

Examination of Theses Related to e-Twinning in Turkey¹

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to examine the thesis studies on eTwinning in Turkey. In the research, document review, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. The theses, which are the data source in the research, were obtained by using the National Thesis Center database on the website of YÖK (Higher Education Council). The study group of the research consists of 9 thesis studies selected by writing "eTwinning" in the scanning part of the YÖK National Thesis Center page on April 1, 2022. In the examination of thesis studies, theses; the year it was published, the university it was published in, the institute it was published in, the research method, the gender of the researchers, the title of the consultant, and the working group were taken as basis. According to the research findings, there were no thesis studies on eTwinning before 2018, the thesis studies were carried out in 2021 at the most, the theses were published by 9 different universities, the theses were published by the educational sciences institutes the most, the gender of the thesis researchers was the most female, the thesis studies were mostly associate professors. It has been determined that the study group of the theses is mostly English teachers. As a result, it can be said that although the number of teachers and projects interested in eTwinning is high in Turkey, the number of theses related to eTwinning is insufficient. In order to increase the number of academic studies related to eTwinning, it can be suggested that teachers who implement eTwinning projects should be supported and directed in this direction.

Keywords: Document review, E-learning, eTwinning.

Introduction

eTwinning is a network of online e-learning projects created by the Council of Europe in 2005 for schools in Europe. Turkey, which was included in 2009, is in the first place among the countries in the eTwinning platform in terms of the number of projects and the number of registered teachers (Basaran, Kaya, Akbas & Yalcin, 2020).

In joint projects created by at least two schools in e-Twinning projects, the subject can be any identified topic. However, the determined project topic should be suitable for the use of information and communication technologies and should be integrated with the national curricula of the schools participating in the project. It has been proven that eTwinning projects that contain these features develop the basic competences specified by the European Parliament and the Council in students (Kearney & Gras-Valazquez, 2015). Analysis of reports produced by the Central Support Service and the National Support Service in Brussels shows that participation in eTwinning projects has many benefits for both students and teachers (Carpenter & Tanner 2013).

The eTwinning platform aims to develop new and innovative ways of using ICT in European schools through school partnerships by promoting online collaboration between teachers and students (Galvin et al., 2006). According to Manfredini (2007), eTwinning provides an opportunity for students to get

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to know new cultures, to increase teachers' motivation for new approaches in education and to continue their professional development.

When the literature is examined, the opinions of the founding teachers who put the eTwinning projects into practice of Gezgin and Gökbas Cabuk (2020); Genctürk Erdem et al. (2021) The contribution of eTwinning projects to the digital literacy skills of the teachers involved in the projects; Avcı (2021), Gündüz Çetin and Gündoğdu (2022) opinions of registered teachers on the eTwinning platform; Avcı et al. (2021), teacher evaluations of their eTwinning project; Basaran et al. (2020) contribution of project-based eTwinning activities to teachers' professional development; Çelebi and Yılmaz (2021) examining teachers' thoughts about eTwinning through metaphor; Contribution of Akıncı and Sağ (2019) eTwinning projects to students' foreign language skills; The effect of digital activities implemented in the Çevik (2021) eTwinning project on the technology awareness and scientific thinking skills of gifted students; Cavus et al. (2021) views of science teachers on eTwinning project processes; Bozdağ (2017) Comparison of technology integration in schools in Turkey and Germany through eTwinning projects; Moran et al. (2021) The attitudes of students towards STEM education of a STEM themed eTwinning project for 3rd and 4th grade primary school students; Yüksel et al. (2021) investigated the effect of the eTwinning project on environment and nature values on 7-11 year old students in line with teachers' opinions. In this research, which is aimed to examine the researches related to eTwinning published by the institutes of universities producing academic information in Turkey, published thesis studies were examined. For this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

Thesis studies on eTwinning in Turkey;

1. How is the distribution according to the years of publication and type of thesis?
2. How is the distribution according to the universities in which it is published?
3. How is the distribution according to the institutes in which it is published?
4. What is the distribution according to research methods?
5. What is the distribution of researchers by gender?
6. What is the distribution according to the thesis advisor titles?
7. What is the distribution according to the study group?
8. What is the distribution according to research topics?

Method

This section contains information about the design of the research, the study group, the data collection tool, and the data analysis.

Research Design

In this research, which aims to examine the theses about eTwinning in Turkey, document review, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. Document review is defined as the process of collecting documents related to a subject area and coding and examining them according to a certain system (Çepni, 2012). Bowen (2009) stated that document review should be considered both as a research model and as a data collection tool. Previous studies on the subject examined are a source of data and also serve as a guide for researchers in interpreting and explaining data (Bowen, 2009).

All processes of this article, which is a compilation research, have been acted in accordance with the rules of scientific research and publication ethics. Ethics committee approval was not obtained when data were collected in a way that required ethics committee approval in the study.

Study Group of the Research

YÖK National Database was used to determine the study group of the research. On April 1, 2022, 9 theses with access permission were reached by typing "eTwinning" into the scanning area of YÖK Thesis Scanning Center.

Research Instrument and Procedures

The thesis studies included to be analyzed in the research consist of researches related to eTwinning. Studies on eTwinning were reached on April 1, 2022. It has been tried to reach the theses that can be accessed as PDF extension from YÖK National Thesis Center. After creating a list of the theses that can be accessed in the Higher Education Council Thesis Search Center, the theses with digital copies that can be accessed were saved on the computer and examined. In the examination of the theses published, the coding form prepared by Yılmaz (2015) was used in the study. For the use of the coding form, permission was obtained from the researcher who prepared it via e-mail.

Validity and Reliability

In order to strengthen the reliability, the qualitative reliability steps suggested by Gibbs (2007) were used. The findings obtained in this direction were checked twice by the researcher, short notes indicating the code definitions were used while coding, and a cross-check was made by consulting an expert for the accuracy of the coding. For validity, an external controller was used and a detailed description was made. The method, documents, and findings of the study were submitted for the approval of this external auditor. Detailed information about the working process description has been made.

Data Analysis and Process

In the research, descriptive analysis, one of the qualitative data analysis, was used. For this, "eTwinning" was chosen as a keyword on the search page on the national thesis center page on the official website of YÖK. Afterward, 9 thesis studies were collected in the computer environment and transferred to the Excel environment in line with the coding form. A coding form was created by the researcher to examine the theses included in this study. The data obtained as a result of the coding are presented in the form of a table.

Findings

In this section, there are findings obtained by examining 9 thesis studies related to "eTwinning" in the database of the National Thesis Scanning Center of the Council of Higher Education in Turkey until April 1, 2022.

Thesis studies on eTwinning in Turkey has been given in Table 1.

Table 1

Thesis studies on eTwinning in Turkey

Research Num.	Researchers	Research year	Type of Research
1	Bilge Akıncı	2018	Master's thesis
2	Fatih Toy	2019	Master's thesis
3	Nalan Demir	2019	Master's thesis
4	Kerem Şahin	2021	Master's thesis
5	Burçin Türkmenoğlu	2021	Master's thesis

6	Pakize Acar	2021	Master's thesis
7	Hürü Gözübüyük	2021	Master's thesis
8	Özge Pelin Nazlı	2022	Master's thesis
9	Emre Bilgin	2022	PhD thesis

Source: National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education

As is seen on Table 1, 9 theses on eTwinning have been published in Turkey. It has been determined that there was no thesis work before 2018, no thesis was published in 2020, and the most thesis work was published in 2021. It is seen that 8 thesis studies were published at the master's level and 1 thesis was published at the doctoral level.

The distribution of thesis studies on eTwinning in Turkey according to the universities in which they were published is given in Table 2.

Table 2.

Distribution of thesis studies on eTwinning in Turkey by universities

Research Num.	Universities
1	Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University
2	Süleyman Demirel University
3	Karadeniz Technical University
4	Mersin University
5	İnönü University
6	Fırat University
7	Çukurova University
8	Gazi University
9	Onsekiz Mart University

As is seen on Table 2, thesis studies on eTwinning in Turkey were published by 9 different universities. These universities are; Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Süleyman Demirel, Karadeniz Technical, Mersin, İnönü, Fırat, Çukurova, Gazi and Onsekiz Mart universities are the universities.

The distribution of thesis studies on eTwinning in Turkey according to the institutes where they are published is given in Table 3.

Table 3*Distribution of thesis studies on eTwinning in Turkey by institutes*

Institues	f
Institute of Education Sciences	6
Social Sciences Institute	2
Institute of Graduate Studies	1

As is seen on Table 3, it was determined that the most thesis studies (f=6) were published by the institute of educational sciences. 2 thesis studies were published by the social sciences institute and 1 thesis was published by the graduate education institute.

The distribution of thesis studies on eTwinning in Turkey according to the research method is given in Table 4.

Table 4*Distribution of thesis studies on eTwinning in Turkey by research method*

Research Method	f
Qualitative research method	6
Mixed research method	3

As is seen on Table 4, it was determined that qualitative research methods were used in 6 theses and mixed research methods were used in 3 theses.

The distribution of thesis studies on eTwinning in Turkey according to the gender of the researchers is given in Table 5.

Table 5*Distribution of thesis studies on eTwinning in Turkey by gender of researchers*

Researcher's Gender	f
Female	6
Male	3

As is seen on Table 5, it was determined that 6 of the thesis researchers were female and 3 were male.

The distribution of thesis studies on eTwinning in Turkey according to thesis advisor titles is given in Table 6.

Table 6*Distribution of thesis studies on eTwinning in Turkey by thesis advisor titles*

Title	f
Professor Doctor	2
Associate Professor Doctor	5
Assistant Professor Doctor	2

As is seen on Table 6, 2 of the theses were published as professor, 5 as associate professor and 2 as assistant professor.

The distribution of thesis studies on eTwinning in Turkey according to the study group is given in Table 7.

Table 7*Distribution of thesis studies on eTwinning in Turkey by study group*

Study Group	f
English teachers	3
Secondary school students	2
High school students	1
Classroom teachers	1
Preschool teachers	1
Teachers and school administrators carrying out the project	1

As is seen on Table 7, the study group of the theses consisted of English teachers (f=3), secondary school students (f=2), high school students (f=1), classroom teachers (f=1), preschool teachers (f=1) and teachers and school administrators (f=1) who carry out projects.

The distribution of thesis studies on eTwinning in Turkey according to the research topics is given in Table 8.

Table 8*Distribution of thesis studies on eTwinning in Turkey by research topics*

Research Num.	Researchers	Research topics
1	Bilge Akıncı	Contribution of eTwinning project applications to foreign language skills
2	Fatih Toy	The effect of Quizlet on English vocabulary teaching
3	Nalan Demir	Multidimensional foreign language teaching
4	Kerem Şahin	Self-assessment of English teachers' technology competencies
5	Burçin Türkmenoğlu	Evaluation of educational projects managed by the research and development unit
6	Pakize Acar	Examining the opinions of classroom teachers about eTwinning
7	Hürü Gözübüyük	Examining the distance education processes of preschool teachers
8	Özge Pelin Nazlı	Developing intercultural communication competence of children learning English as a foreign language
9	Emre Bilgin	Educational use of web 2.0 tools in foreign language teaching

As is seen on Table 8, the research topics are related to foreign language teaching, teachers' views on eTwinning, use of web 2.0 tools and distance education.

Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

The theses about eTwinning in Turkey, which is the country with the highest number of projects on the eTwinning portal, were examined. While examining the theses, they were analyzed in terms of variables such as the year of publication, type of thesis, university, institute, research method, genders of researchers, titles of thesis advisors, working group and research topic. Within the scope of the study, 9 thesis studies related to the subject in the YÖK National Thesis Center were examined.

According to the research findings, it has been determined that the theses related to e-Twinning were published in 2021 the most in Turkey, and no thesis studies were published before 2018 and in 2020. It can be said that the reason why the thesis work was not published in 2020 was due to the fact that the thesis studies were published in a small number, with the transition to distance education in all education levels in Turkey during the Covid-19 pandemic that emerged around the world. Elmas and Boyacıoğlu (2021) reported similar results in their studies.

In line with the research findings, it is seen that the thesis studies on eTwinning in Turkey are mostly published in the master's type. In Turkey, where the rate of continuing doctorate education after master's education is low, it is expected that published thesis studies will be more at the master's

level. As a matter of fact, in this study, most thesis work belongs to the master's level. Sönmez (2017) also stated a similar result in his research.

It has been determined that the thesis studies published on eTwinning in Turkey were published by 9 different universities and the thesis studies were mostly published by educational sciences institutes. It can be said that this is due to the fact that eTwinning projects are related to educational sciences.

In the thesis studies, the most qualitative research method was used. In addition to this, there are also thesis studies in which a mixed research method is used. The mixed research method is seen as a method that allows us to better understand research problems by using quantitative and qualitative approaches together (Baki & Gökçek, 2012). In this context, in the theses published on eTwinning, it can be said that there are also theses consisting of in-depth and multi-dimensional examinations of the research problem. In this context, in the theses published on eTwinning, it can be said that there are also theses consisting of in-depth and multi-dimensional examinations of the research problem.

In this context, it can be said that in the theses published on eTwinning, there are also theses consisting of in-depth and multi-dimensional examinations about the research problem. In the thesis studies published on eTwinning in Turkey, it has been concluded that thesis researchers are mostly female researchers. In addition, it has been determined that thesis studies are mostly published with the title of associate professor. The study group of the thesis studies mostly consists of English teachers. Also, secondary and high school students, classroom and preschool teachers, teachers who are project coordinators and school administrators also took part.

It has been determined that the subject of the thesis studies is related to foreign language teaching since the working group of the theses is mostly English teachers. In addition, teachers' views on eTwinning, the use of web 2.0 tools and issues related to distance education are also included.

As a result, it can be said that the number of thesis studies on eTwinning in Turkey is low. In order to increase the number of theses, teachers who carry out eTwinning projects can be supported to receive postgraduate education and publish a thesis in this direction.

Limitations

The data of the research is limited to the access permission in the YÖK National Database and the thesis studies related to the research topic.

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