Education Quarterly Reviews

Positive Thinking Schools: Projects From Teachers

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Abstract

This study was carried out within the scope of the Art of Happiness, Positive Thinking, and Subjective Well-Being Project. Within the scope of the project, 8-session pre-training was provided to teachers to inform them on the scope of positive thinking and in order to support their subjective well-being. Within the scope of positive thinking applications at schools, which formed the second stage of the project, teachers developed and applied their own projects at their schools. In the study, teachers' views on the scope of the projects they applied at schools and the project application process were analyzed. As the study design, the case study design was applied. The study group consisted of 28 voluntary teachers who received positive thinking training in the first stage of the project and were entitled to get a certificate of achievement. Within the scope of the study, teachers planned their projects and reported on the process. In addition, they kept researcher diaries regarding their applications and noted down their observations. In the research process, 28 teachers at 15 different schools developed and applied 17 different projects. The teachers' views were analyzed in the context of interviews, reports, and diaries. In the study, teachers' observations and evaluations regarding positive thinking education realized in the COVID-19 process were discussed.

Keywords: Positive Thinking, Positive Schools, Education, Projects, COVID-19

Introduction

Positive thinking is a thinking style that emphasizes what is positive and aims at producing constructive solutions rather than being problem-oriented. In this style of thinking, the difficulties and adversities experienced in life are not ignored, but suggestions for solutions to these problems that will increase the quality of life are tried to be developed. It is aimed to keep one's moral high by focusing on positive situations in life, noticing what one already possesses, and based on this, producing constructive solutions to adversities. An individual's perspective of events stands as the most important element that shapes his/her life (Lyubomirsky, 2001).

Researchers emphasize that thinking style can be learned through lives in the surroundings and that this can

positively affect an individual's behaviors and perspective of life (Schwardz & Begley,2002; Friedrickson,2010; Gür,2018; Seligman,2012; Gür,2021). It has been stated in studies conducted that an individual learns from his/her surroundings to think in a negative way, to be pessimistic, and to develop life patterns for adopting a lifestyle-oriented towards developing addictions, but that s/he can also learn to think positively, to look at events from different perspectives, and to develop life patterns aimed at adopting a lifestyle-oriented towards improving the self and being able to overcome adversities more easily (Gür,2018; Siegel & Bryson, 2018; Doidge, 2019; Young et al., 2019; Schweizer et al., 2020). Many research that emphasizes the positive thinking approach points out the importance of positive thinking applications at schools (Jarrar,2013; Wang et al., 2017; Malloy et al., 2018; Roman, 2018).

Background of the Study

This study was planned on the basis of the findings of a study that was previously conducted. Based on the study findings obtained from the literature that indicate the negative effects of the COVID-19 process on students' emotional status (Susilawati, & Supriyatno, 2020; Zacoletti et al.,2020; Chaturvedi et al., 2021), a small-scale qualitative study carried out through face-to-face interviews with 15 parents was conducted. The parents were accessed through snowball sampling method, the voluntary parents were asked questions during online interviews held, and audio recording was made. In the study, the parents were asked about the effects of the COVID-19 process on their children and their educational process as well as about their expectations in this context. The parents included 9 mothers and 6 fathers, and 5 parents had children going to primary school, 5 parents' children were attending secondary school, and 5 parents' children were high school students. The questions were prepared as semi-structured questions, and expert opinion was obtained. The parents' responses were confirmed by presenting them to the parents in written form, coding was performed by the researchers separately, and it was determined that the codes were consistent. Content analysis was performed for the parents' responses. When the parents' responses were evaluated, it was seen that their children's lives were mostly focused on playing computer games, the children moved away from active life and became passive, they could not improve themselves, and that they became more sensitive and angry. The parents indicated that their children became week in academic terms, their social skills weakened, and they could not participate in social activities; the parents also expressed that they would support their children's participation in activities in which they could feel valuable and improve their communication/interaction skills. The table including the parents' responses is presented below:

Table 1: Parents' comments on the effects of the COVID-19 process on their children and their educational process, and their expectations in this regard

Theme	Sub-themes	Codes
Parents' Views	The effects of the COVID-19 process on their children's general situation	Spending too much time playing computer games Passive lifestyle Being unable to improve themselves Being more emotionally fragile and sensitive Losing temper easily - tension
	The effects on children's educational process	Being academically weak/inadequate Uncertainties in the educational process causing anxiety Social skills becoming weak Withdrawing from/cutting ties with social life
	Expectations	Projects/studies that children can participate in and that support them Children feeling themselves valuable Different choices other than games that will attract the attention of children Studies by which they can be productive and socialize in the online environment despite the COVID-19 process

Based on these findings, it was considered that carrying out a study that would produce projects at schools in the context of positive thinking would meet the need in this regard. Accordingly, (due to the COVID-19 pandemic conditions) online interviews (over Zoom) were held with 10 teachers who worked in Nicosia in Northern Cyprus and who volunteered to participate in the study, and they were informed that they would first receive training and then develop projects at schools. Also, they were asked their opinion about the project on positive thinking. All teachers, 3 of whom were working at primary schools, 3 working in secondary schools, and 4 working at high schools, stated that such a project was needed and that they wanted to take part in this project, which they thought was needed by both themselves and the students. The table including the teachers' views is presented below:

Table 2: Teachers' Views on Positive Thinking Applications in the COVID-19 Process

Theme	Sub-themes	Codes
Teachers' Views	Perspectives on the project process in the context of positive thinking	There is a need for such studies in the COVID-19 process
		Such studies are always needed
		It may contribute to teachers in terms of their own personal development
		It may contribute to the students' development

Both findings in the literature and preliminary findings obtained prior to the study pointed to the importance of a project in the context of positive thinking. In this context, the teacher training stage of "The Art of Happiness: Positive Thinking, and Subjective Well-Being Project" was planned.

The Art of Happiness: Positive Thinking, and Subjective Well-Being Project is a psycho-educational project realized as mother and teacher training, which was funded by Northern Cyprus Prime Ministry Fight Against Drugs Committee with UMK202102 number and carried out with the cooperation of Northern Cyprus Prime Ministry Fight Against Drugs Committee, Northern Cyprus (NC)National Education and Culture Ministry Common Services Department, and Cyprus International University. The main aim of the study is to contribute to the well-being of mothers, teachers, and students through positive thinking education. The project was supported by Nicosia Turkish Municipality, Kyrenia Municipality, Değirmenlik Municipality, and Gonyeli Municipality in terms of public announcement of the project, and NC Turkcell and Elite hospital financially sponsored the project. Within the scope of the project, 392 teachers and 76 mothers received positive thinking and subjective well-being education in the 2020-2021 academic year. Teacher training was provided to all teachers in general in the fall semester, and in the spring semester, the education continued in four different groups as pre-school teachers, guidance and psychological counseling teachers, classroom teachers, and branch teachers-school administrators. In this context, teachers carried out application studies at schools. A different researcher for each group assumed the leadership of the group. Activities were done with other groups, and an activity booklet preparation process was carried out. Branch teachers-school administrators group designed projects and applied them at their schools. Researcher 1 assumed the leadership of the group. The study here involves the applications of the branch teachers-school administrators group.

The fall semester education process carried out in the first stage of the project consisted of 8 sessions. In this process, it was aimed to explain to the teachers the scope of positive thinking and subjective well-being and to support the teachers' subjective well-being individually. The sessions were planned to be once a week for 60 minutes. Following the fall semester education, an achievement exam was held, and successful teachers were granted certificates of achievement by TRNC National Education and Culture Ministry. The teachers who succeeded in the exam were entitled to apply for the studies within the scope of "positive thinking applications" continuing in the spring semester.

60 teachers applied for the branch teachers group studies (the total number of branch teachers-school administrators was 117 at the initial stages), and due to the prolonged COVID-19 process and continuation of interruption of education at schools in contrast to the expectations that the pandemic would end by the spring semester, the project studies at schools were planned to be in the form of distance education. 32 teachers withdrew from the study stating that they would not be able to carry out the project application process with their students online. The second stage studies were conducted with 28 branch teachers and school administrators.

In the second stage of the project in the spring semester, education process on positive thinking studies at schools was carried out with branch teachers and school administrators, and meetings were held on project applications that could be conducted at schools. The teachers developed their own projects in order to apply them at their schools. A 9-hour education program was provided to the teachers, and 5 meetings were held. As the education process was continued in the form of distance education at schools due to the pandemic, education sessions and meetings were held online over Zoom software. Along the process, information about positive thinking applications at schools, the issues that should be considered while working with students, project writing stages, and reporting was provided. The teachers independently decided with their students about the content and type of the projects on positive thinking. In this context, they planned their projects and reported on the process. With regard to the project applications carried out at schools with the teachers, answers to the following questions were sought within the scope of the study:
- What kind of projects did the teachers develop in the context of positive thinking?
- How did the teachers evaluate the project application process at schools?

Method

Study Group:

The study group consisted of 28 voluntary teachers who received education in the fall semester and were granted a certificate of achievement. The table including information about the teachers' branches, genders, projects and grade levels is presented below.

Table 3: Information about the teachers' branches, genders, projects, and grade levels

Teacher No.	Project Name	Gender	Branch /Field	Grade Level
1	Helping Stray Animals Project	Female	Information and Communication Technologies	6th Grade
2	Helping Stray Animals Project	Female	Information and Communication Technologies	6th Grade
3	Helping Stray Animals Project	Male	Turkish	6th Grade
4	Happiness is in My Hands	Female	Visual Arts	4th grade
5	Happiness is in My Hands	Female	Visual Arts	4th grade
6	I Am Succeeding	Male	GPC	12th Grade
7	I Am Succeeding	Male	Administrative Staff	12th Grade
8	I Am Succeeding	Male	Administrative Staff	12th Grade
9	I Am Succeeding	Male	Metal Technologies	12th Grade
10	I Am	Female	Chemistry	12th Grade

11	Succeeding People Who Shaped History	Female	History	10th Grade
12	The Child Seeking Happiness	Female	Turkish Language and Literature	6th Grade
13	The Child Seeking Happiness	Female	Visual Arts	6th Grade
14	The Child Seeking Happiness	Male	Administrative Staff	6th Grade
15	The Child Seeking Happiness	Female	Administrative Staff	6th Grade
16	Travel to My World Through Art	Female	Visual Arts	8th grade
17	Science in the Digitalizing World	Male	Science and Technology	6th/8th grade
18	Positive Thinking	Female	Turkish Language and Literature	11th grade
19	The Art of Music and Happiness	Female	Music	1st- 5th grade
20	Happiness Begins at Home	Male	Administrative Staff	All secondary school grade levels
21	Happy Snacks with Vegetables	Female	Science and Technology	8th Grades
22	A Breeze of Happiness in the Nature	Female	Visual Arts	1st and 2nd grades
23	Happy Little Scouts	Female	English - Scouting Club	5th Grade
24	Make a Wish and Be Happy	Female	Mathematics	6th Grade
25	Make a Wish and Be Happy	Female	Music	6th Grade
26	Happiness with Songs	Female	Music	5th Grade
27	The Art of Happiness	Female	Turkish Language and Literature	10th Grade
28	Am I Aware?	Female	Visual Arts	6th Grade

When the distribution of the teachers according to their genders is examined, it is seen that 20 teachers were female, and 8 teachers were male. Considering their branches, it is seen that 2 teachers were from the field of information and communication technologies, 1 teacher from Turkish, 6 teachers from visual arts, 1 teacher from guidance and psychological counseling, 5 teachers from the administrative staff, 1 teacher from metal technologies, 1 teacher from chemistry, 1 from history, 3 from Turkish Language and Literature, 2 from science and technology, 3 from music, 1 from English, and 1 from mathematics. The grade levels of the teachers ranged from 1st grade to 12th grade.

Study Design:

Case study design was chosen as the study design. Case study involves investigating a current context or a situation. A case study is a type of qualitative research in which detailed in-depth data are collected about multiple bounded systems or cases within a current bounded system, case, or a certain time period through

multiple information sources such as observations, interviews, and reports, and a case description is put forth (Bal, 2016). Within the scope of the study, teachers planned their projects and reported on the process. In addition, they kept researcher diaries regarding their applications and noted down their observations; at the end of the semester, researcher 1 held online interviews with the teachers on an individual basis (about 30 minutes), and the teachers expressed their observations and experiences related to the process.

Study Process:

With regard to the project applications at schools, during the meetings held with the teachers once every two weeks, the teachers' views on the process and information about the progress of their projects were taken. Thus, effective application of the projects at schools was aimed. The teachers wrote their projects by steps. First, they designed their projects, and then ideas were exchanged about the appropriateness of the projects for application. After that, corrections were made, the stages of the projects were indicated as dates, headings, and contents, and finally, information about outcomes and observations were added to the reports. The projects were planned so as to continue for at least 8 weeks. The teachers kept diaries about their applications, and at the end of the process, they had evaluation interviews through online interviews. In the evaluation interviews, the questions were not structured, but only questions were asked in order to encourage the participants to share their views and experiences, and the questions were shaped according to the progress of the interviews.

Ethical Procedures:

Prior to participation in the projects, the teachers were sent clarifying consent forms. Prior to the research, required permissions were obtained from NC Ministry of Education and Culture. Within the scope of the Art of Happiness: Positive Thinking and Subjective Well-Being Project, permission was taken from Cyprus International University Ethics Committee dated 19/04/2021 and numbered 100-3378. The names of the participants were not disclosed as per ethical procedures, and they were coded with numbers. Participation in the study was on a voluntary basis. The teachers applied their projects with voluntary students by taking permissions from their schools and parents. The names of the students were not included in the study, but only project application process was evaluated.

Analysis of the Data :

In the study process, the data obtained through interviews, diaries and reports were subjected to content analysis. As a result of the analyses, tables that showed themes, sub-themes, and codes were created, and sample explanations related to teachers' views were presented. Codes were evaluated and compared by the researchers independently from each other, and they were found to be consistent. For the two categories which displayed differences under the sub-theme of evaluations, interviews were held with the researchers, and it was decided to evaluate them under the other existing codes instead of adding new codes. The teachers' responses and groupings related to project contents were sent to them in written form and were confirmed by the teachers.

Findings

Within the scope of the study, 28 teachers at 15 different schools developed and applied 17 different projects. Some teachers working at the same school applied their projects in cooperation. The findings related to the projects developed by the teachers in the context of positive thinking and their evaluations regarding project application process at schools are presented below.

Projects developed by the teachers in the context of positive thinking

Information about the developed projects is given in Table 4.

Table 4: General information about the developed projects

Project No.	Project Name	Grade Level	Number of Students	Field	Scope	Application type
1	Helping Stray Animals Project	6th Grade	31	Technology	Environmental Awareness	General group
2	Happiness is in My Hands	4th grade	15	Visual Arts	Communication - Interaction	General Group
3	I Am Succeeding	12th Grade	40	Guidance	Motivation (Exam Motivation - YKS)	General Group
4	People Who Shaped History	10th Grade	7	History	Motivation	Small Group
5	The Child Seeking Happiness	6th Grade	34	Turkish	Competition (Story/Tale Writing)	General Group / Competition
6	Travel to My World Through Art	8th grade	10	Visual Arts	Communication - Interaction	Small Group
7	Science in the Digitalizing World	6th Grade 8th grade	24 30	Technology	Motivation (making education more fun by combining positive thinking with technology)	General Group
8	Positive Thinking	11th grade	14	Literature	Motivation	General Group
9	The Art of Music and Happiness	1st- 5th grade		Music	Motivation	General Group
10	Happiness Begins at Home	All secondary school grade levels	150-200	Game	Communication - Interaction (Promoting child-parent communication-interaction)	General Group - parent work
11	Happy Snacks with Vegetables	8th Grades	20	Science	Healthy life	Studies in small groups
12	A Breeze of Happiness in the Nature	1st and 2nd grades	50	Visual Arts	Awareness of nature and environment	General group
13	Happy Little Scouts	5th Grade	15	Scouting	Awareness of nature and environment - values	General group
14	Make a Wish and Be Happy	6th Grade	20	Turkish and Visual Arts	Communication - Interaction	General Group
15	Happiness with Songs	4th and 5th Grades	20	Music	Communication - Interaction	General Group
16	The Art of Happiness	10th Grade	10	Literature	Motivation	General Group
17	Am I Aware?	6th Grade	20	Visual Arts	Values education	General Group

As can be seen in Table 4, 17 projects were carried out in the fields of Turkish, visual arts, guidance and counselling, technology, science, music, literature, scouting, games, and history at 1st-12th grade levels. While the projects were applied as general group studies, 3 projects were designed as small group studies. One project

was developed for parents, and the others were applied to the students. It was seen that the projects covered environmental awareness, communication-interaction, motivation, healthy life, and values education.

Figure 1: Projects according to their coverage

When the projects are examined in terms of their scope, it can be stated that they were mostly motivation focused projects, which were followed by communication-interaction and environmental awareness projects. There were also projects developed for competition, values education, and healthy life. The teachers developed projects in line with their branches and areas of interest.

Motivation projects aim at promoting students' participation in education process and motivating them. Some statements describing these projects are as follows:

"We observed that the students' motivation decreased in the pandemic process. Being at home and not being at school with their friends somewhat demoralized them. Adapting to the online process and being in the period of exam preparation at the same time may have negatively affected them. Here, we tried to motivate them, to encourage them, to give the message that we were together despite the distance between us, to encourage them to proceed by setting targets together, to give positive messages, and to make them feel that we were with them."

"Students are quickly distracted during online education, and they get bored. They sit passively in front of the computer. Here, I thought about how I could get them involved in the process, albeit online. A student who is active, enjoys the class, is happy to be there, and is encouraged to participate in the lesson and has high motivation for learning. I aimed to make education more fun by integrating positive thinking with technology. I actually saw that motivation was very important in order to get the student involved."

Communication-interaction projects are projects aimed at encouraging students to cooperate and do group work and promoting their communication skills. In this context, a description of a teacher is presented below:

"Sometimes, I find the opportunity to talk with the parents, albeit on the phone. They tell me: 'We cannot know what to do. These kids are always in front of the computer, playing games. We get angry and take away their computer, but then there is no other alternative; they switch to mobile phones or television. They say 'Should we just watch the walls aimlessly? 'We have not been able to offer an alternative for a long time now. Their communication style with their friends has been online games. I think it is necessary for students to experience that they could communicate with each other in different ways, even in the lockdown period, and that they could do things together."

"Sharing our thoughts, making constructive suggestions for each other, sharing the products on the screen even if we have prepared them at home and organize an online exhibition by bringing them together, showing efforts in the process, realizing that we are a whole as a class; these are all important, and the student's feeling that s/he is not alone and acting with a group consciousness make his/her participation more effective."

Within the scope of environmental awareness projects, studies related to nature, environment, and animals were

carried out. In the meantime, even though it was not possible to be in the nature, studies aimed at developing awareness were conducted.

"For scouting, setting camps in the nature and doing studies in the nature is important. We set our tents at home due to the pandemic process, we did observations in our backyard, and we shared things with each other online." In the competition project, the students participated in the competition by writing stories within the scope of "The Child Seeking Happiness."

"The purpose of this project is to make the students think about the concept of happiness, notice situations and/or events that make themselves and others happy, and to enable them to realize themselves. While entering into the process of participation in the competition by producing a product, they will also realize the importance of the process and improve themselves in the process. The competition will contribute to the students in terms of making efforts to produce higher quality products and improving themselves."

Regarding healthy life, the following description was made:

"Children consume unhealthy food in front of the screen. This project will both make them conscious and guide them towards doing something in this regard."

Regarding the values education, explanations made are as follows:

"In the first stage of the project, I almost remembered the values in education in my childhood. Love, respect, elegance, social communication, ... These are important values. I wanted to highlight such values. It is important that our children be raised with these values."

The teachers' evaluations with regard to project application process at schools

In Table 5, the teachers' views on project applications are presented. Under the views theme, the sub-themes of expectations, difficulties experienced, and evaluations emerged.

Table 5: Teachers' Views on Project Applications

Theme	Sub-themes	Codes
Views	Expectations	Shaping the lives of the students Positive feelings related to the education process Promoting social sensitivity
	Difficulties experienced	Technological problems Student participation problems Lack of motivation created by uncertainty
	Evaluations	Positive feedback regarding the students Professional satisfaction of the teacher

Expectations

When the sub-theme of teachers' expectations of the projects they developed under the theme of their views on project applications was examined, the codes of shaping the lives of the students, positive feelings related to the education process, and promoting social sensitivity emerged.

The code of shaping the lives of the students was the expectation that was expressed the most. Descriptions related to the code are as follows:

In the People Who Shaped History Project, the aim is to analyze how the perspectives and thoughts of the leaders who led the historical events that influenced the whole world and societies affected these events and

what the consequences were, and thus to create an awareness in the students about strong personality characteristics and the power of positive thinking. Previously, when we gave assignments to the students, we used to emphasize mostly the chronological order of the events, causes-effects, and the names and lives of the people who influenced these events. However, with this education, the students will see how important the strong personality characteristics of the people who made these event happen were, and they will come to understand that if one is fighting for a rightful cause, the desired result could be achieved with faith and positive thinking, no matter how long it would take. In this project process, my expectation is that based on the historical figures discussed, the students will see how strong personality characteristics and positive thinking affect the events in a positive direction, they will notice their own strong personality characteristics, and by understanding the importance of the power of positive thinking, they will gain an awareness in terms of applying this in their own lives."

"I will try to apply my project titled Positive Thinking on 11th-grade child development class. I wish I could access many more students. I shaped my project based on the personality powers that I learned in the positive thinking education I had previously received. The texts that I will use give the students the message that they should see life from a positive perspective. Our aim here is to shed light on the question 'how can we look at life and ourselves positively?', and to change our perspective by seeing what is missing in ourselves."

"The scout camp, which could not be organized for a long time due to the pandemic, was the activity that the scouts liked the most and became happy. For this reason, little scouts will set a scout camp in their homes with their resources. Through the online class applications, the values that should be gained by the scouts will be provided in an order, and activities regarding these values will be organized. Activities such as readings books as a family, doing a kindness, and handcraft will be carried out. Online animations will be watched and discussed together, online games that will promote the values will be recommended to children, songs will be sung, and scouting yells will be performed. Then, children will be asked to prepare banners. All of these activities will be published on the school's website. My main aim in the Happy Little Scouts Project is to develop the students' imagination and creativity, and to ensure that they become curious, productive, and self-confident individuals through various activities, and to help them to adapt to life and be happy. The adversities that have emerged in recent times have led to environmental pollution, distrust among people, and increased violence in society. My expectation from this project is to get my students to acquire basic human values and virtues. Thus, I believe that happy individuals who are recognized by society will be raised."

Sample descriptions regarding positive feelings related to the education process are presented below:

"Applications, methods, and techniques continuously used may create a passive attitude in students. With the Science in the Digitalizing World Project, I aimed to make the content of education more fun through different application programs and to contribute to students in terms of developing researcher identity, curiosity, attention, interest, and skills. My main expectations from the project are education and learning through fun, use of technology in education, and positive feelings for education."

"The Child Seeking Happiness Project is a competition project. In the project process, students are expected to produce products appropriate for the process, their skills, and the rules, to become happy to be part of the process, and to understand that the process is at least as important as the result and that learning is as precious as winning the competition."

Statements regarding promoting social sensitivity code are presented below:

"We determined the content of the Helping Stray Animals Project together with our students. While we were discussing what kind of project we should do, the students expressed that they wanted to do something for stray animals. Accordingly, as their teachers, we directed them to work in line with this project. We asked our students to take photos of stray animals in their neighborhood, to create banners in this regard, and to include both photos and slogans in the banners. In addition, we asked and supported them to prepare an online exhibition to display all the work done. Our aim in the 'Helping Stray Animals Project' is to create awareness in society

through the virtual exhibition we will organize. It is important for us to create an awareness, no matter how small it is, in the society with our students with this project. We aimed to contribute to ensuring that society is more sensitive to the stray animals in their surroundings."
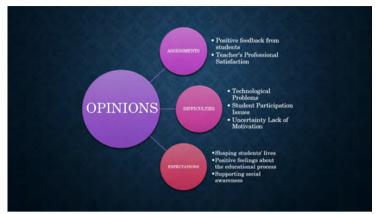

Figure 2: Teachers' Views on Project Applications

Difficulties experienced

Under the theme of difficulties experienced, the codes of technological problems, student participation problems, and lack of motivation created by uncertainties emerged. Some sample explanations related to these codes are as follows:

"Some of our parents experience difficulties with the Internet. There is only one computer at home, and it is used by the oldest child of the family. The younger children have access through their parents' mobile phones when they arrive back from work. This leads to the interruption of education." (Technological problems)

"The pandemic process has made the online education process inevitable. We had to apply the projects online due to the process. The Internet may pose problems for some students. For example, connection is frequently lost, and the student cannot access the system. If the child is too young, the parents have to support them for online education, but some parents cannot even solve the slightest problems that may occur. Then, the student cannot participate in education on that day. I think parents should receive training on online issues and they should be supported in this regard." (Technological problems)

"The lessons being online and lasting 30 minutes due to the pandemic process has been a restricting factor in terms of applications. The online process negatively affects project applications. Therefore, I did the applications in the last lesson hours on Fridays in order for the lessons not to be interrupted ." (Technological problems)

" Some parents believe that online lessons are not efficient. They may not care whether their children take part in the lesson or not. Some say that their mental health is not good, and that the pandemic process tired them as well. This, of course, negatively affects the participation of the students in lessons. The same situation is true for all kinds of studies done." (Student participation problems)

"There are many students who could not adapt to the online process. Even though they participate, they turn off the screen and the sound. You never know if they are there or not, whether they are playing games, and what they are doing. You cannot tell whether they are participating or not. It was not always possible to understand what the students were doing when itwass not a school environment. And this makes the education process rather difficult. For this reason, if there are, say, 30 students in the class, that means you aremakingg the applications efficiently with the participation of 10-15 students. This is because it is important in terms of making evaluations to see student participation, to get feedback, and for them to participate in the studies voluntarily." (Student participation problems)

"Everyone lacks motivation. Their reasoning is 'when the pandemic is over, then we will do.' Uncertainty has demotivated many individuals. This is something that I observe in teachers, students, and parents. In this sense, I believe such projects may make positive contributions. To be honest, this was the reason why I emphasized motivation in my project. Still, it was not possible for me to involve all my students in the process and to bring them together. Do you know why? Because I did not have the opportunity the explain the project to all of them. That would have been easier in the face-to-face process. Despite everything, we still went through a very efficient process." (Lack of motivation created by uncertainty)

The teachers' evaluations with regard to project process

In the context of the teachers' evaluations regarding the project process, the codes of positive feedback regarding the students, and teacher's professional satisfaction were obtained.

Figure 3: Teachers' evaluations regarding the project process

Some sample explanations related to the teachers' evaluations regarding the project process are presented below:
"I decided to determine the students who will participate in the project on a voluntary basis as the education process was online. It was nice to see that my students were voluntary and enthusiastic and that they turned in their assignments before the due date. Another point that attracted my attention was the historical events and figures they chose, such as, The Conquest of Cyprus-Selim II, Malazgirt Battle-Alparslan, Turkish National Struggle in Cyprus-Dr. Fazil Kucuk. The positive aspects of the project were that the students voluntarily and enthusiastically investigated the leaders and historical figures who shaped history, discovered their powerful sides and noticed the effect of positive thinking on events (rightful struggles). It was important that I myself realized how important the power of positive thinking with the education I received and I got my students to notice this as well as a result of this project. Our students, who were under great stress and lost their hopes due to the pandemic, expressed as a result of the project that they understood the importance of positive thinking, and that they would apply it in their lives, which made me very happy". (Positive feedback regarding the students)

"I believed that an awareness would develop in my students. And it actually happened that way. We, as human beings, are actually aware of everything. What we need is only to be encouraged by others and to be reminded that the light of hope is always inside us and that it will never fade away. I found the opportunity to apply the study in the last lessons on Fridays. I and my students turned on our screens, and I shared the texts with them in a casual chat manner. My students were curious about what I would share every Friday. In this process, I observed that my students had different ideas as they were raised in very different environments. From time to time, I felt very sad. They had many troubles in terms of their family lives, financial difficulties, etc. These must have naturally affected my students' perspectives of life negatively. Along with the process, they understood the importance of positive thinking in the face of events, and that they should value themselves. These project process applications formed a different bond between me and my students. We still share things in the last lessons on Fridays. It has turned into a motivation lesson for them." (Positive feedback regarding the students)

"The project had the students feel the value of technology in a positive way in the cooperation process between the students and the teacher. Apart from taking a picture of a child using a technological device, using earphones for recording the songs for the process and audio recording programs of mobile phones to create music pieces, and using electronic communication devices in delivering all these to the teacher, using different types of clips and programs in order to bring all these together can be considered an important value in terms of presenting an important development to the society and the people who perform this job as a role model. It was observed that

the students felt being valued by their parents and the teacher through concrete examples in this context, and the teacher's attitude with regard to valuing each other even if we cannot see each other positively motivated the students and the parents in terms of encouraging the students and the parents. While the students saw each other in the same frame, they made positive comments about the change and development in themselves." (Positive feedback regarding the students)

"We observed that the parent-child relationship improved through games. In the interviews we held with the parents, they mentioned that they got to know their children more closely, they spent more quality time, and a positive atmosphere was formed in their homes. The quality time spent at home with the child positively affects both the child's and the parent's quality of life. I can comfortably say these based on both the feedback I received from the teachers and the parents and my own observations. Another result that I observed in this project was that the parents with less economic power spared more time and showed more effort for the studies aimed at spending quality time at home through games." (Positive feedback regarding the students)

"It was observed in the process that the children gave positive feedback about different education methods used and that they participated in the lesson till the end without losing their motivation. It was noticed that they looked forward to the next lesson in curiosity about the subject to be applied. We observed that although we were in a stressful education process in the pandemic period, in the weeks we applied this project, our students participated in the lessons as if we had never experienced the pandemic and contributed to the project with high motivation ignoring all adversities." (Positive feedback regarding the students)

"I observed that my students were excited about what they would do in the project process, that they became happy with the feeling of achieving a task when they saw the outcome as a result of the project, and that they felt valuable... I think especially preparing the project in the COVID-19 pandemic process when they were away from their schools, isolated at home, and away from their friends and social environments turned their negative feelings into positive ones to a certain degree, provided them with some fun, enabled them to socialize at a certain level, and changed their perspectives of this process. I believe it has been a productive, supportive, and educating process for them." (Positive feedback regarding the students)

"While they were writing their stories about happiness, they revealed the events that made or could make them unhappy. They started the writing journey by not knowing what and how to write and not being able to write anything, but they proved to be quite good in the process. Although they were hesitant about writing at the beginning as they came to their schools through a multiple-choice test and they had spent the last few years preparing for the entrance exam, but they later felt more comfortable. Seeing what they could do through the feeling of creating their own protagonists and keeping them under control enabled them to trust themselves in this respect. At the beginning of each class, we talked about their stories for a few minutes. They gave each other ideas while they were telling what they planned about their protagonists. Besides, while they were fictionalizing their stories and after they finished them, they got their families' opinions. They improved themselves in spelling rules, correct use of punctuation marks, and writing essays. Most importantly, they owned their stories a lot. They would call it 'my story' rather than just 'a story.' (Positive feedback regarding the students)

"As a teacher, it made me very happy to see that their lack of motivation which I previously observed started to disappear, they have revived again, and they started to motivate each other. Especially the last year when we would collect the fruits of the preparation process for the university entrance exam was very important for our students, and losing their motivation was a situation that would negatively affect their future careers. Developing and applying a project in this regard made a positive contribution in the preparation process. Frankly, I was satisfied as an educator who applied this project when my students developed a faith that they would succeed in the exam, set a target, studied in this direction, and shared ideas that would encourage each other." (Teacher's professional satisfaction)

"…."In this sense, I felt that when good things came together, they would become stronger, and that ı managed to integrate into education the process of utilizing the powers of humanity that brought people together even in difficult times through both student and family education. As a result, the percentage of student participation in

class increased every passing day thanks to this study. As an educator, I myself draw my energy from their happiness." (Teacher's professional satisfaction)

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the study are discussed below under the headings of the projects developed by the teachers in the context of positive thinking and their evaluations regarding project application process at schools.

Developed projects

Within the scope of the study, the teachers first received training on positive thinking in the fall semester, and then, in the spring semester, they developed their own projects and applied them at their schools. In line with the branches and duties of the teachers, 17 projects were carried out in the fields of Turkish, visual arts, guidance and counselling, technology, science, music, literature, scouting, games, and history. It was seen that the projects were mostly applied as general group projects. It is thought that the low number of the projects that proceeded as small group studies may have been related to the difficulty for the teachers to access and guide multiple small groups due to the pandemic process. Only one project for the education of the parents was carried out, and all the other projects were planned to be student-oriented.

Teachers' displaying an attitude towards carrying out the projects with students that they could have access to in a distance education process in which even student participation was difficult was seen as an acceptable justification for the project to be implementable. It was seen that the projects covered motivation, communication-interaction, environmental awareness, healthy living, and values education. 6 projects were designed as motivation projects, 5 projects as communication-interaction projects, 3 projects as nature/environmental awareness-sensitivity projects, 1 project as values education projects, 1 project as competition, and 1 project as healthy life project. Various studies conducted indicate that the COVID-19 process has affected student motivation negatively (Susilawati, & Supriyatno, 2020; Zacoletti et al.,2020; Rahman et al., 2021). According to Holzer et al. (2021), studies in which students feel competent have an impact on positive emotions. And this promotes students' motivation. Richardson and Hamlin emphasize that nature and environmental awareness support well-being and positive emotions in students. Here, it is important that students feel themselves competent and think that they make a contribution. Students' feelings of having improved themselves, relaxation, being appreciated, being productive, and making a contribution, and being in communication even at a distance increase their well-being. The teachers' observations and their statements about the scopes of the projects were in this direction. Rahman et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of communication-interaction focused and distance education focused studies in the context of supporting motivation and well-being in students in the COVID-19 process.

The teachers' views with regard to project application process at schools

As a result of the analysis of the teachers' views, the sub-themes of expectations, difficulties experienced, and evaluations emerged. The teachers' expectations of the projects they developed point to the codes of shaping the lives of the students, positive feelings related to the education process and promoting social sensitivity.

The code of shaping the lives of the students was the expectation that was expressed the most. With the perspective of shaping the lives of the students, the teachers tried to design projects that emphasized the importance of thinking positively by benefiting from the technology, contributed to the awareness of the students based on various examples, were supported with examples and descriptions that they could adapt to their lives, and made them creative and productive. In their evaluations on the code of positive emotions related to the education process, the teachers expressed views such as making the process fun, encouraging the students to participate rather than being in a passive status, using the technology in an effective way, making the students feel themselves a part of the process, and motivating them to develop products in line with their skills. With regard to the code of promoting social sensitivity, it was aimed for the students to develop sensitivity projects to raise social awareness together, and to do studies to contribute in this respect. As for the use of technology, it

was observed that teacher-student and student-student communication and interaction were kept alive with the effective use of WhatsApp groups, Google Classroom, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams programs, and thus the students actively participated in the process by providing feedback to each other and their teachers. Also, the virtual exhibitions organized together with the students at the end of the process provided feedback about the studies for both the students and the parents and enabled the students to see the project process as a whole in a concrete form.

As regards the difficulties experienced, it was seen that the teachers commented on the codes of technological problems, student participation problems, and lack of motivation created by uncertainties. Within the scope of these comments, the views expressed by the teachers were students' internet access problems, inability to produce home-based solutions in terms of technology, the pressure to follow the academic curriculum in a limited time period due to shorter lesson periods in online education, drop in the students' motivation for education in the online process, and the uncertainty in the pandemic process causing the students to postpone certain targets and lose their motivation. It is thought that the low motivation of the students due to the pandemic process prevented them from producing solution-oriented approaches in terms of technology. However, it was also observed and expressed by the teachers that the students displayed more active participation in the project process. In this context, it can be stated that students show more effort to participate in the studies which attract their interest and in which they can be more active.

In the context of the teachers' evaluations regarding the project process they carried out with their students, descriptions were made regarding the codes of positive feedback regarding the students and the teacher's professional satisfaction. The descriptions made with regard to positive feedback regarding the students were that the students explained to their teachers that they adapted what they had learned to their lives by giving examples, the teacher-students bond became stronger, the students supported communication with each other, they showed efforts to produce creative products, and they made statements about using time in a more qualified way. Within the framework of the teacher's professional satisfaction, the teachers made statements on their feeling satisfied with observing their contribution to the positive developments in students and the increase in their motivation and participation in the education process, and their feeling happy due to observing that their students were happy.

In the study they conducted, Achterberg et al. (2021) stated that both students and parents entered a negative emotional period along with the lockdown process experienced due to the pandemic and could not develop positive coping strategies and that this situation was reflected in students' behaviors, and situations such as continuously saying that they are bored (negative emotional expressions and becoming passive), drops in participation in school activities and spending more time on social media and games emerged. The COVID-19 process has negatively affected the communication and interaction between students and caused them to spend time ineffectively in a passive manner (Andrews et al., 2020). Social isolation has negative effects on the brain and behaviors. In cases where face-to-face social interaction is not possible, activities in which technology is used to support social communication and interaction may lessen these negative effects (Orben et al., 2020). Susilawati & Supriyatno (2020) emphasize that technology can be effectively used in order to promote students' participation and motivate them. Yustina et al. (2020) point out that technology-based projects that are built upon well-designed and effective student-teacher interaction promote students' motivation and participation in the COVID-19 process. Studies that will attract students' attention, support their social interaction, and make them feel competent make important contributions to them in terms of participation, motivation, and effective gains (Sitar-Taut, 2021). Pelikan et al. (2021) found that the students who felt themselves competent could better cope with the difficulties they experienced in independent learning, effective time management, motivation, task-oriented working, distance learning, and peer interaction and that they could display more solution-oriented approaches. Studies conducted present evidence that positive thinking applications positively support the students' motivation for the education process, their social communication, their effective problem solving skills when faced with difficult situations, and their self-competence (Jarrar, 2013; Wang et al., 2017; Roman, 2018).

As a result, based on the teachers' observations and comments, it can be stated that the projects designed by teachers in line with their branches in order to promote positive thinking and carried out online (technology

supported) and with effective teacher-student communication contribute to the students' social communication and motivation and that the students try to implement positive thinking in their lives.

However, the fact that 32 out 60 teachers who applied in the context of project applications at schools at the beginning of the study withdrew from the study on the grounds that they could not carry out technology-oriented studies as a result of the inability to shift to face-to-face education process was a situation encountered in the study. In this context, it can be stated that teachers are in need of being supported in terms of ensuring student participation by effectively integrating technology into education.

It is possible to claim that the developments experienced in the technological field with the advent of the information age have deeply affected educational activities just as they have influenced all aspects of life. Ignoring the problems resulting from the users (lack of equipment, lack of the Internet, being unable to solve technological problems, etc.), as a result of the pandemic process that has had impacts all over the world, it has been proven that technology can effectively assist educational activities. It can be stated that the effects of this radical change experienced along with the process will be felt more in the educational activities. Especially with the integration of new technologies (smart devices, distance learning systems, virtual reality, etc.) and the Internet into the education process, technology and education have intertwined as never before.

Based on this, it can be stated that providing the teachers with training on positive thinking in order to promote the students' effective education process and social-emotional well-being and developing and applying projects at schools that will support positive thinking will positively support the students, and the fact that technology can be used as a part of this process should also be considered. Besides, the situation of the students who experience difficulties in participating in online education should not be disregarded, and in this context, training on efficient and effective use of technology should be provided to both students and parents.

In addition, based on the fact that teachers' feeling emotionally well will reflect on their students, it can be suggested that training programs that will support their well-being in processes such as the COVID-19 process which affect the world or the society should be organized. Also, considering that the parents' emotional well-being will be an effective factor for their children, parent training programs aimed at positive thinking will also make meaningful contributions to the students.

The data of the study are limited to the observations and views of 28 teachers, and the content analysis of the 17 projects applied by these teachers at their schools. Further research is needed in this regard in order to make generalizations by obtaining more valid data.

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