

## **Examination of Teachers' Views on Erasmus+ Projects in Schools**

**Serap Çimsir**

*Ministry of National Education, Mehmet Akif Ersoy Primary School, Atatürk, Aras St. No: 13, 34758 Ataşehir/ Istanbul, Türkiye*

### **ABSTRACT**

Erasmus+ projects are important in implementing innovative approaches in the educational process. This study is designed as descriptive quantitative research to determine teachers' opinions about Erasmus+ projects in public schools. The study group consisted of 303 teachers who voluntarily participated in the research from the population of teachers working in public schools in Istanbul. The data are collected using a questionnaire prepared by the researcher by taking expert opinions. The first part of the form, which consists of two parts, contains personal information, and the second part contains questions about teachers' views on Erasmus+ projects in schools. ANOVA and t-tests are used to analyse the data. The findings showed that the teachers' opinions on Erasmus+ projects did not differ significantly by gender, institution of duty, professional seniority, and educational status. Also, the teachers had positive opinions about Erasmus+ projects. In addition, the opinions on Erasmus+ projects differed significantly in favour of those who previously participated in an Erasmus+ project, those who had been abroad within the scope of an Erasmus+ project, and those who wanted to participate in Erasmus+ projects.

*Keywords:* Erasmus+, opinion, school, teacher

### **INTRODUCTION**

Education is the basis of employability, personal satisfaction, and responsible and active citizenship. The right to inclusive quality education and lifelong learning has been declared in the first principle in the European Social Rights Column. Education is at the heart of the European way of life and strengthens freedom, diversity, human rights, social justice, the social

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*E-mail address:*

[serapcimsir@gmail.com](mailto:serapcimsir@gmail.com)

market economy, and democracy (European Commission [EC], 2020). The international dimension of education is becoming increasingly important in the globalising world. Attempting innovative approaches in educational practices, cooperation, and cultural integration are among the basic dynamics of education.

Today, the education system in Türkiye is based on the constructivist approach. In this approach, the student is expected to internalise the content based on his/her knowledge, skills, and attitudes, develop multiple perspectives on events, establish a new learning connection by benefiting from real-life situations, reach various data sources, and take responsibility for learning. In addition, the teacher and the student need to progress together in the learning process for the teacher to be a guide, for the content to be acquired with real-life situations and for the evaluation to be process-based (Peker-Ünal, 2019). However, the content and methods of education in schools are constantly changing. One of the reasons for these changes is the implementation of programs such as the Lifelong Learning Program (LLP) Erasmus+, where the slogan “Learning for life” has gained an increasing number of followers (Kugiejko, 2016). It also aligns with the essence of the constructivist approach adopted today through learning for life.

### **Erasmus+ Projects**

The common point of the models, such as problem-based learning and project-based learning, allows the constructivist

approach to be put into practice. The common feature of these models is that they place a contemporary problem related to the student and their achievements in the centre of the process, with the teacher guiding. In this process, the student must determine what he/she needs to do to solve the problem, create goals, communicate, and gain various skills, such as computer literacy, effective listening, research, taking notes, and time management (Peker-Ünal, 2019). In this context, the school project activities significantly affect the education of individuals suitable for today’s education. In particular, Erasmus+ projects allow educators from various countries to meet, exchange ideas, support innovative education practices, and have an important impact on encouraging foreign language learning. In addition, within the project’s scope, the cultural development of teachers working together from different countries is reflected in their teaching competencies, and a high level of efficiency is provided in education.

The project can be a task that includes problem identification, problem-solving, decision-making, design creation, collaboration, presentation, or a concrete product (Thomas, 2000). Projects organise people in different parts of the world to collaborate and fuse, bringing together cultures, people, and scientific content. For this reason, project experience is important for teachers and students (Tatlı, 2016). The Erasmus+ programme is instrumental in promoting activities at the European Union (EU) level like supporting the EU

commitment to promoting citizenship, fundamental freedoms, tolerance, and non-discrimination through education, mainstreaming successful practices, and developing cooperation for national reform and supporting implementation financially (EC, 2020). With three million participants since 1987, the Erasmus+ programme is the world's most successful student exchange program, promoting education and intercultural exchange (Ballatore & Ferede, 2013). Erasmus+ projects are becoming increasingly important due to their various contributions to the projects implemented in schools. Erasmus+ Programme contributes to the participants in the following terms (Erasmus+ Programme Guide [EPG], 2017, p.6):

- Reducing the early school leaving rate to below 10% and increasing access to higher education to 40% at least,
- Ensuring sustainable development in the field of higher education,
- Developing the European dimension of sports and
- Promoting European values (the EU is built on freedom, human dignity, equality, democracy, respect for human rights, and the rule of law, including the rights of minorities) following Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union.

The Erasmus+ programme has benefits such as recognition of multilingualism, skills and competencies, dissemination, and maintenance of the results obtained from the project (Hatirasu, 2017). In addition,

Erasmus+ projects implemented in schools have many benefits, such as applying personal, social, communicative, and intercultural interaction and innovative methods. The types of Erasmus+ projects implemented in schools are briefly defined below (EPG, 2017):

**Main Action 1-Mobility of Individuals.** In this context, the application of “Erasmus+ Graduate Credits” encouraged by the program is supported by the mobility of students and staff to provide a learning experience to teachers, trainers/trainers, academicians, students, interns, volunteers, educational institutions and nongovernmental institutions/organisations, young people, youth workers in another country, as well as going abroad for a master's degree.

**Main Action-Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices.** This program supports *transnational strategic partnerships* aiming to promote experience and technical expertise sharing and innovation among different institutions/organisations in the field of education, training, and youth; *information partnerships* between higher education institutions and enterprises aiming to encourage teaching-learning; *sectoral skill partnerships* gathering findings for the skills needed to deliver activities in one or more fields; *capacity building projects* supporting cooperation with partner countries in the field of higher education and youth.

**Main Action 3-Support for Policy Reform.**

This program supports peer learning and peer supervision through open coordination methods in the field of education, training, and youth; initiatives for policy innovation to ensure that innovative policies can test their effectiveness among stakeholders; support for European policy tools to support recognition of competencies and skills, skills management and guidance; and cooperation with international institutions/organisations with capacity and expertise to strengthen the impact of policies in the field of education, training, and youth.

Erasmus+ projects offer opportunities for participants to develop their personal and professional skills, increase their experience and knowledge, increase their awareness of responsibility, compare their education systems, communicate the innovations seen in their own countries, introduce their culture to other countries, and become a world person (Demirer & Dak, 2019). Furthermore, considering that the educators convey their experiences to their students or that the students are actively involved in the project process, the importance of Erasmus+ projects in the education process is understood.

On the other side, the cross-curricular approach, one of the important principles of modern pedagogy, is a teaching strategy that allows educators to combine concepts and skills from various disciplines and offers advantages to teachers and students. One effective way to implement the cross-curricular approach is to participate in Erasmus+ projects. Positive connections

between Erasmus+ project work and intercurricular strategy are listed below (Klajn, 2019):

**Motivation.** Since the Erasmus+ project activities correspond to a concrete school problem that needs to be solved, teachers from different profiles share the common goal; the possibility of vocational training in another cultural environment also increases the attractiveness of such a project.

**System and management.** Because the school receives a grant to organise the project and all activities are written in the annual work plan, this can provide teachers with sufficient materials and an appropriate environmental environment over time.

**Didactic and pedagogical knowledge.** International experience gives participants access to a wide range of teaching methods.

These explanations show that Klajn (2019) emphasises the importance of Erasmus+ projects in motivation, system and management, and didactic and pedagogical knowledge. Research (Erdoğan, 2007; Gültekin, 2007) also shows that students' academic success in secondary and higher education project activities increased. It has been determined that university students also want to study abroad with the Erasmus+ programme to gain new experiences, better access to academic information, and improve their foreign language skills (Marinescu, 2022).

Education is a dynamic phenomenon. For this reason, innovations in education

must be reflected in educational practices in the context of developing technology and 21st-century skills, as well as cultural interaction. In order to achieve this, it is important to include Erasmus+ projects that support intercultural interaction and innovative practices in schools. Therefore, project practices in education are very important regarding the quality of education, change of good practices, and 21st-century skills.

### **Importance of the Research**

Erasmus+ projects offer an important educational activity by providing student and teacher mobility and activities, providing great interaction and cooperation opportunities between countries, societies and institutions (Köroğlu & Çoban, 2021). When studies abroad regarding Erasmus+ projects are examined, commission studies, national reports, and research are generally encountered regarding the contributions of these projects to educational institutions. Kugiejko's (2016) case study on the benefits of participation in projects in two primary schools participating in the Erasmus+ project attracted attention. In this study, individual interviews, coordinators and teachers' observations were analysed, and it was determined that teachers and students participating in the projects could cooperate and that all types of schools, regardless of their location (city or rural area), could benefit from participating in the Erasmus+ project. Marinescu et al. (2022) researched to obtain feedback from university students participating in the Erasmus+ programme,

analyse the benefits and difficulties of participating in this program, and determine the reasons that lead students to choose a particular partner university. This research is quantitative in the form of an opinion poll. The research shows that university students want to study abroad with the Erasmus+ programme to gain new experiences, improve their foreign language skills and better access academic information.

Burden and Kearney (2023) conducted a multiple case study investigating the impact of three international university-school partnership projects to improve the digital pedagogies of teachers and teacher educators with mobile devices. Interview and survey data were used in the study, and as a result, the positive impact of the projects on students' attitudes and peer learning was emphasised. As a result of their case study on environmental education with students between the ages of 6 and 15 in Slovakia, Piscová et al. (2023) stated that teaching materials and teacher training should be improved and that Erasmus+ projects provide the opportunity to practice and do internships abroad. Marron et al. (2023) also conducted an online survey of 1170 primary school teachers in 9 European countries participating in the Erasmus+ project to determine the importance of participation in physical education in primary education. It was determined that most participants thought involvement in physical education was very important and that guidance on children's motor needs and video-based resources were useful in encouraging participation in physical education. It is seen

that this research is related to the subject of the project implemented in the relevant institution and was conducted on a specific sample from the schools participating in the projects.

Türkiye's primary, secondary, high school and university studies are part of the Erasmus+ programme. Bakioğlu and Certel (2010) conducted a qualitative study on the programme's contributions with 30 Turkish university students participating in the Erasmus+ exchange programme. These studies emphasise the importance of the Erasmus+ programme and its benefits to students in higher education. Kesik and Balcı (2016) conducted a scale development study to determine the contributions of European Union (EU) Projects called Strategic Partnerships to schools. However, this study collected data from teachers working in 11 schools in a province in Türkiye that actively participated in EU Projects. Similarly, Gözen (2010) developed a scale to obtain participant opinions on finding ideas, work programs, budgeting, European added value, and dissemination during the project proposal preparation process. Başaran et al. (2021) conducted a qualitative study on 12 teachers participating in the projects to examine the impact of Erasmus+ projects carried out by the Directorates of National Education on schools.

Demirer and Dak (2019) tried to determine their views on Erasmus+ projects carried out under the coordination of the Turkish National Agency with visual metaphors. The study was conducted with

47 people who worked as senior managers, school administrators and teachers in institutions affiliated with the Ministry of National Education and participated in the projects. This research is about the participants' involvement in the project, their Erasmus+ project preparation and motivation factors, their future expectations, and how Erasmus+ projects affect their education and training processes. The sample in this study consists of teachers and administrators in schools and institutions participating in the projects. Yavrutürk and İlhan (2022) examined students' experiences participating in the Erasmus+ student mobility program regarding twenty-first-century skills and their views on the skills they gained thanks to Erasmus+ mobility. The research was conducted with ten science high school students who went to Greece within the scope of the Erasmus+ student mobility program, and the data was obtained through a semi-structured interview form.

As a result, students participating in the Erasmus+ student exchange program have been determined to have intercultural experiences, use digital skills effectively, improve communication skills and project-based work, engage in intercultural interaction, and improve foreign language skills. Köroğlu and Çoban (2021), in their study examining the thoughts of students participating in Erasmus+ Projects about mobility and the effects of mobility, determined that Erasmus+ mobility has individual, academic, social, language skills and cultural effects on students. In these studies, the sample was limited to a very

small number of students participating in the Erasmus+ project.

Kılınc and Korkmaz (2022) examined the opinions of English teachers who participated in the Erasmus+ programme with the theme 'Improving the Proficiency of English Teachers' about teaching English. The data was obtained from 37 English teachers in a province who went to four European countries, Greece, Hungary, Czechia and Austria, within the project's scope. By examining the answers given by the participants as a result of their on-the-job observations, comparisons and evaluations of the systems of the countries under six different headings were included. In this research, the sample was limited to 37 English teachers who participated in projects for English teachers in one province. This situation has made it difficult to make generalisations on the subject. Notably, in these studies, the working group was limited in number, and the data was taken only from a certain group that participated in Erasmus+ projects. These studies focus on the project process rather than the projects' contributions. Regarding the Erasmus+ Programme, we can say that these studies, especially on teachers' opinions, do not examine in detail the purposes of the Erasmus+ Programme goals. It is important to emphasise the cultural, intellectual and communicative contribution of Erasmus+ projects to teachers and students in line with the European Union goals because students' participation in Erasmus+ projects before starting university can affect students' more universal thinking,

university and professional preferences, intellectual perspective, and a different perspective on education.

For this reason, it is important to examine the opinions of teachers in educational institutions about Erasmus+ projects within the scope of the targets included in the Erasmus+ Program Guide, their participation in the projects or their positive/negative opinions about their own/students' participation. Moreover, it should be considered that Erasmus+ project activities in preschool, primary school, secondary school and high school education institutions that provide human resources to universities can positively affect the quality of higher education and participation in Erasmus+ projects in universities. It is thought that it is important to determine the contribution level of Erasmus+ projects to teachers and students according to the opinions of teachers who participate and/or do not participate in these projects.

Many studies based on qualitative and quantitative data, including the opinions of teachers and students about Erasmus+ projects, have been examined in the literature. A research gap has been observed to determine teachers' opinions about the goals of Erasmus+ projects according to the Erasmus+ goals in the current EPG (2017). Therefore, this study tried to determine teachers' opinions about the benefits of Erasmus+ projects for themselves and their students by using a measurement tool that includes the goals of the Erasmus+ program. In the process of membership to the European Union, ensuring intercultural

sharing through partnerships in education with European Union member countries and recognising European culture and projects related to globalisation are important. These project studies are also important for determining Türkiye's educational practices and economic and technological deficiencies and ensuring cooperation. For this reason, there was a need to determine the opinions of teachers, who are the managers of educational processes, about Erasmus+ projects with a measurement tool that covers the Erasmus+ goals in the Erasmus+ Programme and with a large sample. This need made it necessary to conduct comprehensive research on Erasmus+ projects at the level of schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), about teachers in-depth, and with a measurement tool developed considering the Erasmus+ programme. Therefore, the findings obtained from this study can greatly contribute to the Erasmus+ programme managers, national agencies, training practitioners, researchers, and the literature. The problem sentence of the present study is: What are the teachers' opinions on Erasmus+ projects conducted in schools?

### **Purpose and Subgoals of the Research**

This study aims to determine teachers' opinions about Erasmus+ projects in schools according to different variables. Accordingly, the subgoals of the study are as follows:

1. What are the opinions of teachers about themselves regarding

Erasmus+ Projects carried out in schools?

2. What are the opinions of teachers about their students regarding Erasmus+ Projects carried out in schools?
3. Do teachers' opinions about Erasmus+ projects in schools differ according to the descriptive characteristics (gender, professional seniority, educational status, level of education)?
4. Do teachers' opinions about Erasmus+ projects in schools differ according to the descriptive characteristics of the projects (whether they participate in Erasmus+ projects, whether they are abroad within the scope of Erasmus+ projects, and whether they want to participate in Erasmus+ projects)?

## **METHODS**

### **Research Model**

This descriptive quantitative research aims to determine teachers' opinions about Erasmus+ projects in schools. Descriptive studies are generally used to reach a general idea about this universe by using a sample selected from the universe. Descriptive studies are generally used to arrive at a general idea about the population using a sample selected from the population (Karasar, 2008). In addition, this study was designed to determine teachers' opinions working at preschool, primary, secondary, and high school levels about Erasmus+ projects in schools in general.



**Population-sample**

The population of the research is teachers working in public schools in Istanbul, Türkiye. The participants of the research were selected using the simple random sampling method. In this type of sampling, all elements in the population have an equal chance of being selected. This sampling is also termed disproportionate or unbiased (Karasar, 2008). The research participants were teachers who voluntarily participated in the online questionnaire from the population of teachers working in public schools in Istanbul, Türkiye, as

a simple random sampling in the spring semester of the 2021–2022 academic year. The characteristics of the study participants are listed in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1 shows that among the teachers participating in the study, there are more female participants (78.9%) according to gender; there are more participants from primary schools (73.9%); there are more senior participants with 16–20 years (26.1%) and 21–25 years (25.1%) of professional seniority, and there are more undergraduate graduates (78.9%) according to educational status.

Table 2 shows that most teachers (80.5%) who participated in the study did not participate in Erasmus+ projects before; most of them (87.1%) had not been abroad within the scope of an Erasmus+ project before, and most of them (61.7%) wanted to participate in Erasmus+ projects.

Table 1  
*Distribution of teachers according to descriptive characteristics*

Descriptive Characteristics		n	%
Gender	Female	239	78.9
	Male	64	21.1
	Total	303	100
Type of institution served	Preschool	18	5.9
	Primary School	224	73.9
	Secondary School	43	14.2
	High School	18	5.9
	Total	303	100
Professional Seniority	5 years	14	4.6
	6–10 years	33	10.9
	11–15 years	46	15.2
	16–20 years	79	26.1
	21–25 year	76	25.1
	25 years or more	55	18.2
	Total	303	100
Educational Status	License	239	78.9
	Postgraduate Degree	64	21.1
	Total	303	100

Note: %: Percentage  
Source: Author's work

Table 2  
*Distribution of teachers according to their characteristics related to Erasmus+ projects*

Characteristics Related to Erasmus+ Projects		n	%
Previously participated in an Erasmus+ project	Positive	59	19.5
	No	244	80.5
	Total	303	100
Previously being abroad within the scope of an Erasmus+ project	Positive	39	12.9
	No	264	87.1
	Total	303	100
Willingness to participate in Erasmus+ projects	Positive	187	61.7
	No	39	12.9
	Indecisive	77	25.4
Total	303	100	

Source: Author's work

### Data Collection Tool, Validity, and Reliability

In this study, a questionnaire consisting of multiple-choice questions was used to determine the personal information of the teachers and their views on Erasmus+ projects conducted in schools. First, the literature was reviewed; the contribution of Erasmus+ projects to education, teacher, and student development was evaluated, and an item pool was created for the measurement tool. EPG (2017), which explains the objectives of Erasmus+ projects, was used to create question items. The question items prepared were presented to six experts, including two lecturers, three experts who completed their doctorate in classroom teaching, and one who was a guidance expert. The measurement tool was finalised in line with their views. The questionnaire included 16 questions about the teachers' opinions about Erasmus+ projects, which the experts considered appropriate.

Exploratory factor analysis was applied to reveal the construct validity of the measurement tool. As a result of the Barlett test ( $p=0.000<0.05$ ), it was determined that there was a relationship between the variables included in the factor analysis (Büyüköztürk et al., 2018). As a result of the test ( $KMO=0.939>0.60$ ), it was determined that the sample size was sufficient for factor analysis. In the factor analysis application, the varimax method was chosen to ensure that the relationship structure between the factors remained the same. As a result of the factor analysis, the variables were grouped under a single

factor with a total explained variance of 64.615%. The factor structure of the measurement tool is shown in Table 3.

Table 3  
*Factor structure of the measurement instrument*

Items	Factor Loadings	Items	Factor Loadings
q2	.90	q14	.84
q7	.89	q15	.84
q4	.88	q12	.83
q5	.87	q9	.82
q3	.86	q6	.76
q1	.86	q16	.70
q13	.85	q10	.48
q8	.85	q11	.48
Total Variance = 64.62%; Overall Reliability (Alpha)=0.95			

Source: Author's work

Sub-factor scores shown in Table 3 were calculated between 1 and 5 points by adding the scores of all items within a sub-factor and dividing by the number of items answered by each respondent within that subscale. The overall reliability of the measurement tool was found to be very high, with  $\alpha=0.95$ . These results show that the instrument is valid and reliable. Some of the items included in the measurement tool are listed below:

- Participating in Erasmus+ projects contributes to the professional development of teachers.
- Participating in Erasmus+ projects contributes to teachers' communication skills.
- Participating in Erasmus+ projects contributes to the cultural development of students.

- Participating in Erasmus+ projects contributes to students' development of an international perspective in their educational lives.

### Data Collection and Data Analysis

The prepared questionnaire was sent to teachers online through teacher networks and official announcements. All guidelines specified within the scope of the “Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive for Higher Education Institutions” were implemented throughout this analysis. Ethics Committee Approval was obtained from Maltepe University for this study (Decision date: 13/12/2021, Decision no: 2021-34-01).

Frequency and percentage analyses were used to determine the descriptive characteristics of the teachers who participated in the study. Mean and standard deviation statistics were used to examine the measurement tool. Skewness and kurtosis values were examined to determine whether the research variables showed a normal distribution, and the obtained data are given in Table 4.

Table 4  
*Gaussian distribution*

	<i>N</i>	<i>Kurtosis</i>	<i>Skewness</i>
Opinions on Erasmus+ projects	303	-0.004	-0.683

Source: Author's work

When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that the research variables show a normal distribution. In the literature, the results related to the kurtosis and skewness

values of the variables were accepted as the normal distribution between +1.5 and -1.5 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) and +2.0 and -2.0 (George & Mallery, 2010). In cases where variable variance is unknown, nonparametric tests are used if the distribution of the main mass does not show a normal distribution (Field, 2009). According to the law of large numbers and the central limit theorem, the distribution was assumed normal since it was at a sufficient level as a sample, and the analyses were maintained (Inal & Günay, 1993).

According to the descriptive characteristics of the teachers, t-test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and post hoc (Tukey, LSD) analyses were used to examine the differences in the measurement tool levels. The independent group t-test determined the significant difference between the two independent samples. Cohen (*d*) and Eta square ( $\eta^2$ ) coefficients were used to calculate the effect size. The effect size indicates whether the difference between the groups is large enough to be considered significant. Cohen value is evaluated as 0.8=large, 0.5=medium, 0.2=small, and Eta square value as 0.14=large, 0.06=medium, 0.01=small (Büyüköztürk et al., 2018).

### RESULTS

The distribution of the answers given by the teachers to the statements about their views on Erasmus+ projects is shown in Table 5.

According to the answers given by the teachers in Table 5, it is seen that teachers think that Erasmus+ projects contribute to their professional development ( $x=4.33$ ),

Table 5  
*Distribution of teachers' responses to their statements about their views on Erasmus+ projects*

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Participating in Erasmus+ projects contributes to the professional development of teachers	1	0.3	4	1.3	38	12.5	112	37.0	148	48.8	4.33	0.77
Participating in Erasmus+ projects contributes to teachers' communication skills	1	0.3	2	0.7	33	10.9	115	38.0	152	50.2	4.37	0.73
Participating in Erasmus+ projects contributes to the cultural development of teachers	0	0.0	3	1.0	23	7.6	110	36.3	167	55.1	4.46	0.68
Participating in Erasmus+ projects contributes to teachers' development of an international perspective on educational practices	0	0.0	2	0.7	20	6.6	112	37.0	169	55.8	4.48	0.65
Participating in Erasmus+ projects increases teachers' motivation	1	0.3	5	1.7	28	9.2	128	42.2	141	46.5	4.33	0.74
Participating in Erasmus+ projects positively affects teachers' commitment to the institution	1	0.3	9	3.0	61	20.1	114	37.6	118	38.9	4.12	0.85
Participating in Erasmus+ projects contributes to teachers' adoption of innovative educational practices	0	0.0	4	1.3	30	9.9	110	36.3	159	52.5	4.40	0.72
Participating in Erasmus+ projects increases teachers' interest in learning a foreign language	0	0.0	5	1.7	26	8.6	104	34.3	168	55.4	4.44	0.72
Teachers' participation in Erasmus+ projects contributes to their awareness of universal concepts such as freedom and democracy.	0	0.0	9	3.0	42	13.9	118	38.9	134	44.2	4.24	0.80
Teachers prioritise schools that run Erasmus+ projects when requesting appointments	9	3.0	77	25.4	109	36.0	57	18.8	51	16.8	3.21	1.09
Teachers participating in Erasmus+ school projects are objectively determined according to various criteria.	10	3.3	41	13.5	104	34.3	103	34.0	45	14.9	3.44	1.01

Note. SD: Standard deviation

Source: Author's work

their communication skills ( $x=4.37$ ), provide cultural development for them ( $x=4.46$ ). Also, it is seen that teachers think that Erasmus+ projects enable them to develop an international perspective on educational practices ( $x=4.48$ ), increase their motivation ( $x=4.33$ ), and affect their commitment to their institutions ( $x= 4.12$ ). It is seen that teachers think that Erasmus+ projects enable them to adopt innovative educational practices ( $x=4,40$ ), It is seen that teachers think that Erasmus+ projects encourage them to learn foreign languages ( $x=4.44$ ), provide awareness of universal concepts such as freedom and democracy ( $x=4.24$ ). It is inferred that teachers are undecided

about prioritising schools with Erasmus+ projects when seeking a transfer ( $x= 3.21$ ). It is apparent that teachers are hesitant about the objectivity of selecting teachers for Erasmus+ projects or think they are not objective ( $x= 3.44$ ). These findings show that teachers think that Erasmus+ projects are useful for them.

Teachers' responses to the statements regarding their students' views on Erasmus+ projects are shown in Table 6.

When Table 6 is examined, the answers given by the teachers to the statements made by their students about Erasmus+ projects yielded the following results. Teachers think that Erasmus+ projects contribute

Table 6  
Distribution of the answers given by teachers to the statements about their views on Erasmus+ projects about their students

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither Agree Nor Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Participating in Erasmus+ projects contributes to the cultural development of students	0	0.0	1	0.3	20	6.6	124	40.9	158	52.1	4.45	0.63
Participating in Erasmus+ projects contributes to students' communication skills	0	0.0	1	0.3	22	7.3	111	36.6	169	55.8	4.48	0.65
Participating in Erasmus+ projects contributes to students' development of an international perspective in their educational lives	0	0.0	3	1.0	17	5.6	108	35.6	175	57.8	4.50	0.65
Participating in Erasmus+ projects provides students with an incentive to learn a foreign language	0	0.0	1	0.3	19	6.3	103	34.0	180	59.4	4.52	0.63
Participation in Erasmus+ projects affects students' choice of profession	0	0.0	6	2.0	57	18.8	128	42.2	112	37.0	4.14	0.79

Source: Author's work

to their students' cultural development ( $x=4.45$ ), communication skills ( $x=4.48$ ), and the development of an international perspective in their educational lives ( $x=4.50$ ). It is seen that teachers think that Erasmus+ projects encourage their students to learn foreign languages ( $x=4.52$ ). Teachers also think that Erasmus+ projects will affect their students' choice of profession ( $x=4.14$ ). These findings show that teachers think Erasmus+ projects are useful for their students.

The results of the analysis conducted to examine the differentiation of the participating teachers' opinions about Erasmus+ projects according to the descriptive characteristics are given in Table 7.

As seen in Table 7, the opinions of the participating teachers on Erasmus+ projects do not differ significantly by gender, institution of duty, professional seniority, and educational status ( $p>0.05$ ).

The teachers' opinions about Erasmus+ projects are differentiated according to the descriptive characteristics of the projects in Table 8.

According to Table 8, the scores ( $x=4.39$ ) of the previous participant in a project regarding their opinions on Erasmus+ projects were found to be higher than the scores ( $x=4.21$ ) of the previous not participant in a project regarding their opinions on Erasmus+ projects ( $t=2.10$ ;  $p=0.04<0.05$ ;  $d=0.31$ ;  $\eta^2=0.01$ ). Among the participating teachers, the scores of those who had previously been abroad within the scope of a project regarding their opinions on Erasmus+ projects ( $x=4.49$ ) were found

to be higher than those who had not been abroad within the scope of a project before regarding their opinions on Erasmus+ projects ( $x=4.21$ ) ( $t=2.80$ ;  $p=0.01<0.05$ ;  $d=0.48$ ;  $\eta^2=0.03$ ). The scores of the teachers regarding their opinions on Erasmus+ projects differed significantly in schools

Table 7  
*Differentiation status of teachers' opinions on Erasmus+ projects according to demographic characteristics*

Demographic Characteristics	n	Opinion on Erasmus+ Projects
Gender		Mean±SD
Female	239	4.25±0.58
Male	64	4.21±0.63
t=		0.55
p=		0.56
Type of Institution Served		Mean±SD
Preschool	18	4.37±0.45
Primary School	224	4.21±0.61
Secondary School	43	4.33±0.60
High School	18	4.39±0.39
F=		1.32
p=		0.27
Professional Seniority		Mean ±SD
0–5 years	14	4.30±0.55
6–10 years	33	4.25±0.62
11–15 years	46	4.50±0.39
16–20 years	79	4.21±0.53
21–25 years	76	4.18±0.69
25 years or more	55	4.16±0.62
F=		2.23
p=		0.05
Educational Status		Mean ±SD
License	239	4.23±0.58
Postgraduate Degree	64	4.31±0.61
t=		0.96
p=		0.33

Source: Author's work

Table 8

*Differentiation status of teachers' opinions on Erasmus+ projects according to the descriptive characteristics of the projects*

Demographic Characteristics	n	Opinion on Erasmus+ Projects
Previously participated in a project		Mean±SD
Positive	59	4.39±0.64
No	244	4.21±0.57
t=		2.10
p=		0.04*
Previously being abroad within the scope of an Erasmus+ project		Mean±SD
Positive	39	4.49±0.58
No	264	4.21±0.58
t=		2.80
p=		0.01*
Willingness to participate in an Erasmus+ project		Mean ±SD
Positive	187	4.45±0.50
No	39	3.92±0.67
Indecisive	77	3.92±0.53
F=		35.38
p=		0.00*
Post hoc=		1>2.1>3(p<0.05)

Note. \*:  $p < 0.05$

Source: Author's work

according to their desire to participate in the project ( $F=35.38$ ;  $p=0<0.05$ ;  $\eta^2=0.19$ ). The reason for this difference is that the scores of those who wanted to participate in the project in schools regarding their opinions on Erasmus+ projects were higher than the scores of those who did not want to participate in the project in schools regarding their opinions on Erasmus + projects ( $p<0.05$ ). Furthermore, the scores of those who wanted to participate in the project in schools regarding their opinions on Erasmus+ projects were higher than those who were undecided about participating in the project in schools regarding their opinions on Erasmus + projects ( $p<0.05$ ).

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study, which show that Erasmus+ projects contribute to the development of teachers and students in cultural and similar fields, are similar to the findings of other studies. Yavrutürk and İlhan (2022) determined that students participating in the Erasmus+ student exchange program improved their intercultural experiences, using digital skills effectively, improving communication skills, project-based work, engaging in intercultural interaction and foreign language skills. Koroğlu and Çoban (2021) determined that Erasmus+ mobility has individual, academic, social, language skills and cultural effects on

students. According to Ađrı (2006), the Erasmus+ programme is useful in getting to know and promote Turkish culture better and recognising different cultures. Marinescu et al. (2022) determined that university students want to study abroad with the Erasmus+ program to better access academic information, gain new experiences and improve their foreign language skills.

Tatlı (2016) has found that teachers believe that project development contributes to personal and cultural interaction, helps development, and increases students' success. They emphasise the option of providing financial gain the least. Tatlı (2016) has also found that although teachers do not participate in project development studies much, they have a high consensus that project studies can increase student success and provide personal development and cultural interaction. This finding coincides with the finding in the present study that teachers have positive opinions about Erasmus+ projects and that projects contribute to cultural and academic development. In their metaphor study, Demirer and Dak (2019) determined that project units were not created, and personnel employment was not provided for the preparation, execution, and finalisation of the Erasmus+ project in primary, secondary, and secondary education institutions affiliated with the Ministry of Education. In addition, studies on projects in educational institutions are mostly conducted voluntarily. Therefore, institutions need to see projects as a tool to go abroad behind their desire to present Erasmus+ projects. On the other hand, those

with insufficient institutional capacity in the institutions preparing the project received consultancy and had the training companies prepare the project. These results suggest that project preparation training is not sufficiently included in schools affiliated with the Ministry of Education and that the desire of most teachers to participate in the projects may be directed toward the purpose of being abroad for those similar to the present study's findings.

Kugiejko (2016) determined that teachers and students participating in projects can collaborate and that all school types, regardless of location (urban or rural), can benefit from participation in projects. Burden and Kearney (2023) emphasised that projects positively affect students' attitudes and peer learning. Piscová et al. (2023) stated that Erasmus+ projects provide the opportunity to practice and do internships abroad. Ađrı (2006) examined the reasons why university students participated in the Erasmus+ Program and determined that the desire to recognise different cultures and gain experience abroad, that is, the cultural dimension of the program, was at the forefront and that the students participated in the program to acquire new environments, gain experience in Europe and conduct academic studies. According to the results from the study of Bakiođlu and Certel (2010), university students found their education abroad to be academically advantageous and important within the scope of Erasmus+ and attached too much importance to their personal, social, cultural, and linguistic benefits.



In addition, almost all students were affected by the educational environments they received in the host institution and the student-centred teaching approach. These findings coincide with the present study's findings that the projects beneficial students and contributed to teachers' adoption of innovative educational practices. Hatrasu (2017) examined universities' 2014, 2015, and 2016 applications and determined that the number of applications from Türkiye was moderate and unsuccessful. From this point of view, Erasmus+ project activities should be implemented more effectively in the schools affiliated with the Ministry of Education to ensure student employment in universities so that Türkiye can benefit adequately from the grant allocated for knowledge partnerships. In addition to the current study finding that teachers want to participate in the project, the low number of teachers participating indicates that project studies should be emphasised in the schools.

Başaran et al. (2021) determined in their research that students and teachers participating in Erasmus+ exchange programs make significant contributions to both their academic and personal development, increase the use of technology in the educational environment, and that all participants want to take part in projects again when appropriate conditions are available. Tatlı (2016) determined the opinions of 360 teachers working at the primary, secondary, and high school levels about the project development process and tried to identify the obstacles faced by teachers in this process. The study

determined that branch teachers, except social studies and information technology teachers, received no project development and management training. Most teachers wanted to but could not participate in the project studies due to the deficiencies they saw.

In addition, most teachers suggested that it would be beneficial to establish a unit in their schools for project development and include foreign language teachers, especially information technologies, in these units. The areas where teachers consider themselves inadequate in project development are information and foreign language; very few teachers do not want to take responsibility, do not want to go abroad, and at least they do not participate in projects due to prejudice. These findings coincide with the present study's finding that teachers have positive opinions about the projects, want to participate in the projects, and have an increasing interest in learning foreign languages.

Botas and Huisman (2013) determined that the participation of Polish students in the Erasmus+ project positively affects their academic achievement and cultural, social, and linguistic development. However, it harms their success because their work and Erasmus+ studies provide opportunities for students to develop cultural, social, and linguistic skills in tourism. The findings of these studies for university students overlap with the teachers' views in the present study that Erasmus+ projects contribute to the development of students at preschool, primary, secondary, and high school levels.

When these results are evaluated together, it can be stated that Erasmus+ projects contribute to teachers and students at all levels of education.

Kugiejko (2016) stated that every type of school, regardless of location (city or rural area), can benefit from participation in a global change with the case study and analysis conducted in two primary schools participating in the Erasmus+ project. However, the main limiting factor that stands out, especially in rural schools, is the thought and fear of participating in an international program, the strain on the language skills of the staff, and more administrative work. Cerban and Iacobescu (2018) conducted a study within the scope of the Erasmus+ KA3 project on individuals who had received special education between the ages of seven and 45 years. Teachers and parents recorded the developments in the study, aiming to increase the participants' communication and life skills. Social adaptation of communication skills was observed according to visual instructions. As a result, individuals with verbal communication disabilities, under the guidance of teachers and parents, could express themselves and acquire knowledge and skills with the help of mobile software, symbols, and graphics. These results show that Erasmus+ projects greatly benefit students in special education.

In their research, Özdoğru et al. (2022) collected the contributions of "Erasmus+ School Education Personnel Mobility" projects to teachers under professional development and personal development themes. In this research, it was seen that the

opinions about professional development, getting to know the education systems of different countries, getting to know different cultures, active learning, collaborating with colleagues and gaining a project culture came to the fore. In the theme of personal development, the ideas of socialising, seeing different countries and increasing self-confidence come to the fore. These findings support the current study's findings that teachers think Erasmus+ projects contribute to their cultural, personal and professional development. Yalçın-Incik and Yanpar-Yelken (2009) determined that teachers working in primary schools think that European Union Education Projects are an opportunity to see the education programs of foreign countries on-site and get to know different cultures. Klajn (2019) determined that teachers have access to the international experience and various teaching methods in terms of didactic and pedagogical knowledge by providing motivation as a benefit of the shares in the project process between the Erasmus+ project work and the intercurricular strategy, providing teachers with sufficient materials and an appropriate environmental environment over time with the grant received by the school. In addition, the teachers participating in the project in Klajn (2019) work had positive opinions. These positive opinions coincide with the present study's findings, suggesting teachers think that positive opinions about Erasmus+ projects contribute to the development of teachers and students.

Demir and Demir (2009) determined that the personal and professional

development of the participants in the Erasmus+ programme improved; they determined that they improved in areas such as benevolence, kindness, planned life, time management, the culture of peace, formation of tolerance and consciousness awareness, respect, vision, language skills, and academic development and self-confidence. Furthermore, Ballatore and Ferede (2013), in their study with Erasmus+ participants and nonparticipants in France, Italy, and the United Kingdom, determined that Erasmus+ students were more academic and comfortable travellers and had higher socioeconomic status and were more open to international opportunities than resident students. These results support the finding that participation in Erasmus+ projects in the current study affects students' development and future career choices. The findings on the benefits of Erasmus+ projects in these studies are similar to the results of the present study.

## CONCLUSION

When the findings obtained from this study were evaluated, the result was that teachers think that Erasmus+ projects carried out in schools are useful for themselves and their students. Moreover, this study determined that the opinions of the participating teachers about Erasmus+ projects did not differ significantly by gender, institution, professional seniority, and educational status and that the teachers had positive opinions about Erasmus+ projects. However, the scores of the opinions on Erasmus+ projects differed significantly in favour of those

participating in Erasmus+ projects, those being abroad within the scope of the project previously, and those who wanted to participate in the projects. So, it was found that teachers' views on Erasmus+ projects differed according to their characteristics in the projects: teachers who had previously participated in a project, who had been abroad within the scope of a project, and who were willing to participate in projects had more positive views on the projects. These results show that Erasmus+ projects are appreciated by teachers and evaluated as useful for themselves and their students.

Participating in international projects provides positive experiences for both teachers and students. This research reveals the importance and necessity of including more school project work for teachers' personal, professional and cultural development. In addition, the fact that teachers think that Erasmus+ projects contribute to various student development areas indicates the importance of the projects in terms of the functionality of education.

One of the important findings of this study is that the participant teachers think that Erasmus+ projects contribute to teachers' personal, professional and cultural development. Erasmus+ projects are very functional, bringing together teachers and students from different cultures in the education process and aiming to exchange and implement good practices in education. In addition, the importance of multicultural education in a globalising world is undeniable.

It is important to establish a professional team in which participants are determined according to objective criteria in institutions, to provide in-service training for writing, maintaining, and managing projects in institutions, to increase the number of projects, to disseminate the results of the project implemented and to ensure the sustainability of the project to benefit from the Erasmus+ objectives. As a result, participation in Erasmus+ projects contributes greatly to teachers in terms of cultural, communicative, and professional development and to students in terms of recognising different cultures at an early age and encountering different course content and methods.

### **Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research**

As a result, considering the positive opinions of teachers about Erasmus+ projects, the Ministry of National Education can carry out studies to support more teachers and/or students in participating in Erasmus+ projects in schools. Besides, this research was conducted with 305 teachers working in public schools in Türkiye, and wider research can be designed to include teachers from different countries. Teachers participating in Erasmus+ projects can be asked to report and share their observations and experiences about the countries where they are project partners. On the other hand, this descriptive research is based on quantitative data. Qualitative research can be designed to determine the views of both teachers and students about Erasmus+

projects. Case or experimental research can be conducted on the effectiveness of Erasmus+ projects in schools.

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