



WHAT ARE THE PURPOSES OF TEACHERS FOR USING THE ETWINNING PLATFORM AND THE EFFECTS OF THE PLATFORM ON TEACHERS?

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Abstract: This study is a qualitative case study research, determining the purposes of teachers to use the eTwinning platform and to examine the effects of the platform on teachers. The study group consisted of 15 volunteer teachers who carried out eTwinning projects rewarded with quality labels. In the study, the data were obtained through a semi-structured interview form, and the content analysis method was used in the data analysis. According to the results obtained, it was concluded that teachers used the eTwinning platform in order to make projects, participate in online courses, contribute to their professional development and collaborate. The platform has a great contribution to teachers both personally and professionally. As a result, it is obvious that the eTwinning platform is very useful for teachers. The platform is so effective that it contributes to the professional and personal development of teachers, and even changes their perspective on the profession.

Key words: eTwinning, Information and communication technologies, Online collaboration, Online learning, Teacher, Personal development, Professional development

1. Introduction

With the development of information and technology, many innovations have occurred around the world. Technological devices and fast internet access have led to globalization and enabled people, ideas and cultures to interact. Now we can meet with people who are kilometers away and communicate with people from countries we have never been to. These rapid developments have affected educational institutions as in all areas of life. In parallel with these developments, learning environments have become more dynamic and the roles of teachers and students have changed. Now, the teacher is not the person who only conveys information, and also only learning the information is not enough for the student. Kuran (2002) stated that teachers should be problem-solving people who have sufficient knowledge, open to learning, develop themselves, keep up with the change and development in the society before the student. Also, students should be trained as individuals who can use the information they learn in real life and who have advanced skills such as innovation, creativity and leadership.

With the introduction of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) into the classroom, learning has gone beyond the classroom environment and has become independent of time and space. Accordingly, it has become an obligation for teachers to have the skills to use the information and communication technologies effectively and to improve themselves in this regard. In this context, eTwinning provides a highly effective platform for teachers to improve themselves.

eTwinning is a platform which promotes school collaboration in Europe through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and offers opportunities for free and continuing online Professional Development for educators. It was launched in 2005 as the main action of the European Commission's e-learning Programme, and it has been integrated into Erasmus+, the European programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport, since 2014. Its Central Support Service is operated by European Schoolnet, an international partnership of 34 European Ministries of Education and supported at national level by 38 National Support Services. It is also available in 28

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languages and offers news, professional development opportunities and examples of successful projects (eTwinning, 2020). Therefore, the platform provides a very wide online learning environment. Duncan Howell (2010) stated that online learning environments provide valuable opportunities for teachers' professional development. eTwinning offers teachers the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from different cities and countries, along with various learning activities, online seminars and professional development workshops. Also, teachers can find project partners and participate in various projects in a safe online environment. In short, eTwinning provides a platform for teachers, students and administrators working in participating schools of European countries to communicate, collaborate, develop projects and share. Also, teachers who carry out projects with very good qualifications are rewarded with a quality label. This significantly increases teachers' motivation. According to the data of May 2020, there are 800.160 teachers, 205.329 schools and 106.364 projects registered in the eTwinning platform (eTwinning, 2020).



Figure 1. According to the data of May 2020, number of teachers, schools and projects registered in the eTwinning platform (eTwinning, 2020)

eTwinning aims to develop new and innovative ways to use ICT in European schools through schools promoting online collaboration between students and teachers (Galvin et al., 2006). Teachers from preschool, elementary, secondary schools can participate in eTwinning to exchange and collaborate, learn ICT skills, communication skills, teaching skills and interdisciplinary study skills (i.e. 21st-century skills) (Pham et al., 2012). Fat (2012) stated that the purpose of the eTwinning platform is not only to provide school matching, it is also for young people to equip themselves with technological skills and to adopt intercultural differences. Manfredini (2007) sees eTwinning as a concrete chance for teachers to improve their language skills, learn new things about Europe, and ensure cross-cultural interaction with colleagues from other countries. He also stated that it contributes to new learning for students. As a result, eTwinning is a learning platform that provides qualifications such as collaboration and communication in education, awareness of new technologies, using web 2.0 tools, recognizing cultural awareness, 21st-century skills.

In the literature review, it was seen that various studies related to eTwinning have been carried out. In his study, Papadakis (2016) aimed to inform the educational community about the actions and benefits of using eTwinning in schools. In the study, general information about eTwinning was given, its development in 10 years period was explained and information about the use of the platform was given. As a result, it was stated that eTwinning is an open, safe, free education network that allows innovation in learning and teaching practices and brings the whole European education community (teachers, students, schools) together. It was also explained that the platform offers unique opportunities for teachers and students such as improving their language skills, exchanging information with their peers, using ICT effectively, and acculturation and will offer much more in the near future. A similar study was carried out in Turkey. In their study, Gülnar and Yatağan (2014) focused on the objectives and the process of the eTwinning activity in Turkey and whole world. In this

context, the features of the platform and how it is used were introduced and a sample project plan was given. It was also stated that the platform provides various benefits for teachers and students. Crişan (2013) examined the effect of teachers' participation in eTwinning on teaching practices. 108 teachers participated in the study and the data were collected through an online survey. The teachers who participated in the study stated that the using eTwinning is motivating and encouraging both for themselves and their students and also contributes to their professional development. They also stated that the national and European quality label awards given to the projects are also motivational for teachers. Camilleri (2016) investigated the benefits and challenges of global education and intercultural interaction between students participating in eTwinning projects in various European countries. In this context, interviews were conducted with teachers from different countries. The results showed that eTwinning contributed to the development of global education via intercultural interaction. It was also concluded that eTwinning plays an important role in equipping students with 21st-century skills. Akıncı (2018) examined the contribution of eTwinning projects to foreign language skills of students and professional development of teachers. The action research model was used in the study and the researcher was a teacher. In the study, an eTwinning project was carried out in order to enrich the English lessons with web 2.0 tools. In the study, it was found out that the practice of the eTwinning project positively affects the language skills of students and increases their interest in the lesson. Also, it was concluded that the eTwinning project has made a great contribution to the professional development of the teacher by integrating the teaching process with technology. In their study on creative learning and innovative teaching, Cachia, Ferrari, Ala-Mutka and Punie (2010) stated that eTwinning contributes to the learning of teachers from different nations and provides an opportunity for collaboration. It was also emphasized that eTwinning activities should be supported more effectively by all schools and teachers.

It is obvious that eTwinning is a platform that offers unique opportunities for schools, teachers and students. However, as a result of the literature review, it was seen that the number of studies on eTwinning is limited. In Turkey, the studies in this subject is much more limited. Therefore, it is believed that the study will contribute significantly to the related literature. In this context, the aim of the study is to determine the purposes of teachers for using the eTwinning platform and to reveal the effects of the platform on teachers. Therefore, the problem statement of the study is expressed as "What are the purposes of teachers to use eTwinning platform and what effects does the platform have on teachers?". In the context of this fundamental problem, the sub-problems of the study are listed as follows.

1. What are the purposes of teachers using the eTwinning platform?
2. How does the eTwinning platform affect teachers' personal development?
3. How does the eTwinning platform affect teachers' professional development?
4. How does the eTwinning platform affect teachers' perspectives on the profession?

2. Methods

2. 1. Study Model

This qualitative study was designed as a case study research. A semi-structured interview method was used as a data collection method.

2. 2. Study Group

The study group of the study was selected by the criterion sampling method which is one of the purposeful sampling methods. The purposeful sampling method is a sampling method in which information-rich situations are selected accordingly to the purpose of the research conduct an in-depth investigation (Patton, 2014). The basic principle in the criterion sampling method is to study all the situations that meet a predetermined set of criteria (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). In this study, participating in eTwinning projects and having quality label rewarded projects were taken as a

criterion. The study group included 15 volunteer teachers working in the state elementary, secondary and high schools in Konya in the 2019-2020 academic year. In order to be ethically appropriate, codes such as T1... T15 were used instead of teachers' clear names. The demographic structure of the study group and the codes given to the teachers are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Features of the Study Group and Codes Given to Participants in the Study

Codes	Gender	Professional seniority	Branch	School type	Number of quality labels
T1	Female	10-15 years	Pre-school Teaching	Elementary school	1
T2	Male	15 years and more	Class Teaching	Elementary school	29
T3	Female	10-15 years	Class Teaching	Elementary school	20
T4	Female	15 years and more	Turkish	Secondary school	9
T5	Male	10-15 years	Mathematics	Secondary school	2
T6	Female	5-10 years	Social Sciences	Secondary school	7
T7	Female	5-10 years	Science	Secondary school	3
T8	Male	0-5 years	English	Secondary school	20
T9	Male	5-10 years	Visual Arts	Secondary school	2
T10	Female	0-5 years	Turkish Language and Literature	High school	5
T11	Male	5-10 years	Mathematics	High school	2
T12	Male	10-15 years	History	High school	1
T13	Male	5-10 years	Chemistry	High school	6
T14	Female	15 years and more	English	High school	3
T15	Female	0-5 years	Biology	High school	4

It is seen in Table 1 that three of the teachers in the study group work in elementary school (Class and pre-school teaching), six in secondary school (Turkish, Mathematics, Social Sciences, Science, English, Visual Arts) and six in high school (Turkish Language and Literature, Mathematics, History, Chemistry, English, Biology). The number of female teachers (53.3%) in the study group is higher than the number of male teachers (46.7%). Three of the teachers in the study group have worked as a teacher for 0-5 years (20%), five of them 5-10 years (33.3%), four of them 10-15 years (26.7%), and three of them have worked for 15 years and more (20%).

2. 3. Data Collection Tool and Process

In this study, the semi-structured interview method, a qualitative research data collection method, was used. This method was primarily chosen due to the fact that each participant answered the questions in the designed semi-structured interview form independently from each other and certain level of standard and flexibility by its definition (Büyüköztürk et al., 2018).

The literature on eTwinning was analyzed and a semi-structured interview form was prepared to use in the study by the researchers with expert consultation. While preparing the interview form, the focus was especially on the purposes of teachers to use the eTwinning platform, and its effects on their personal and professional development. Regarding the questions prepared to ensure the validity of the research form, expert opinion of two academics from a state university education faculty in Turkey was consulted and then the suitability of the language used in the interview form was edited by taking the opinions of a Turkish Education department specialist. Then, a pilot study was conducted with two participants and the feedback from the interview form designed with the experts was compared. After the necessary changes and corrections, the form was presented to the experts again and the form was finalized. This stage was used to structure the interview questions and was not presented as a result.

The participants in the study group were selected as volunteers and they were informed about the study before starting the interview. Before the interviews, it was stated to the participants that their names and workplaces will not be disclosed, and the data to be collected will be used for scientific purposes. It was also emphasized that the interview form should be filled out openly in order to reach the purpose of the research. The questions in the semi-structured interview form were asked to the

participants in the same order, and no limitations were made for their answers. However, due to the features of the semi-structured interview method, some final/complementary questions were asked to enable participants to open and elaborate on their answers.

2. 4. Data Analysis

The data collected as a result of the study were analyzed with the content analysis method. Content analysis method requires an in-depth analysis of the data collected. In content analysis, themes, categories and codes that are not predetermined are created. The purpose is to present the obtained data by organizing them within the framework of codes and themes in a way that the reader can understand (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). Variational method was used in the data analysis process. For this purpose, the opinions of two experts who are experienced in qualitative research and independent from each other were consulted. The coding made by the experts and the coding made by the researchers were compared and necessary arrangements were made. The coherence ratio among coders was found as 0.89 according to the formula of Miles and Huberman (1994) ($\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{Consensus}}{\text{Consensus} + \text{Disagreement}}$). In the first stage of the analysis, teachers were given a code number. Then, in accordance with the characteristics of the content analysis, direct quotations were included in order to convey the opinions of the participants. In the presentation of the data, the criteria of appropriateness to the theme, descriptiveness and being remarkable were taken into account for the direct quote selection (Ünver, Bümen, & Başbay, 2010). In the Results section, the opinions of teachers were stated with codes and interview notes are given in quotation marks. At the final stage, the data were interpreted considering the data in the literature.

3. Findings

In this section, themes obtained as a result of content analysis, codes related to themes and frequencies of these codes are presented. Also, direct quotations from the participants are given in quotation marks and the statements of the participants are shown with codes assigned to the participants before quotations. In the analysis process, since some of the answers given by the participants are related to more than one code, the frequency numbers and the number of participants in the tables given in the Results section may vary.

3. 1. The Purposes of Teachers for Using the eTwinning Platform

The first question of the study was to reveal the purposes of teachers for using the eTwinning platform. In the question addressed for this purpose, literature was reviewed to guide teachers. After providing options for the purposes of using the platform, they were asked to choose the appropriate ones from these options and explain their purposes. For this reason, the opinions of the teachers were stated below and the options given with descriptions that they marked were indicated in the table. The results obtained from the interviews with teachers are presented in Table 2.

When the codes created on the theme of "purposes of using the eTwinning platform" presented in Table 2 were examined, it was seen that all the participants use the platform for "*professional development*" and "*to make the learning-teaching process more effective*". Besides, all but two of the participants stated that they used the platform for "*building projects*" and "*collaboration-exchange of ideas*".

T4: "*I use the platform for professional development. You need a different development for a different education. This pushes you to improve your professional development. Also, professional development webinars allow you to train on new and different topics.*"

T6: "*I use the platform to make the learning-teaching process more active. With eTwinning, I started using project-based and collaborative learning more actively. It helped me train students who research, question and learn to learn. We also made peer education more practicable with our projects.*"

T7: *"I use it to exchange ideas and cooperate with my friends in other departments. Also, the projects provide the opportunity to see the good practices of our colleagues in Europe and transfer them to our country."*

T9: *"To be able to do projects in my department."*

Apart from this, the majority of the participants stated that they used the platform to *"participate in online courses"* and *"find partners for Erasmus projects"*.

T11: *"The eTwinning platform offers teachers a great opportunity for development. Thanks to the online seminars I attended, I learned a lot that I did not know. So I use the platform to attend online courses."*

T13: *"I use the platform to find partners for my Erasmus projects. Because the most important step in building Erasmus projects is to find a reliable partner. The eTwinning platform is a platform that sets the ground for Erasmus. Here we learn to build projects and find reliable partners."*

Three participants stated that they used the platform because it provides *"benefits to students"* and another teacher used it to assure *"visibility at the European level"* of himself and his school.

T12: *'Learning, providing technological equipment, giving my students a project-based education perspective, allowing them to experience their own learning adventures, to produce innovative content with children, to give my students a fun learning experience, getting my students socialized.'*

T10: *'To enable my students to gain a sense of belonging to the school, to discover their own skills, and to meet with information technologies thanks to various activities carried out in different projects.'*

T6: *'Ensuring the visibility of myself and my school at the European level.'*

Teachers stated that eTwinning projects provide many benefits to their students such as producing innovative content, providing a sense of belonging to the school, introducing them to information technologies, and introducing different teaching methods.

Table 2. *Opinions of the Participants on the Purposes of Using the eTwinning Platform*

Theme	Codes	Participants	Frequency (f)
Purposes of using the eTwinning platform	Building projects	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7 T8, T9, T12, T13, T14, T15	13
	Participate in online courses	T1, T2, T3, T5, T6, T7 T8, T9, T11, T13, T14	11
	Professional development	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12, T13, T14, T15	15
	Collaboration-exchange of ideas	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7 T8, T9, T12, T13, T14, T15	13
	To make the learning-teaching process more effective	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7 T8, T9, T10, T11, T12, T13, T14, T15	15
	Find partners for Erasmus projects	T1, T2, T3, T5, T7, T11, T13, T14	8
	Benefits to students	T10, T11, T12	3
	Visibility at the European level	T6	1
	Total		79

3. 2. The Effects of eTwinning Platform on Personal Development

The second question in the study is how the eTwinning platform affects the personal development of teachers. In this context, themes and codes obtained from teacher opinions are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Participant Opinions on the Effects of eTwinning Platform on Personal Development

Theme	Codes	Participants	Frequency (f)
<i>The effects of eTwinning platform on personal development</i>	Self-confidence	<i>T1, T2, T3, T6, T8, T9, T11, T12, T13, T14, T15</i>	11
	Communication	<i>T2, T3, T4, T8, T10, T13, T14, T15</i>	9
	Helping-Sharing	<i>T3, T6, T8, T14</i>	4
	New friendships	<i>T4, T5, T8, T15</i>	4
	Foreign language	<i>T4, T5, T7</i>	3
	Leadership-Respectability	<i>T2, T3, T12</i>	3
	Belonging	<i>T9, T12, T15</i>	3
	Productivity	<i>T5</i>	1
	Total		37

When the codes created on the theme of “the effects of eTwinning platform on personal development” presented in Table 3 were examined, the majority of the participants stated that the platform contributed to the developing “*self-confidence*” and eight participants developed their “*communication*” skills. Four teachers stated that the platform contributed positively to the “*helping-sharing*” skills. The teachers said that sharing knowledge with colleagues made them happy.

T6: ‘*Besides my professional development, it also contributed to my self-confidence and sharing with people.*’

T8: ‘*With eTwinning, I learned many applications that I did not know before. I used them in my lessons and my self-confidence improved with the reactions I received. It made me happy to tell people what I knew. It improved my communication skills. At the same time, my social environment has expanded.*’

T14: ‘*It increased my communication and collaboration skills and improved my self-confidence.*’

Three teachers stated that the platform developed their “*foreign language*” skills. In addition, the teachers stated that they established “*new friendships*” through the projects. One teacher stated that the platform contributed to “*productivity*”.

T4: “It enhanced my foreign language, my communication skills improved, so I had more friends from abroad.”

T5: “Making good friendships with national and international teachers. To be a teacher who produces not always consumes. It provides foreign language development.”

T7: “It was especially effective in foreign language development.”

Three participants stated that the platform developed the sense of “*belonging*” to the community and three teachers claimed that it contributed to their personal development in terms of “*leadership-respectability*”.

T2: “Yes, it contributed. Thanks to it, I became a well-known person. It helped with self-confidence and communication.”

T2 coded teacher stated that he became the eTwinning Provincial Coordinator with his success in eTwinning projects and got recognized by all teachers at the Provincial Directorate of National Education and in the city where he was located.

T3: “Yes, my self-confidence has increased so much more. My communication skills continue to increase. It is a good feeling to understand that it is efficient to gain respect in the society through assistance and collaboration.”

T9: ‘I think it is effective in developments such as working with the community, belonging to the community, self-confidence.’

T12: “It made contributions to belonging, leadership, and self-confidence.”

T15: "Yes. Communication, meeting new people, self-confidence. I had the feeling of belonging to a community that thinks and works like me."

Teachers stated that they gained a sense of belonging to the community since the eTwinning platform is a very large community and developed their self-confidence and communication skills.

3. 3. The Effects of eTwinning Platform on Professional Development

The third question in the study is how the eTwinning platform affects the professional development of teachers. In this context, themes and codes obtained from teacher opinions are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Participant Opinions on the Effects of eTwinning Platform on Professional Development

Theme	Codes	Participants	Frequency (f)
<i>The effects of eTwinning platform on professional development</i>	Technology	<i>T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T10, T11, T12, T15</i>	12
	Pedagogy	<i>T1, T2, T3, T4, T6, T9, T10, T11, T12, T14, T15</i>	11
	Acculturation	<i>T1, T2, T3, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T13, T15</i>	10
	Foreign language	<i>T1, T2, T4, T5, T6, T7, T10</i>	7
	New learning	<i>T5, T6, T7, T8, T12, T14</i>	6
	Total		46

When the codes created on the theme of "the effects of eTwinning platform on personal development" presented in Table 4 were examined, the majority of participants stated that the platform contributed significantly to their "technology" and "pedagogy" knowledge.

T1: "You are constantly improving yourself. Our English improves because we use it in projects. We use more web 2.0 tools. We use different methods and techniques in the lessons. In this way, we also communicate with teachers in different cities and countries."

T3: "Yes, it has effects. I was not aware of the digital world six years ago, but today I find myself very competent to use technology. You also know the lifestyles and traditions of different countries. Besides, it is efficient to work across multi-disciplines and reach the goal with a specific plan."

T6: "It especially contributed to digital literacy, one of the 21st-century skills and helped me learn and actively use many technological tools. It also allowed me to experience the knowledge of many departments apart from mine. My language skills have improved considerably, especially in European projects. We have reached the level to communicate with our partners in English. I started to use project-based and collaborative learning more actively. It helped me train students who research, question and learn to learn. We also made peer education more applicable with our projects. We created cultural bridges and had culture siblings with these projects. The projects with European partners allowed us to observe the culture of our partners."

T11: "Absolutely. You start to be able to think of an activity for any subject. You can also unite with your colleagues and provide an interdisciplinary integrity. It makes you want to try different learning methods. You also learn and teach technology to present project products in a more refined way, or for students to use correctly and efficiently."

At the same time, the majority of the participants stated that the national and international projects provided "acculturation". Seven participants stated that the platform positively affected their professional development by developing their "foreign language" skills.

T7: "Yes, I benefited from exchanging ideas with my friends from other departments and professional development seminars. It also allows us to see the different cultural activities of foreign partners, even teachers and students from other cities. I learned different information for the development of my students. We have foreign partners in the projects and my English has improved since we have to communicate with them all the time. I had no interest in web 2.0 tools before. Thanks to eTwinning,

these tools have made a huge contribution. I learned at least 50 web 2.0 tools I never knew before and taught my students.”

T8: “Yes, I benefited from webinars and seminars I attended. I learned new applications, methods. I learned web 2.0 tools and taught my students. I had the opportunity to see their culture closely in the projects I carried out with foreign partners.”

T13: “It provides great acculturation. I had the opportunity to host my project friends in Turkey. Likewise, I visited my project partner in Spain.”

Besides, six participants stated that it contributed to “new learning” through trainings on the platform and information exchanges with peers.

T12: "Yes. It allows you to learn all innovative applications. It diversifies and develops teaching methods and techniques. It primarily provides advancement in technology. It helps me integrate technology into lessons. It also allowed us to enjoy teaching with various web 2.0 tools.”

T14: "Yes, it allowed me to learn and apply new approaches, new teaching methods such as project-based learning, steam, fcl."

The teachers stated that they learned new approaches, different teaching methods and techniques. In this way, it can be said that the platform develops teachers' pedagogy knowledge.

3. 4. Effects of the eTwinning Platform on the Perspectives of Teachers on the Profession

The fourth question in the study is how the eTwinning platform affects the perspectives of teachers on the profession. In this context, themes and codes obtained from teacher opinions are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Participant Opinions on the Effects of eTwinning Platform on the Perspectives of Teachers on the Profession

Theme	Codes	Participants	Frequency (f)
<i>Effects of the eTwinning platform on the perspectives of teachers on the profession</i>	Pedagogy	T3, T4, T5, T7, T8, T10, T11, T13	8
	Technology	T1, T3, T6, T10, T12	5
	Professional development	T2, T5, T9,	3
	Innovative	T13, T14, T15	3
	Lifetime learning	T6, T12	2
	Total		21

When the opinions on the “effects of the eTwinning platform on the perspectives of teachers on the profession” presented in Table 5 were examined, all the teachers stated that the platform positively affected their perspectives on the profession. The teachers stated that the platform affected their perspectives on the profession in terms of “pedagogy”, “technology”, “professional development”, “innovative” perspective and “lifetime learning”.

T3: “Yes, it was very useful to integrate technology into lessons and to strengthen 21st-century skills.”

T5: "Yes. In terms of professional development and following good examples. About integrating lessons from routine teaching to project-based teaching.”

T8: “I definitely learned good methods and techniques from other colleagues I changed my teaching methods.”

T9: "I think it creates awareness in terms of professional development."

T11: “Yes, it had a positive effect. I had the chance to try project-based teaching and many other methods like this, and learning became more fun and meaningful.”

T13: “My interest in innovative methods and different cultures has increased. I started using different methods in my lessons.”

T15: "Yes, I became a more innovative teacher."

It is remarkable that a teacher stated that eTwinning is the turning point of her professional life.

T6: "The turning point of my professional life was eTwinning. I think it is a window opening to the 21st century. After meeting this platform, I understood better that I had to keep up with the developing technology and develop my students in this way. I think that eTwinning is a never-ending learning journey and becomes ordinary when a teacher stops learning."

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to determine the purposes of teachers for using the eTwinning platform and to reveal the effects of the platform on teachers. As a result of the analysis of the interviews, four themes were determined. Firstly, the purposes of teachers for using eTwinning projects were examined. As a result of the analysis of the data obtained in this context, it was seen that all the teachers participating in the study use the platform for professional development. This result is similar to the results of previous studies (Akıncı, 2018; Crişan, 2013; Gülnar & Yatağan, 2014; Velea, 2012). In his study, Akıncı (2018) concluded that the integration of the teaching process with technology in the eTwinning application has great contributions to the professional development of the teacher. Also, this result supports Bacigalipo and Cachia's (2011) opinion that eTwinning is worth investing in for professional development in Europe. All participants also stated that they use the eTwinning platform to make the learning-teaching process more effective. Akdemir (2017) stated that eTwinning projects provide valuable opportunities for both teachers and students in terms of improving the teaching process. Therefore, the results of the two studies were compatible. Besides, it was seen that all but two of the participants used the platform for building projects and collaboration-exchange of ideas. Similar to this result, Cachia, Ferrari, Ala-Mutka and Punie (2010) stated that eTwinning contributes to the learning of teachers from different nations and provides an opportunity for collaboration. Crişan (2013) stated that the main reason of teachers for using the eTwinning portal is to create and work on educational projects and inferred that the national and European quality label awards given to eTwinning projects motivate teachers. So, it is believed that teachers use the platform to build projects. Apart from these, the majority of the participants stated that they use the platform to participate in online courses. eTwinning offers teachers various learning activities, online seminars and professional development workshops. With these activities, teachers constantly gain new knowledge and tools. Besides, teachers can find project partners in a safe online environment. Similar to our opinion, half of the participant teachers stated that they use the platform to find partners for Erasmus projects. In Erasmus projects, teachers can work together with teachers they worked with and trusted in eTwinning projects. Contrary to this result, a very few number of the teachers who participated in the work of Crişan (2013) stated that they used the platform to find Erasmus project partners. In our study, some teachers stated that they use the platform because it is beneficial for their students. It was also seen in the literature that eTwinning projects offer a wide range of benefits for students (Akdemir, 2017; Akıncı, 2018; Αλεξίου, 2019; Yılmaz & Altun Yılmaz, 2012). Teachers stated that projects provide many benefits to their students such as producing innovative content, providing a sense of belonging to the school, and introducing different teaching methods.

Secondly, the effects of the eTwinning platform on the personal development of teachers were examined. All of the teachers shared the opinion that the platform positively affected their personal development. This result is similar to the study results of Vuorikari, Gilleran and Scimeca (2011). The majority of participants stated that the platform improved their self-confidence, and half stated that it also improved their communication skills. Teachers can improve themselves with the help of the unique opportunities offered by the eTwinning platform to teachers. In this way, it is believed that their self-confidence has improved. Also, the projects allow teachers to improve their communication skills and exchange ideas with their colleagues. Teachers enrolled in the eTwinning platform are constantly interacting not only through the platform, but also through eTwinning groups set up in various social media websites. Also, the teachers stated that the platform improved their feelings of solidarity and they were happy to share their knowledge with their colleagues. Similarly, Cachia and Punie (2012) discovered that eTwinning teachers were open and willing to cooperate with their colleagues in using information and communication technologies. Along with these, several teachers stated that the platform contributed to their personal development in terms of the sense of belonging to

the community, productivity, and leadership-respectability. The eTwinning platform is a very large community, and there are always some teachers and coordinators who can be helpful for the others. It was thought that teachers' sense of belonging to the community improved in this way. Similar to this result, teachers in Crişan's (2013) study stated that the eTwinning platform strengthens the sense of belonging to a professional community. Besides, eTwinning is a dynamic platform with projects and never-ending professional development activities and encourages teachers to productivity. Some teachers stated that the platform is beneficial for their personal development by developing foreign language skills. eTwinning offers teachers the opportunity to do international projects as well as national projects. Thus, teachers can make projects with their colleagues from different countries and improve their foreign language skills. This result is similar to Manfredini's (2007) opinion. It is also similar to various study results in the literature (Akdemir, 2017; Gülnar & Yatağan, 2014). Similarly, Gülnar and Yatağan (2014) stated that the eTwinning platform contributed to teachers in developing their foreign language practice.

Thirdly, the effects of the eTwinning platform on the professional development of teachers were examined. All of the teachers shared the opinion that the platform positively affected their professional development. This result is similar to Duncan Howell's (2010) study which concluded that online learning environments provide valuable opportunities for teachers' professional development. The majority of teachers who participated in the study stated that the platform contributed significantly to their technology and pedagogy knowledge. The teachers stated that the projects increased their technology knowledge, they learned about the web 2.0 tools and they improved significantly in terms of pedagogy by integrating the knowledge they learned into their lessons. Also, it was seen that they learned new teaching methods such as project-based learning, steam, fcl. This result is similar to the study results of Holmes (2013), Crişan (2013), Gülnar and Yatağan (2014) and Akıncı (2018). The participants also stated that the national and international projects provided acculturation. This is quite obvious. Because the projects bring together teachers from different schools, cities and countries. In the first stage of the projects, school and city promotion videos are prepared, thus enabling students to get to know different cultures. Besides, projects are also carried out to promote cultural differences. The results revealing that eTwinning provides cultural interaction are also seen in the literature review (Akdemir, 2017; Camilleri, 2016; Manfredini, 2007; Yılmaz & Altun Yılmaz, 2012). Also, as in personal development, teachers stated that the platform also positively affected their professional development by improving their foreign language skills.

Finally, the effects of the eTwinning platform on perspectives of teachers on the profession were examined. It was seen that all of the teachers thought that the platform positively affected their perspectives on the profession. It was found out that the platform affected the perspectives of teachers on the profession in terms of pedagogy, technology, professional development, innovative perspective and lifetime learning. It is remarkable that a teacher stated that eTwinning is the turning point of her professional life. Thanks to eTwinning projects and learning activities on the platform, teachers gain pedagogy and technology knowledge and innovative perspectives. This contributes greatly to their professional development and the learning journey of teachers never ends.

As a result, it is obvious that the eTwinning platform is very useful for teachers. The platform is so effective that it contributes to the professional and personal development of teachers, and even changes their perspective on the profession. In line with the results given in the study, the following suggestions can be made:

- Primarily, it is considered important that all teachers are aware of the platform. Teachers should be informed about the platform and dissemination efforts should be considered important.
- Professional development activities on the platform can be increased and edited according to the needs of teachers.
- Studies can be carried out to increase eTwinning awareness at the university level as well by collaborating with universities. There are universities in Turkey that have started to operate in this regard, although their numbers are very few. It is thought that it would be appropriate to expand the use of the platform in all universities.

- As a result of the literature review, it was seen that there are very few studies on eTwinning. Therefore, it is very important to increase the number of the studies. In this context;
 - ◆ Student opinions about the platform can be examined.
 - ◆ The benefits of the platform for students can be examined.
 - ◆ The disadvantages of the platform can be examined.
 - ◆ Particularly, teachers and student opinions on eTwinning projects, and the advantages and disadvantages of projects can be examined.

This study is limited to the results obtained from the opinions of only 15 teachers. However, it is thought that the study will fill an important gap in the literature and provide guidance for future studies on the subject.

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