together gave the pupils confidence.*"
- SP-AA: "*It is beneficial for the students in terms of understanding, exploring, learning and recognising different cultures.*"

Table 9 analyses the responses to the question "What are the conveniences and difficulties you experience in the eTwinning project development, implementation and closure processes?

Table 9 Conveniences and Difficulties of eTwinning Projects

Categories	Codes	Turkey	Europe
Conveniences	Team spirit and cooperation	1	4
	Not difficult	1	4
	Implementation phase	1	2
	Support from colleagues	1	1
	Previous eTwinning platform	0	1
	Writing the project	0	1
	I worked willingly	1	0
	It's fun	1	0
	Efficient	1	0
	School support	1	0
	Supporting the environment	1	0
	Doing activities on time	1	0
	Total	**10**	**13**

Categories	Codes	Turkey	Europe
Difficulties	Language, communicating in a foreign language	3	3
	Use of technology	3	1
	Peer pressure	2	0
	Conditions requiring parental consent	1	0
	Lack of technological equipment	1	0
	Reporting the project	1	0
	Finding a partner	1	1
	Motivating foreign partners	1	0
	Excessive workload	1	0
	Lack of support from school management	1	1
	Reluctance of parents	1	0
	Pandemic period	1	1
	Different working hours of the foreign partners	1	1
	Participation in many projects in the same year	1	0
	The irrelevance of time	1	0
	Uploading events to the platform	1	1
	The process of applying for the Quality Label	1	0
	New eTwinning platform	0	3
	Project implementation	0	1
	Total	**22**	**13**

In the second part of the interview form, the answers given by the teachers to the fourth question were divided into two categories, namely conveniences and difficulties. In the convenience category, Turkish teachers created a total of 10 codes, while European teachers created 13 codes. In the category of difficulties, Turkish teachers created a total of 22 codes while European teachers created 13 codes. Some of the teachers' statements in response to the fourth question are given below:

- TR-AA: "*I had difficulties with the language, getting parents' permission to share on social media and collecting links.*"
- TR-MA: "*The lack of a mentor in my first projects, the use of technology and the reporting phase at the end of the project were very difficult for me.*"
- TR-ET: "*Reaching project partners is sometimes a tedious process.*"
- TR-SA: "*Some of my colleagues criticise me in a negative way with expressions such as 'make advertising' is a difficulty I experience socially.*"
- TR-RAÖ: "*I experienced difficulties such as not getting enough support from the school administration, negative behaviour of my colleagues towards me and the pandemic process.*"
- TR-TER: "*I did five projects in one year, I had problems to finish the projects.*"
- TR-NY: "*The only thing I had difficulties with was uploading the activities to the platform. Applying for the quality label was also difficult.*"
- LI-LD: "*I had difficulties such as the use of technology and the language barrier.*"
- RO-IF: "*The old platform was very easy, but in the new platform I cannot connect with my former partners or other teachers.*"
- SE-GNM: "*The new platform is very problematic, I have many problems to upload the activities.*"
- IT-SA: "*It was a difficulty for me that there was no one to guide and help me.*"
- SP-AA: "*The new platform is not good, it is not easy to find project partners.*"

Table 10 analyses the responses to the question "How did you feel about what you experienced in the development, implementation and closure processes of eTwinning projects?

Table 10 The Impact of the eTwinning Project Experience on Teachers' Emotions

Categories	Codes	Turkey	Europe
Positive	It made me so happy	7	7
	It's very nice to get an award	1	3
	It was very good to have new experiences	1	2
	I felt determined	0	2
	Exciting	0	2
	I felt strong	0	1
	I felt important	0	1
	It's fun	0	1
	Proud to succeed	1	0
	Very enjoyable	1	0
	Motivating	1	0
	I'm glad I got involved	1	0
	Helped me to become a role model	1	0
	Made me feel valuable about myself and my job	1	0
	Increased my confidence	1	0
	Made me feel productive	1	0
	Total	**17**	**19**
Negative	Tasks to complete create pressure	0	1
	Sometimes I felt helpless	0	1
	Sometimes I felt lonely	0	1
	Sometimes I felt very stressed	0	1
	Sometimes I felt disappointed	0	1
	Exhausting	1	0
	Very busy	1	0
	Those who try to devalue my efforts are demotivating	1	0
	Total	**3**	**5**

The teachers' responses to the fifth question in the second part of the interview form were divided into two categories: positive and negative. In the positive category, Turkish teachers created a total of 17 codes, while European teachers created 19 codes. In the negative category, Turkish teachers created a total of 3 codes, while European teachers created 5 codes. In their responses to this question, Turkish and European teachers mostly said "I was very happy". Some of the teachers' responses to the fifth question are given below:

- TR-AC: "*I was very happy when I completed the project. It's a proud feeling to have done it.*"
- TR-HK: "*Social, hardworking, researcher, helpful, team spirit, and the feeling of working together took me in.*"
- TR-EÖ: "*I am glad I got involved, I became an exemplary teacher in my city because of my participation in eTwinning projects. I became a role model and guide for many of my friends.*"
- TR-EB: "*I felt myself and my profession more valuable. In an environment where the teaching profession is so discredited, working in cooperation with colleagues like myself gave me strength.*"
- TR-NY: "*I felt more productive as my self-confidence increased.*"
- RO-TR: "*The implementation process is always a more difficult one, it involves the allocation of time resources in a judicious way, most often you feel curiosity, the desire to know but also the pressure of the tasks you have to solve. Once these tasks are completed, the feeling of joy of things well done, useful for professional progress and for the development of children's work skills, is great.*"
- RO-BE: "*Sometimes I felt helpless, alone and very stressed and other times I felt ambitious and strong.*"
- IT-SA: "*It is an area where every educator can work actively. The awards at the end of the project are exciting.*"

Table 11 analyses the responses to the question "What were your motivations when you first got involved in eTwinning projects?"

Table 11 Teachers' Motivations for Participation in eTwinning Projects

Categories	Codes	Turkey	Europe
Intrinsic Motivation	To learn and improve	5	5
	Being open to differences	1	3
	Interacting with different cultures	1	2
	Need for innovation	2	1
	Striving to be efficient	1	1
	Language development	0	1
	I am hardworking and determined	0	1
	To discover	0	1
	Curiosity	3	0
	Sense of sharing	1	0
	Total	**14**	**15**
Extrinsic Motivation	Colleagues and friends	3	4
	Receive an award at the end	1	1
	School Administration	0	1
	Total	**4**	**6**
	General Total	**18**	**21**

The teachers' answers to the sixth question in the second part of the interview form were divided into two categories: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. In the category of intrinsic motivation, Turkish teachers created a total of 14 codes while European teachers created 15 codes. In the category of extrinsic motivation, Turkish teachers created a total of 4 codes while European teachers created 6 codes. It can be seen that the intrinsic motivation of the teachers is higher than their extrinsic motivation and the intrinsic motivation of the two groups is almost equal. In their answers to this question, Turkish and European teachers mostly said "to learn and improve myself". Some of the teachers' answers to the sixth question are given below:

- TR-MA: "*The fact that my colleagues I work with are doing eTwinning projects and getting awards at the end of the project motivated me. Winning an award was one of my goals and I achieved it.*"
- TR-HK: "*I saw a colleague's projects on social media and she encouraged me. I think we achieved our goals, our project was very successful and we received both*

national and European awards."

- TR-RAÖ: "*I enjoyed eTwinning projects, I was attentive and meticulous in carrying out my projects, but as a result of the devaluation and harassment, I decided not to do them anymore.*".
- TR-TE: "*I like to produce, improve and share. I had the opportunity to do this with projects and I am very happy.*"
- TR-NY: "*I can list the motivations as my desire to get to know new cultures from Europe and Turkey, my sense of curiosity and my desire to improve myself, my desire to be more productive for my students, my desire to use technology in education and to help my students to use it.*"
- LI-LD: "*Continuous improvement, innovation and searching for new methods.*"
- RO-TR: "*The desire to broaden my horizon of professional knowledge and to improve my teaching skills and competences are the factors that drive me towards such approaches.*"
- IT-AT: "*Education requires constant change, this is what encouraged me.*"
- SP-AA: "*My motivation is to develop, learn and explore professionally. I would like to work more on this.*"

In Table 12, the answers to the question "Do you think that you receive enough support from the school administration in eTwinning project processes? In which areas do you receive the most support?" are analysed:

Table 12 School Management Support for eTwinning Projects

Categories	Codes	Turkey	Europe
Positive	I received support	7	4
	I've always had support	3	3
	Partially supported	2	1
	Total	**12**	**8**
Negative	I received no support	5	6
	Total	**5**	**6**
Support Areas	Provision of materials	3	2
	In every subject and in all areas	3	1
	About time	3	0
	Psychological and motivational	2	0

Support Areas	In the use of school facilities	2	0
	At the project launch	1	0
	In the dissemination of the project	1	0
	Explaining to parents	1	0
	I receive support for innovation	0	1
	Makes our work easier	0	1
	Technical support	0	1
	Total	**16**	**6**

The teachers' responses to the seventh question in the second part of the interview form were grouped into three categories: positive, negative and support areas. In the positive category, Turkish teachers created a total of 12 codes while European teachers created 8 codes. In the negative category, Turkish teachers created a total of 5 codes while European teachers created 6 codes. In the category of support areas, Turkish teachers created a total of 16 codes while European teachers created 6 codes. Turkish teachers mostly said "I received support" while European teachers said "I received no support". Some of the teachers' responses to the seventh question are given below:

- TR-SA: "*The school supports us, but it is not enough to help us.*"
- TR-AA: "*We get partial support because the administrators do not have much knowledge about the project.*"
- TR-RAÖ: "*In general, I have seen that teachers who run eTwinning projects are lonely and unsupported. I did not receive any support when I was doing the projects. On the contrary, I tried hard and my achievements were devalued.*"
- TR-TE: "*The school administration always supported me. We were involved in province-wide activities to promote and disseminate the projects. They supported us in buying materials. They supported us to get support from parents.*"
- RO-BE: "*I didn't get enough support because I am the only one with an eTwinning project in my school and the administration doesn't know how to support me.*"
- RO-RI: "*I have not received enough support, I need more support and I want to be encouraged to continue*

in this way."

- IT-AT: "*In our school, projects are very important. I received support in the creation, implementation and completion of the project.*"

In Table 13, the answers to the question "What are your general demands regarding eTwinning projects?" are analysed:

Table 13 Demands Related to eTwinning Projects

Categories	Codes	Turkey	Europe
Demands	eTwinning platform should be more accessible	4	6
	eTwinning platform should return to its old format	0	1
	Should cover the whole world	0	1
	All teachers should experience it	0	1
	More promotion should be done	0	1
	It should be easier to find a partner	0	1
	Continuity must be ensured	1	0
	Projects must be effective	1	0
	Projects should be generalised	1	0
	eTwinning training should be provided to administrators	1	0
	Teachers' participation should be ensured	1	0
	Foreign partner must exist	1	0
	Label application process should be facilitated	2	0
	Teachers should be trained in eTwinning	2	1
	There should be salary rewards	1	0
Demands	Finding partners from different countries	1	1
	Webinar	0	1
	More support	0	1
	To reach more people	0	1
	Total	**16**	**16**

The responses of the teachers to the eighth question in the second part of the interview form were categorised under the category of demands. Both Turkish and European teachers created a total of 16 codes. Some of the statements of the teachers in response to the eighth question are given below:

- TR-GA: "*It should be an original platform suitable for its purpose on a voluntary basis. The projects should not be pretending. Its aims and objectives should be realistic. It should have an impact on pupils, parents and stakeholders in the school. Quality labelling should not be seen as a goal but as an outcome.*"
- TR-NKO: "*The fact that the platform changed this year and still has unresolved problems has reduced our motivation. They overturned the system that was working smoothly. It should be simplified for those who do not know it at all, and the content of projects and studies can be displayed on the site interface. They can also make it easier to obtain the European quality label.*"
- TR-EÖ: "*I think that those who want to increase the visibility of the work done and to be involved in different studies should definitely take part in the eTwinning project.*"
- RO-TR: "*There should be more trainings and webinars in schools offering opportunities for eTwinning projects.*"
- RO-IF: "*The platform should go back to its old format.*"
- IT-AT: "*I think that eTwinning should involve all schools in the world. There should be common goals in creating and carrying out projects.*"
- SP-AA: "*It should be easier to find partners. I would like the platform to be reintroduced.*"

When their responses to the eight questions in the second part of the interview form are analysed as a whole, the numerical data obtained about eTwinning projects can be summarised as follows. While Turkish teachers created a total of 195 codes in the categories of "positive, convenience, motivation and cognitive-affective-social gains" regarding

eTwinning projects, European teachers created 149 codes. Considering that sixteen teachers from each group participated, it can be said that Turkish teachers have a more positive attitude towards eTwinning projects than their European colleagues. However, in the categories of "negative and difficult", Turkish teachers created a total of 31 codes, while European teachers created 24 codes. It can be seen that Turkish teachers created more codes, both positive and negative, than their European colleagues. This is due to the fact that one teacher from Turkey, who encountered many difficulties in the project process and felt that she did not receive enough support in this regard, answered most of the questions with negative expressions. The views of this teacher are particularly important as running eTwinning projects can have its own difficulties or disadvantages, such as pressure, devaluation and isolation. It is also clear from the data that Turkish teachers experience more difficulties in the project process than their European counterparts. In general it can be said that the teachers in the study group answered the questions in detail. It should also be noted that some teachers gave short and simple answers. When analysing the European teachers separately, it can be said Eastern European teachers are more willing to participate in eTwinning projects. In particular, Romanian teachers were more willing than all European participants, both in terms of participation in projects and in this study.

Discussions

This study comparatively analysed the views of Turkish and European preschool teachers on their participation in eTwinning projects. Based on the data obtained, the benefits of eTwinning projects for teachers and intercultural cooperation were identified. One study concludes that eTwinning projects increase teachers' cultural awareness, improve their international cooperation and dialogue skills, and promote understanding and respect between different cultures. Looking at different studies, it can be seen that eTwinning projects make a significant contribution to universal education and citizenship concepts (Acar & Peker, 2021; Camilleri, 2016; Yılmaz & Altun Yılmaz, 2012).

According to the results of the study, eTwinning projects increase teachers' personal, professional and social gains. Teachers support their professional development, develop different skills and encourage innovative teaching practices through projects. Demir and Kayaoğlu (2021) stated that such international projects improve students' language proficiency; It has been reported that they increased their motivation to learn a foreign language. Teachers also managed to improve their strategic competencies.

eTwinning projects are a tool that supports the professional development of teachers, project participants develop their pedagogical skills, gain international cultural awareness and discover innovative teaching methods. Crisan (2013) emphasises that the teachers who participate eTwinning projects agree that the use of eTwinning is motivating and stimulating for both themselves and their students, and also contributes to their professional development.

In addition, eTwinning projects create a network among teachers, increase their professional reputation and establish strong ties with their students and parents. The results of the research are in line with the findings of Yılmaz and Yılmaz (2012) that students' learning motivation, interest in the course and self-confidence increase.

Conclusion

In this study, the views, perceptions and attitudes of Turkish and European preschool teachers participating in eTwinning projects about eTwinning were analysed comparatively. The data obtained revealed that eTwinning projects provide professional, personal and social gains such as providing cooperation between teachers and cultures, supporting personal and professional development, providing opportunities for the development of different skills, encouraging innovative teaching practices, creating a network between educators, increasing teachers' professional reputation, strengthening their ties with students and parents, providing professional satisfaction, acquiring different studies, methods and techniques, and communication skills. In addition, eTwinning projects have a positive impact on the development of school culture. It has been determined that the school gains an international character, has a strong staff with the professional development of teachers,

has highly motivated students, strengthens the infrastructure in information technologies, increases the recognition of the school, creates a national and international network, encourages the participation of school stakeholders, enriches the school culturally, develops the school in foreign language education, and enriches the education programme.

The views of Turkish and European preschool teachers about eTwinning projects are very much in line. In both groups, teachers are mostly intrinsically motivated to carry out eTwinning projects and the fact that there is a reward at the end is a motivating factor. It is obvious that they need more support from the school administration. However, it was also found that in general, teachers' skills in using web2 tools and technology in education increased thanks to the projects. Despite the difficulties experienced in foreign languages, it was determined that both teachers and students were able to communicate with each other and their communication skills improved thanks to the projects.

The data obtained from the interviews with the teachers show that there are many positive approaches but also some negativities. Both Turkish and European teachers found the new eTwinning platform "European School Education Platform" ESEP difficult and impractical and emphasised that the old platform was much easier and more useful. The difficulty of finding partners from different countries in the new platform is also one of the issues that teachers are uncomfortable with. Another negative factor is that teachers who do not do eTwinning projects and school administrators who are not interested in the subject may have prejudices about teachers who actively participate in project activities.

Turkish and European teachers' participation in eTwinning projects is voluntary. Teachers believe that such projects have a positive impact on their personal and professional development. They need the support of the school administration to increase their motivation.

Recommendations

The teachers who participated in the research are very happy to participate in eTwinning projects both professionally and personally. Their participation in these projects mostly starts with intrinsic motivation and continues with the encouragement of colleagues. However, it is obvious that teachers need training on this subject. In addition, school administrators should also be provided with a training on the project. Thus, school administrators can motivate teachers to do projects, create a culture in the school in this direction and support teachers in the difficulties they may experience. Project trainings will also make a great contribution to the dissemination of projects.

ESEP is a platform that almost all teachers evaluated negatively. Teachers prefer the old platform which they used much more easily. Preschool teaching is already a very difficult profession and teachers willingly participate in eTwinning projects even though there is no obligation to do so, but the new platform increases the workload of teachers. For this reason, the platform needs to be updated in a way that facilitates teachers' work.

Teachers find it difficult to find partners from different countries. Therefore, they always have to do another project with the same partners. It should be ensured that teachers can reach new partners more easily.

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