



The impact of eTwinning on teachers' wellbeing

Full monitoring report 2024



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The impact of eTwinning on teachers' wellbeing

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KEY FINDINGS

- Teachers who are active in eTwinning (eTwinners) reported high levels of **subjective wellbeing**. eTwinning impacted their teaching efficacy more and their interpersonal school relations less.
- Regarding **emotional wellbeing**, eTwinners reported having a positive emotional state in both their everyday lives and during eTwinning activities. eTwinning activities and recognition were cited to enhance their positive affect.
- eTwinning positively impacts eTwinners' **psychological wellbeing**, supporting their autonomy, competence and connectedness. It was also noted that eTwinning impacted eTwinners' personal growth, increasing their confidence.
- eTwinning offers ongoing learning opportunities that enhance eTwinners' **cognitive wellbeing** through reflection and self-directed learning. Formal and informal recognition of eTwinning activities were motivations for growth and lifelong learning.
- eTwinning fostered eTwinners' **social wellbeing** by facilitating professional and personal relationships that lead to deeper collegiality among teachers. Formal and informal recognition of eTwinning activities enhanced the perceived value of teachers, often countering the societal undervaluation of the teaching profession.
- eTwinners experience moderately high levels of **thriving from work** (fulfilment and satisfaction in their profession). eTwinning was cited as a protective factor against burnout and stagnation, and as significantly enhancing job resources in the workplace such as social and emotional support.
- In **existential wellbeing**, eTwinning stimulated reflection about teachers' roles, facilitated transitions from traditional teaching roles to other positions and reduced ideas of quitting.
- Overall, **the highest impact of eTwinning** was observed on teachers' subjective wellbeing, work-related emotional and psychological wellbeing and social wellbeing from work.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The findings of the report derive from a mixed-methods approach. A survey (**quantitative data collection**) was carried out, which aimed to capture respondents' current perceptions of their wellbeing and the impact eTwinning has had on their wellbeing. In addition, interviews (**qualitative data collection**) were conducted to gain more insights into how eTwinning impacts teachers' wellbeing.

According to the findings in this report, teachers who are involved in eTwinning exhibit **high levels of teaching efficacy**, showing confidence in their competence and ability to meet the demands of their work. The collaborative and innovative nature of eTwinning activities positively impacts their teaching efficacy, which correlates with job satisfaction, teacher retention and overall wellbeing.

Their sense of school connectedness remains slightly lower compared with teaching efficacy, suggesting a need for more collaborative opportunities in their schools. Although eTwinning empowers teachers in their teaching, it has less impact on school connectedness, suggesting the importance of fostering more collaborative practices at school level. Promoting and implementing eTwinning Schools' mission statements could play a pivotal role in this.

Teachers reported high levels of positive emotions during eTwinning activities, although some negative emotions persist due to stress and workload challenges. Participating in eTwinning **positively influenced teachers' emotional wellbeing**, fostering an environment that provides emotional support, practical guidance and a sense of belonging. Despite facing challenges, teachers attributed a positive outlook to their involvement in eTwinning, emphasising the importance of community support in managing uncertainties and experiencing renewed joy and fulfilment in their professional lives. Engaging with the eTwinning community not only builds personal relationships but also leads to deeper connections and emotional fulfilment and mitigates feelings of isolation. **Recognition and appreciation improves teachers' motivation, professional pride, self-esteem and job satisfaction even further**, suggesting that eTwinning has the potential to sustain or enhance job satisfaction while reducing teachers' desire to leave the profession.

Teachers who participate in eTwinning activities reported a **significant positive impact on their psychological wellbeing** – particularly a higher impact on their personal growth – but a slightly lower impact on their sense of autonomy. This indicates robust support for personal and professional development but less independence in their roles. While

eTwinning enriches teachers' learning experiences and confidence, the perception of less autonomy suggests potential constraints within school systems or teaching roles.

However, the qualitative data show that eTwinning positively influences teachers' confidence and didactical-pedagogical autonomy, fostering a sense of initiative and ownership over their actions. Furthermore, eTwinning was reported to contribute to **fulfilling teachers' basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness**, which are essential to their overall psychological wellbeing and resilience against burnout.

Participating in eTwinning activities was also reported to significantly **impact teachers' cognitive wellbeing by fostering ongoing learning and cognitive enrichment**. The eTwinning community serves as a dynamic space for peer collaboration, knowledge sharing and reflective practice, empowering teachers to refine their pedagogical skills and cultivate a mindset of lifelong learning. Through self-directed exploration and interaction with peers, teachers' confidence, communication skills and ability to provide and receive constructive feedback improves, contributing to their professional competence. Additionally, eTwinning offers professional development opportunities tailored to individual needs, promoting self-regulated learning and overcoming geographical or bureaucratic constraints (e.g. applications and waiting lists). **Recognition received through eTwinning activities motivates teachers, reinforcing their sense of accomplishment and enjoyment in learning.**

Overall, eTwinning contributes to teachers' personal and professional growth, impacting their reflection, self-regulated learning, ownership and intrinsic motivation, and their enthusiasm for teaching and engagement in their work.

Teachers' **thriving from work** is significantly influenced by eTwinning activities, as indicated by respondents' levels of perceived fulfilment, satisfaction and happiness in their professional roles. The positive impact of eTwinning is noteworthy, and contributes to better emotional, social and psychological wellbeing, which are associated with lower stress and burnout, higher teaching quality and better student support. eTwinning was perceived as less impactful in addressing broader challenges such as work-life balance, job security and physical health and wellbeing.

Nevertheless, the qualitative data suggest that **eTwinning serves as a protective factor against burnout and stagnation**, mainly due to social support, resource exchange and recognition. More specifically, recognition for eTwinning activities was described as **increasing**

teachers' value and status, which counteracts the undervaluation of the teaching profession in many parts of society.

Moreover, eTwinning significantly impacts teachers' **social wellbeing**, reporting positive impacts in areas such as respect, belonging, value, support and fairness at work. The qualitative data revealed that **eTwinning encourages open communication, trust and empathy among peers**, nurturing robust and diverse interpersonal relationships without judgment or disrespect. These relationships may extend beyond professional collaboration and turn into meaningful friendships. Having a recognised role like eTwinning group moderator or ambassador empowers teachers even further, encouraging ownership and collective responsibility.

The eTwinning community is perceived as a space for mutual support and problem-solving, cultivating trust and reliability among colleagues through shared experiences. **Recognition for eTwinning activities validates individual contributions, enhancing teachers' value and status** in the community.

Finally, participating in eTwinning significantly impacts teachers' **existential wellbeing** by providing opportunities for personal and professional fulfilment. Teachers' self-perception changed from solitary individuals to integral members of a dynamic community, improving their perseverance and adaptability while overcoming challenges collaboratively. eTwinning was said to help teachers make **conscious choices that align with their aspirations** and promote work-life balance through essential skills and self-awareness. Moreover, it influenced teachers' career trajectories, stimulating career transitions and geographical mobility and nurturing sustainable careers that align with their individual values and provide opportunities for reinvention.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report explores teachers' perceptions of their own wellbeing in the context of their involvement in eTwinning activities via a mixed-method approach (survey and interviews). The report focuses on how teachers perceive their current wellbeing and how eTwinning activities impact it. Wellbeing is a multifaceted concept and this introduction briefly discusses the dimensions of wellbeing to explain how the concept applies to this study.

Teachers are pivotal in guiding pupils' cognitive and social development. However, ensuring teachers' own wellbeing often presents challenges, such as heavy workloads and insufficient resources (European Commission, European Education and Culture Executive Agency, et al., 2021). Recognising and effectively addressing the dimensions of **teachers' wellbeing is crucial to maintaining and improving education quality**. Teachers' psychological state impacts their own personal wellbeing and influences their pupils' wellbeing and performance (Spilt et al., 2011; Roffey, 2012; Braun et al., 2020; Glazzard & Rose, 2020). Research also shows a correlation between teachers' mental health and wellbeing and that of their pupils (Harding et al., 2019). Teachers who experience chronic stress or emotional strain may struggle to effectively teach and engage with pupils, but when teachers feel supported and valued, they can create a positive learning environment for pupils to thrive.

Neglecting teachers' wellbeing can have far-reaching consequences. **Stress and burnout can lead to high turnover rates among teachers**, causing instability in schools, negatively impacting pupils' learning (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Supporting teachers' wellbeing, and that of other school staff, can improve the attractiveness of the teaching profession (Council of the European Union, 2022). A lack of support for teachers' mental health can also contribute to a school culture where issues are not openly discussed, making it difficult for those in need to seek help. **A multi-level approach to addressing teachers' wellbeing** includes provision of resources and a positive work environment that acknowledges their efforts (European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2023).

Wellbeing involves a range of elements. [LifeComp](https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/302967)¹, the European framework for the personal, social and learning to learn key competence (Sala et al., 2020: 36), defines wellbeing as 'The pursuit of life satisfaction, care of physical, mental and social health and adoption of a sustainable lifestyle'. This definition calls for a systemic understanding

1- <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/302967>

that considers interactions between physical, cognitive, emotional, social, existential and environmental factors.

LifeComp identifies the most important ways to improve the following **dimensions of wellbeing**:

- **Cognitive:** Engaging in activities that foster creativity and nurture mental flexibility; promoting personal development and fostering lifelong curiosity and enjoyment in learning.
- **Emotional:** Cultivating autonomy, the ability to make self-directed decisions and self-awareness; understanding and managing one's own emotions, thoughts and actions.
- **Social:** Fostering empathy; demonstrating care for others; being open to seeking assistance when necessary; extending support to those in need.
- **Existential:** Fostering a sense of purpose in life; making deliberate decisions; striving for an equilibrium between work and personal lives.

The literature review added some additional dimensions related to the scope and profile of the participants (teaching staff). **Subjective wellbeing**, which could also be described as happiness, is an individual's personal assessment of their overall life satisfaction. While this evaluation is subjective, it is believed to provide insights into the real conditions of people's lives (Sheldon & Lucas, 2014). According to Renshaw et al. (2015), teaching efficacy and school connectedness are two variables that shape **teachers' subjective wellbeing** and illustrate how their perceptions of competence in their role and belonging in the school community significantly contribute to their overall happiness and job satisfaction.

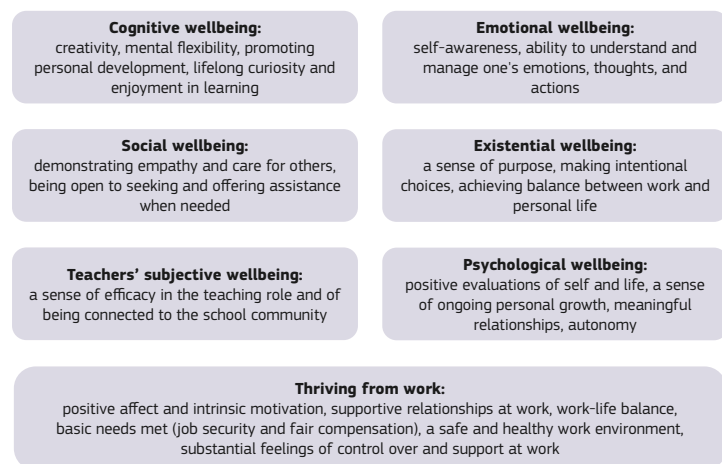
Psychological wellbeing is separate from subjective wellbeing and encompasses broader dimensions (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). It includes positive evaluations of self and life, a sense of ongoing personal growth, a sense of purpose and meaning, cultivation of meaningful relationships, aptitude at managing personal affairs and the external environment, and autonomy. These factors collectively contribute to a deeper, more holistic understanding of individuals' overall psychological wellbeing, emphasising the interplay between personal fulfilment, relationships and environment in shaping individuals' wellbeing.

A similar concept that encompasses several dimensions of wellbeing and satisfaction derived from professional life is known as **'thriving from work'**. This includes work-related emotional and psychological wellbeing, highlighting the positive affect and intrinsic motivation derived from fulfilling work (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Social wellbeing from work also plays a crucial role – supportive relationships and a sense of workplace community increase job satisfaction and personal growth (Kahn, 2007).

Work-life balance ensures that professional and personal domains don't negatively impact each other, leading to lower stress levels and better overall life satisfaction (Kossek & Lautsch, 2018). Meeting basic needs for thriving such as job security, paid leave, opportunities for advancement and fair compensation are crucial (Blanchflower et al., 2011; Davison & Blackburn, 2022). Effective job design and positive work experiences (including substantial feelings of control over work and support at work) contribute significantly to thriving (Kleine et al., 2019). Work-related physical and mental wellbeing, including a safe and healthy work environment, are fundamental to sustained engagement and productivity (Harter et al., 2003).

Figure 1 provides a brief overview of the wellbeing dimensions addressed in this study.

Figure 1: Wellbeing dimensions addressed in this study



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research aim

The aim of this eTwinning monitoring report is to explore the **perceived impact of eTwinning on teachers' wellbeing**. The report focuses on teachers' subjective, psychological, cognitive, emotional, social and existential wellbeing, and their perceptions of 'thriving from work'. Table 1 presents the research questions that guided this study.

Table 1: Research questions

<p>Quantitative</p> <p>(online survey)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is eTwinners' current perception of their wellbeing? What is the perceived impact of eTwinning on their wellbeing?
<p>Qualitative</p> <p>(online interview)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In what ways does eTwinning impact eTwinners' wellbeing? Which features/aspects/activities of eTwinning impact eTwinners' wellbeing?

The third and fourth research questions supplement and extend/enrich the second research question, which was addressed via the online survey.

2.2 Data collection and data analysis

Considering the multifaceted nature of the concept of 'wellbeing' and the need for 'interpretive power²', the research methodology was based on a mixed-methods approach. The study used an online survey (quantitative data collection) and interview guide (qualitative data collection).

Quantitative data were collected via an online survey that was developed in English and administered using EU Survey. The survey (which was accessible from 22 February to 5 April 2024) was distributed by

2 - Interpretive power refers to the ability to understand individuals' experiences and behaviours in relation to their cultural contexts (Brady et al., 2018). In this report, the term is used to partially reflect this, considering that the qualitative data allow for a better contextualisation of the quantitative data.

the Central Support Service and National Support Organisations via the European School Education Platform, newsletters and social media.

The survey included scales (see 'Data collection tools') for exploring the following dimensions of teachers' wellbeing: subjective, emotional, psychological, work-related emotional and psychological, social wellbeing from work, work-life integration, basic needs for thriving, job design and experience of work and physical and mental wellbeing from work. The survey included three sections of questions to respondents about: a) their current perception of their own wellbeing, b) their perceptions of the impact of eTwinning on their own wellbeing and c) their eTwinning profile and experience. An additional question at the end of the survey asked if they were interested in participating in an online interview.

The **qualitative** data collection focused on cognitive, emotional, social and existential wellbeing. Potential overlap of wellbeing dimensions (social, emotional, psychological) between the quantitative and qualitative methodologies was addressed by ensuring that the tools used in each approach were designed to complement rather than duplicate the other. The scope of the scales (quantitative data) and the interview guide (qualitative data) differed in terms of width (coverage of a wide range of dimensions within each dimension of wellbeing) and depth (allowing for context and detailed understanding that could not be captured through the scales alone).

The interviews took place via video-conferencing tools between the end of March and beginning of April 2024. Interview participants were identified from a pool of teachers who expressed interest when filling in the survey. Participants were selected based on the following criteria: geographical allocation, availability, English language proficiency and relevance. For the last criterion, they were asked to briefly write a description about their experience with eTwinning in relation to wellbeing, emphasising that the focus should be on them (teachers) and not on their pupils. The Central Support Service checked and selected the responses when processing participants' submissions and contacted the participants.

The quantitative data were processed, analysed and presented using descriptive statistics. Mean/average scores for the subscales and scales were computed. The qualitative data were analysed based on qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2014), which provides a systematic and rigorous approach to analysing qualitative data. This method is grounded in the principles of inductive reasoning and systematic coding and enables researchers to derive meaningful insights from qualitative data in a structured way (Mayring, 2022).

2.3 Data collection tools

The literature review targeted reliable, valid and scientifically developed scales. Considering the scope of this report, the number of items included in each scale/questionnaire and their availability and limitations, the following tools were selected:

- **Teacher Subjective Wellbeing Questionnaire (TSWQ)**: an eight-item instrument with two subscales: teaching efficacy and school connectedness. Teachers' subjective wellbeing is measured under the lens of these two variables (Renshaw et al., 2015; Renshaw, 2020). The tool remains consistent for teachers at primary and lower and higher secondary school levels (Mankin et al., 2017).
- **Psychological Wellbeing Scale (PWS)**: an 18-item instrument based on self-determination theory, with six subscales: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).
- **Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS)**: a brief scale comprised of 20 items, with 10 measuring positive affect (e.g. excited, inspired) and 10 measuring negative affect (e.g. upset, afraid) to measure mood or emotion (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988).
- **Thriving from Work Questionnaire (TfWQ)**: a 30-item instrument developed by Harvard University with six subscales: work-related emotional and psychological wellbeing; social wellbeing from work; work-life integration; basic needs for thriving; job design and experience of work; and physical and mental wellbeing from work. Although not all subscales are considered relevant to this study, the researchers who developed the questionnaire propose administering it as a whole (Peters et al., 2023).

The entire scales or subscales were combined with additional close-ended questions on respondents' backgrounds/profiles. The survey asked an open-ended question at the beginning of the interview on participants' backgrounds/profiles. These data are presented in the first sections of the quantitative and qualitative analyses to better contextualise the data analysis.

An interview guide based on six thematic groups was developed and applied to help gather data. The first group included introductory questions about participants' profiles, their engagement with eTwinning

activities (professional development, community engagement and eTwinning projects) and motivation for joining these activities. The second group asked for participants' perceptions of the impact of eTwinning on cognitive wellbeing (continuous learning and reflective practice and areas of personal/professional growth). The third group targeted emotional wellbeing (sense of belonging and self-worth) and the fourth focused on social wellbeing (interpersonal relationships and support from and to the community). The fifth group asked about existential wellbeing (purpose, work-life balance and life decisions) and the sixth asked about the impact of recognition on their emotional, social and cognitive wellbeing.

Figure 2: Wellbeing dimensions and data collection



3. RESULTS

3.1 Profile of survey respondents

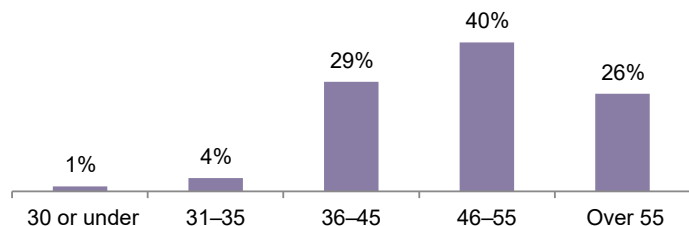
The survey yielded 503 valid responses from 41 countries. Italian respondents represent the largest proportion, comprising 15 % of the sample, followed by Romanian (12 %) and Turkish (10 %) teachers³ (Table 2).

Table 2: Country allocation with at least 10 respondents

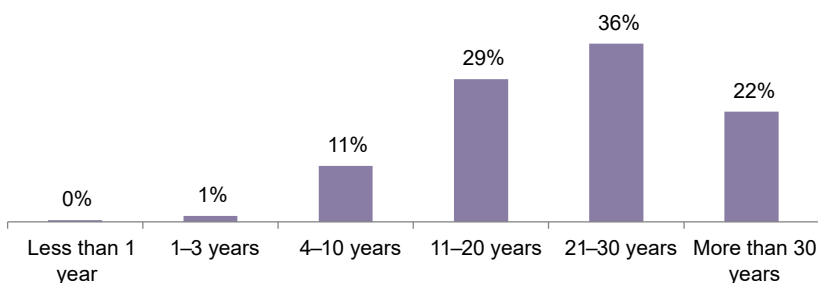
Country	Percentage	Country	Percentage
Italy	15 %	France	3 %
Romania	12 %	Moldova	3 %
Türkiye	10 %	Poland	2 %
Greece	7 %	Albania	2 %
Spain	6 %	Georgia	2 %
Croatia	5 %	Slovakia	2 %
Serbia	5 %	Ukraine	2 %
Portugal	3 %		

In terms of age distribution, Figure 3 illustrates that most respondents were aged 46–55, representing 40 % of the total ($N = 503$), and indicating a significant proportion of experienced teachers. Following closely behind are respondents aged over 55 at 26 %, whilst 29 % of respondents were aged 36 to 45. Only 4 % of respondents were aged 31–35, and the smallest cohort was teachers aged 30 or under, at only 1 %. This implies a lower representation of younger teachers in this survey.

³ - The majority of the respondents surveyed were subject teachers, so the term 'teachers' is used interchangeably with 'participants' and/or 'respondents'.

Figure 3: Respondents' age

The survey results show a range of experience levels among participants. A substantial majority (58 %) have dedicated at least two decades to school education (Figure 4), with an additional 29 % boasting a tenure of 11–20 years. 11 % of respondents have between 4–10 years of experience, while a smaller proportion (1 %) are newcomers with 1–3 years of experience.

Figure 4: Years of work in school education

As seen in Figure 5, most respondents work in secondary education (60 %), 30 % of which work in upper secondary education, 24 % in lower secondary and 6 % in initial vocational education and training (IVET). Primary education follows closely behind with 30 % of respondents, and early childhood education and care (ECEC) accounts for 10 % of responses.

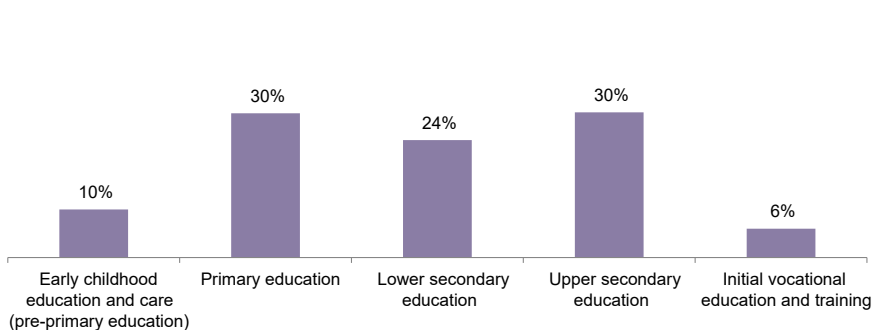
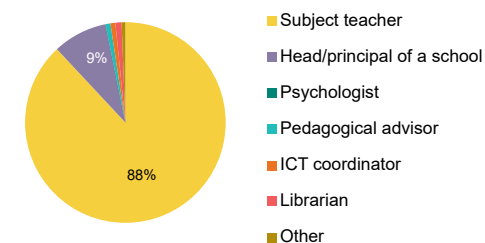
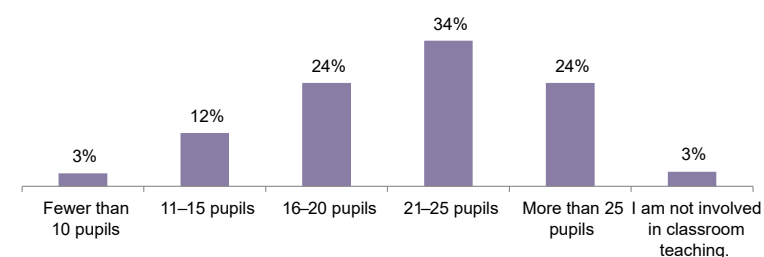
Figure 5: Educational level of work

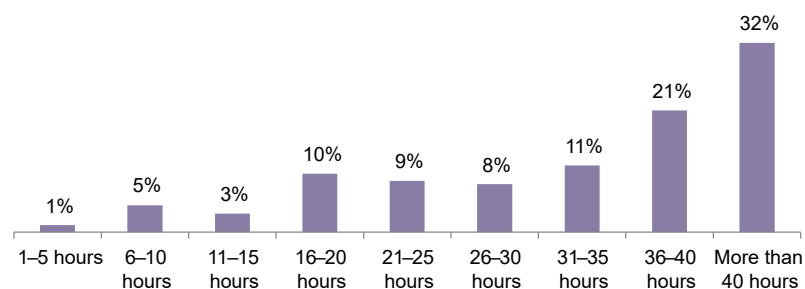
Figure 6 reveals that the majority of respondents (88 %) are subject teachers. Heads/principals of schools make up 9 %, and pedagogical advisors, ICT coordinators and librarians represent 1 % each. No psychologists answered the survey, and a few respondents reported other roles such as heads of studies, assistants to the head/principal of the school or speech therapists.

Figure 6: Respondents' main position

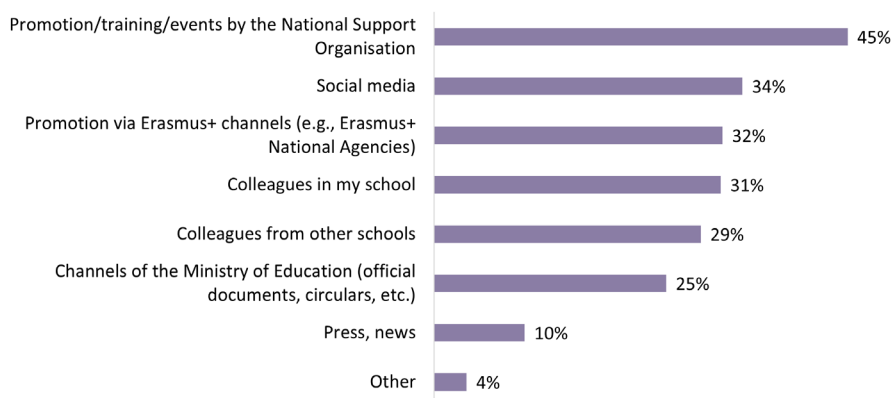
Most of the teachers surveyed (34 %) said that their class has 21–25 pupils (Figure 7), followed by those who have more than 25 or 16–20 pupils, each representing 24 % of respondents. 12 % said they teach classes with 11–15 pupils, whereas a smaller proportion (3 %) had fewer than 10 pupils. 3 % also stated that they are not involved in classroom teaching.

Figure 7: Number of pupils in classroom

Teachers reported a wide range of weekly work hours, encompassing all work-related activities, including teaching, planning and preparing lessons, assessing and grading pupils, parent sessions and administrative duties (Figure 8). 1 % reported that they work between 1 and 5 hours per week and 5 % said 6–10 hours. Moving up the scale, 3 % reported 11–15 working hours and 10 % said they work 16–20 hours weekly. Nearly 10 % of respondents said they spend 21–25 hours a week on their work, while 8 % reported 26–30 hours. The majority of teachers said they work more than 30 hours per week, 11 % said 31–35 hours, 21 % said 36–40 hours and 32 % reported working over 40 hours per week.

Figure 8: Total hours of work per week

According to Figure 9, a significant proportion of teachers (45 %) learned about eTwinning through promotion, training or events organised by their country's National Support Organisation, and 34 % of respondents discovered eTwinning through social media platforms. Promotion via Erasmus+ channels such as Erasmus+ National Agencies also played a significant role, with 32 % of respondents citing them as sources of information. Colleagues in their own schools were influential for 31 % of teachers, while 29 % learned about eTwinning from colleagues in other schools. Ministry of Education channels or other relevant ministries were noted by 25 % of respondents and press and news sources raised awareness for 10 % of teachers. A smaller percentage, 4 %, reported discovering eTwinning through other means including family members, their university studies and massive open online courses (MOOCs) organised by European organisations.

Figure 9: Source of information about eTwinning

Respondents cited a variety of motivations for registering in eTwinning (Figure 10). The main reason (73 % of respondents) was the desire to collaborate with other partners in Europe. 71 % expressed interest in exploring new forms of pedagogy, highlighting a keenness to innovate their teaching practices. 65 % were looking to become part of a community of European teachers, emphasising a desire for connection with their peers, and 60 % of teachers aimed to challenge their current practices, viewing eTwinning as a source of fresh opportunities. 35 % recognised the potential that eTwinning has for facilitating access to Erasmus+ partnerships, indicating a strategic approach to international collaboration. 33 % found professional recognition by participating. Encouragement from different sources played a pivotal role in motivating teachers to join eTwinning: 23 % cited encouragement from colleagues and 18 % were prompted by their National Support Organisation. 14 % indicated that their decision was influenced by their school principal. 16 % highlighted the rewards and benefits offered by their ministry as a tangible incentive for participating. Finally, 12 % of respondents said they registered due to curiosity, suggesting openness to exploring new avenues.

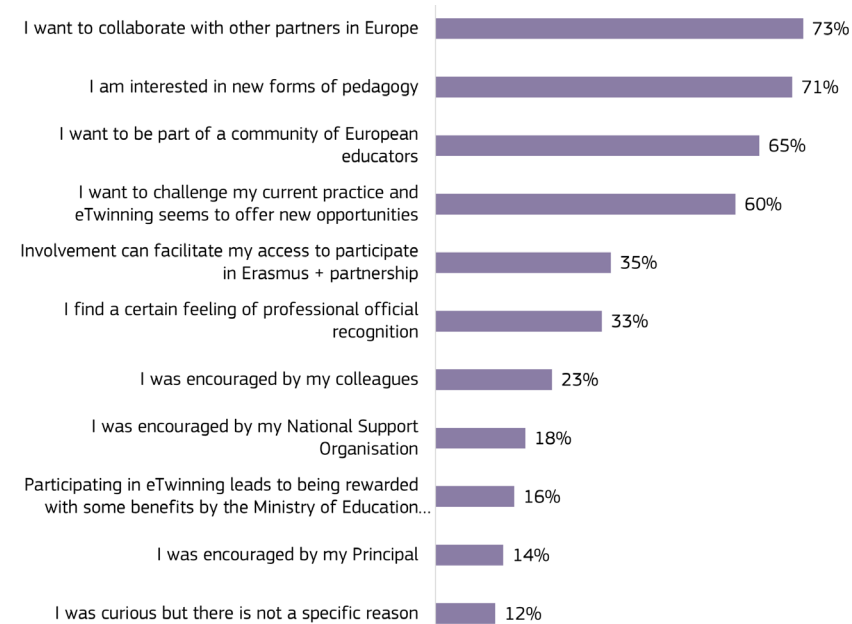
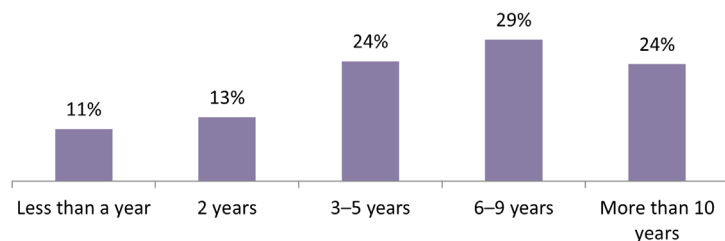
Figure 10: Main reasons for registering in eTwinning

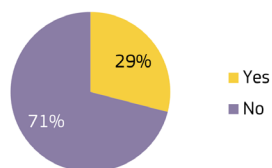
Figure 11 shows that a substantial proportion (29 %) of respondents have been registered in eTwinning for 6–9 years, with a significant level of experience and commitment. Following closely, 24 % have been registered for over a decade, demonstrating a longstanding dedication to the eTwinning community. Another 24 % fall within the 3–5-year range, reflecting substantial mid-term engagement. 13 % have been registered for 2 years, while a smaller but noteworthy proportion (11 %) who registered in the past year.

Figure 11: Number of years registered in eTwinning



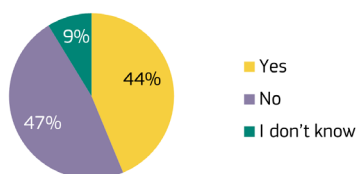
Approximately 29 % of the teachers surveyed are eTwinning ambassadors, whilst the majority (71 %) indicated are not (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Respondents' role as eTwinning ambassador



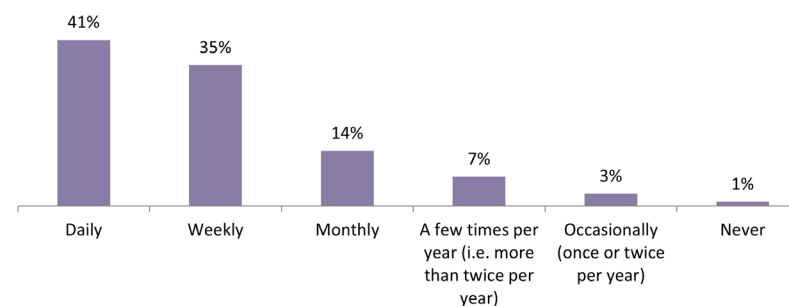
44 % of respondents said that their school has been awarded an eTwinning School Label (Figure 13), which is a very high figure (fewer than 5 % of all schools registered in eTwinning are eTwinning Schools). On the other hand, 48 % of respondents said that their school has not received this recognition. 9 % of teachers admitted to being unsure about their school's eTwinning School Label status.

Figure 13: Respondents' school with an eTwinning School Label

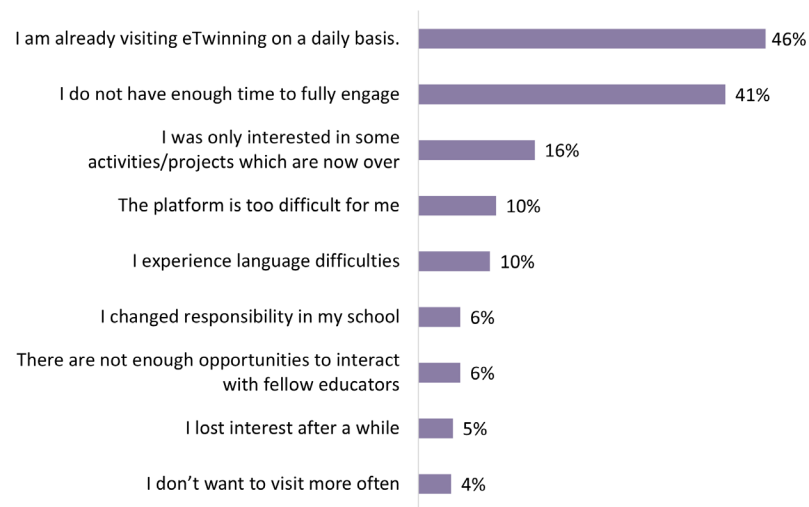


Teachers' engagement with the eTwinning area of the platform varies significantly, as shown in Figure 14. A substantial proportion (41 %) of participants reported visiting the platform daily, indicating a high level of involvement. Closely behind, 35 % of teachers said that they visit the eTwinning area weekly, reflecting a consistent commitment. Moving to less-frequent engagement, 14 % reported visiting monthly, while a smaller yet notable 7 % of respondents said they accessed the eTwinning area a few times per year. A mere 3 % of the respondents visit sporadically, either once or twice per year, and 1 % of teachers reported never visiting the eTwinning area.

Figure 14: Frequency of visiting the eTwinning area of the platform

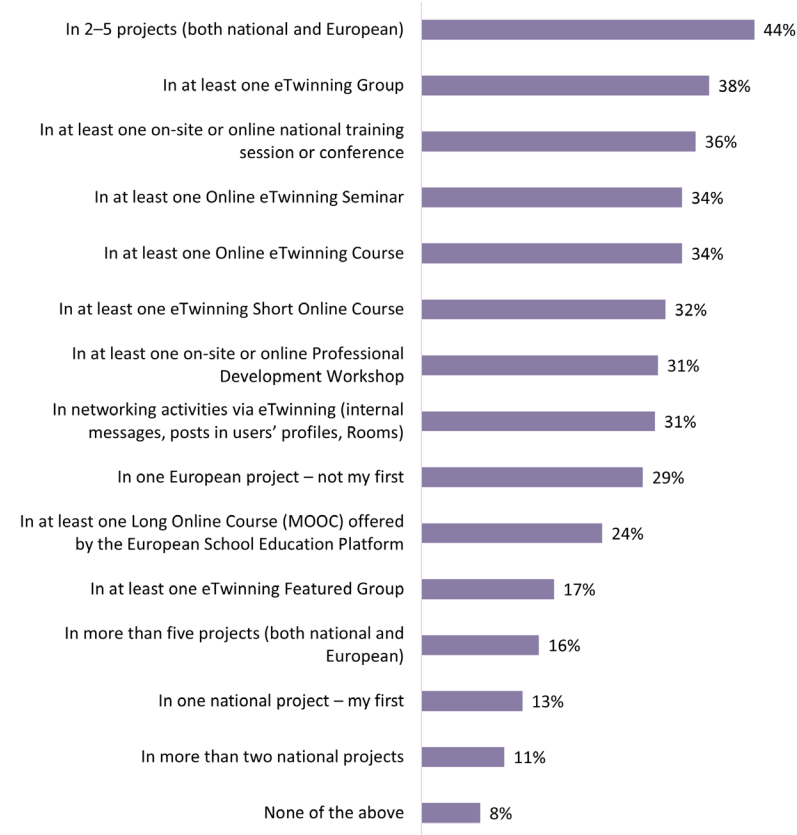


As seen in Figure 15, 41 % of respondents cited a lack of time as the primary barrier to fully engaging with eTwinning. A substantial proportion (16 %) said that their interest waned after certain activities or projects concluded. Language difficulties and finding the platform too challenging were each identified as significant obstacles by 10 % of respondents. 6 % attributed their lower engagement to changes in their responsibilities at school and an equal percentage noted a lack of opportunities to interact with their peers on the platform. A smaller proportion (5 %) reported losing interest over time. Only 4 % explicitly stated that they do not want to visit eTwinning more often.

Figure 15: Reasons for not visiting the eTwinning area more often

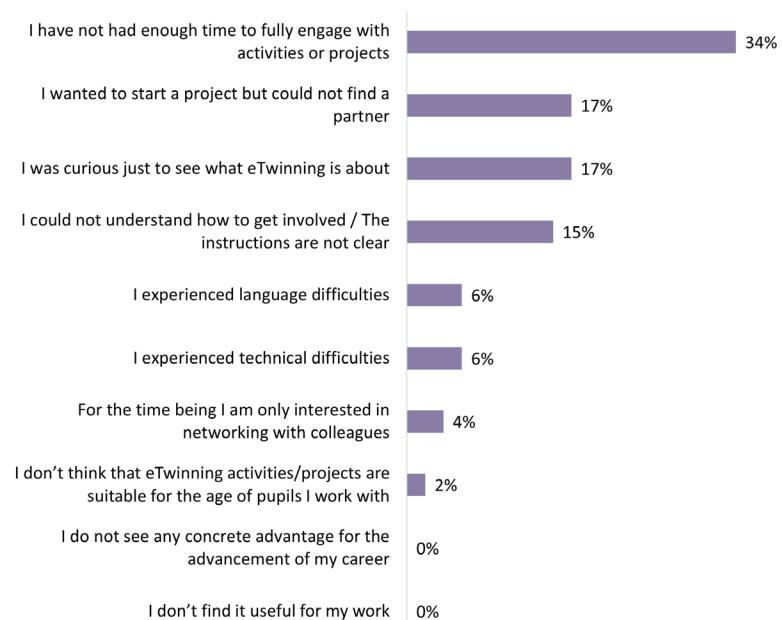
In the past two years, respondents have been actively engaged in various eTwinning activities (Figure 16). At the top of the list, 44 % of the teachers surveyed participated in 2–5 national or European eTwinning projects. Following closely behind, 38 % joined at least one eTwinning group, 36 % attended at least one onsite or online national training session or conference and 34 % participated in at least one online eTwinning seminar and/or course. 32 % of the teachers surveyed engaged in at least one short online course and 31 % took part in eTwinning networking activities, utilising internal messages, posts and virtual rooms to connect and exchange ideas with peers.

A significant proportion (29 %) of respondents participated in one European project and 24 % took part in at least one long online course provided by the European School Education Platform. 13 % had participated in their first national project and 11 % ventured into more than two national projects. 8 % of teachers reported no participation in any of the eTwinning activities within the specified timeframe. This shows that the survey participants are, by and large, engaged eTwinners.

Figure 16: Participation in eTwinning activities during the last two years

Respondents who did not participate in any eTwinning activities in the last two years ($N = 53$) were asked to indicate the main reasons why not (Figure 17). The most prominent reason, cited by 34 % of respondents, is a lack of time to fully engage with activities or projects. This is followed by those who expressed interest in eTwinning but faced challenges finding a partner to collaborate with, or those who were curious about the platform but did not proceed further, each representing 17 % of respondents. 15 % said that they struggled with understanding how to get involved. Technical difficulties and language barriers were also significant hindrances, each mentioned by 6 % of respondents. A smaller proportion of teachers (4 %) stated that, for the time being, they were solely interested in networking with colleagues, while 2 % felt that eTwinning activities/projects were not suitable for the age group they teach. Interestingly, no respondents indicated that they did not find eTwinning useful for their work or see any concrete career advancement advantages.

Figure 17: Reasons hindering participation in eTwinning activities



3.2 Quantitative analysis

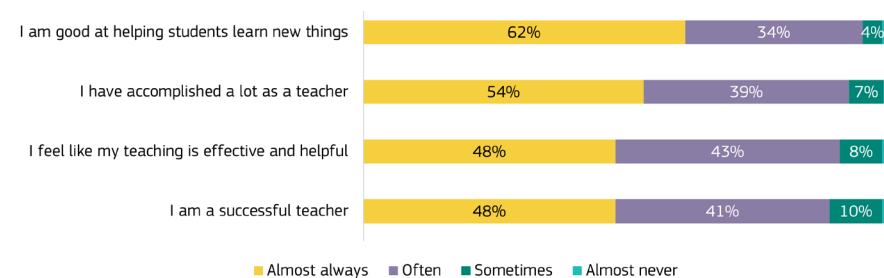
The online survey consisted of two sections. The first aimed to explore respondents' perceptions of their wellbeing in relation to their current teaching practice and the second inquired about their perception of the extent to which eTwinning activities may have impacted their wellbeing.

3.2.1 Teachers' subjective wellbeing

Respondents were asked to reflect on how they had felt in the past month in relation to their teaching efficacy and sense of school connectedness, two variables that constitute teachers' subjective wellbeing (Renshaw, 2020).

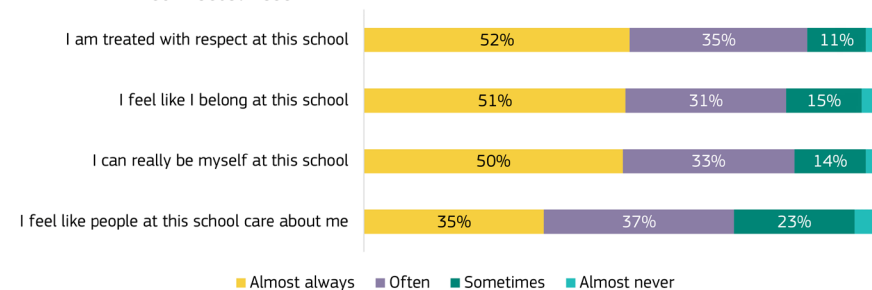
In terms of teaching efficacy (Figure 18), 96 % of respondents reported that they 'almost always' or 'often' feel that they are good at helping pupils learn new things, and 93 % feel that they have accomplished a lot as a teacher. 91 % of teachers reported feeling that their teaching is effective and helpful either 'almost always' or 'often' and 89 % of respondents feel that they are 'almost always' or 'often' successful teachers.

Figure 18: Current perception of teachers' subjective wellbeing – teaching efficacy



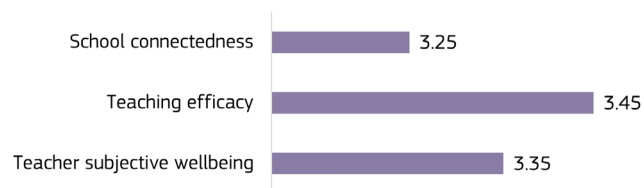
In terms of school connectedness (Figure 19), 87 % of respondents reported feeling that they are treated with respect at their school either 'almost always' or 'often'. 83 % reported feeling that they can 'almost always' or 'often' be themselves at school. 82 % reported 'almost always' or 'often' feeling that they belong at their school, and 72 % 'almost always' or 'often' feel that people at their school care about them.

Figure 19: Current perception of teachers' subjective wellbeing – school connectedness



In computing the average scores of the two variables (Figure 20), analysis revealed that the teachers surveyed reported a high level of teaching efficacy ($M = 3.45$) and school connectedness ($M = 3.25$), with four being the highest score for each. Respondents indicated a higher average score for teaching efficacy, compared with school connectedness – teachers appraise their teaching behaviours as effectively meeting environmental demands but report feeling slightly less connected and supported by others at school. The average score across all items to gauge teachers' subjective wellbeing was high ($M = 3.35$), with four being the highest score.

Figure 20: Current perception of teachers' subjective wellbeing – average scores



Regarding respondents' perceptions of the impact of eTwinning activities on their subjective wellbeing (Figure 21), it is evident that a large majority perceive a strong positive effect ('extremely' or 'quite a bit') of eTwinning on their teaching efficacy. Approximately 87 % of respondents indicated that eTwinning positively impacted their feeling of being good at helping their pupils learn new things. 83 % of the teachers surveyed reported that eTwinning positively affected their feeling of being effective and helpful with their teaching, and their sense of accomplishment in their role, reflecting a substantial feeling of fulfilment and productivity in their profession. Eight out of ten respondents reported that eTwinning positively affected their perception of teaching success.

Figure 21: Perceived impact on teachers' subjective wellbeing - teaching efficacy

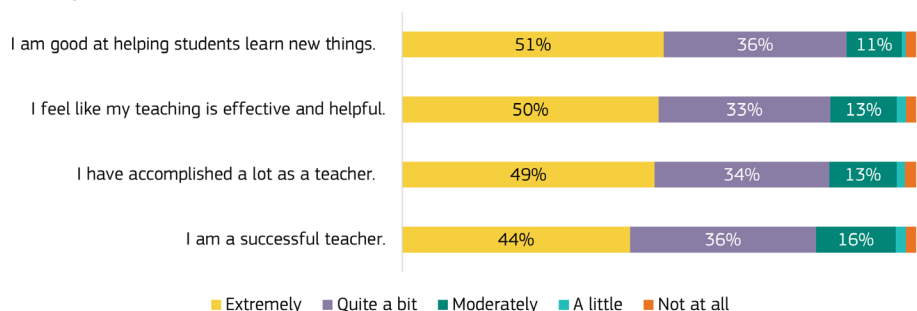
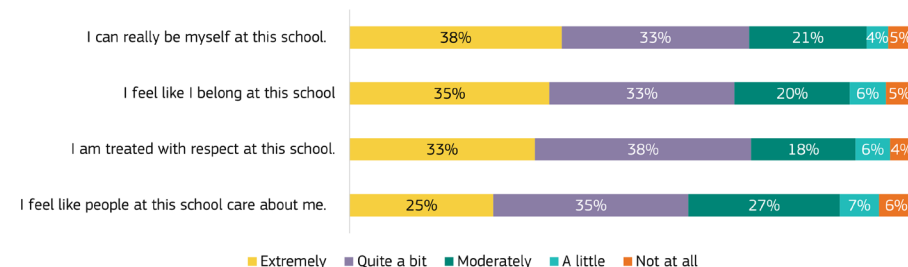


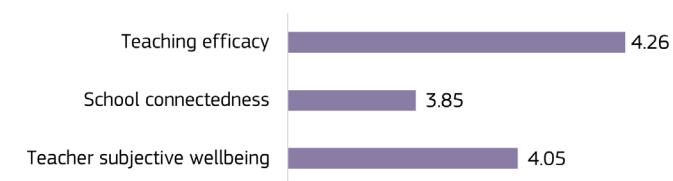
Figure 22 reveals that respondents perceived that eTwinning has positively impacted their sense of school connectedness. Specifically, 71 % said that eTwinning helped them to genuinely be themselves at school and to be treated with respect. Moreover, 68 % reported that eTwinning positively impacted their feeling of belonging at their school, and 60 % said it had a positive impact on their feeling of being cared for.

Figure 22: Perceived impact on teachers' subjective wellbeing – school connectedness



Overall, the perceived impact of eTwinning on teachers' subjective wellbeing is reported to be high ($M = 4.05$), considering that the highest score is five, which corresponds to 'Extremely' (Figure 23). At a deeper level, eTwinning is perceived to have a higher positive impact on teachers' efficacy ($M = 4.26$), compared with their feeling of school connectedness ($M = 3.85$).

Figure 23: Perceived impact on teachers' subjective wellbeing – average scores

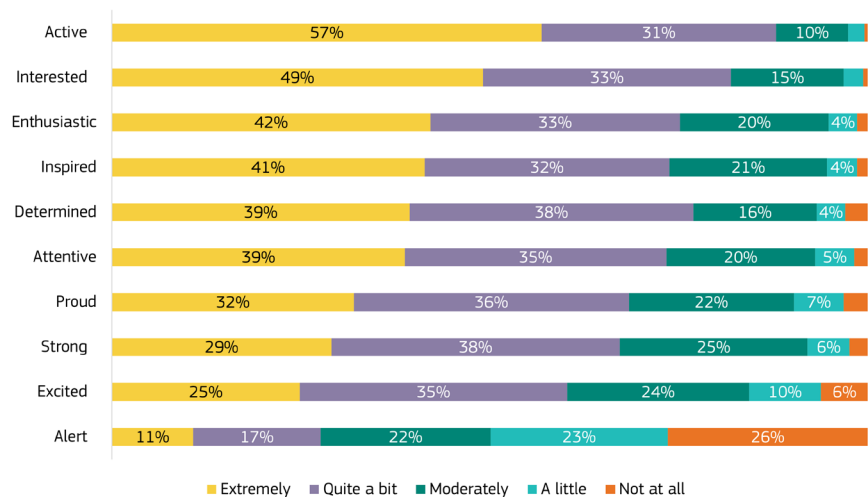


3.2.2 Emotional wellbeing

To explore respondents' **affect, the mental states involving evaluative feelings** such as whether they feel good or bad, like or dislike a situation (Parkinson et al., 1996 as cited by Díaz-García et al., 2020), they were asked to consider their current role and indicate the extent to which they have experienced certain positive and negative affects over the last few days.

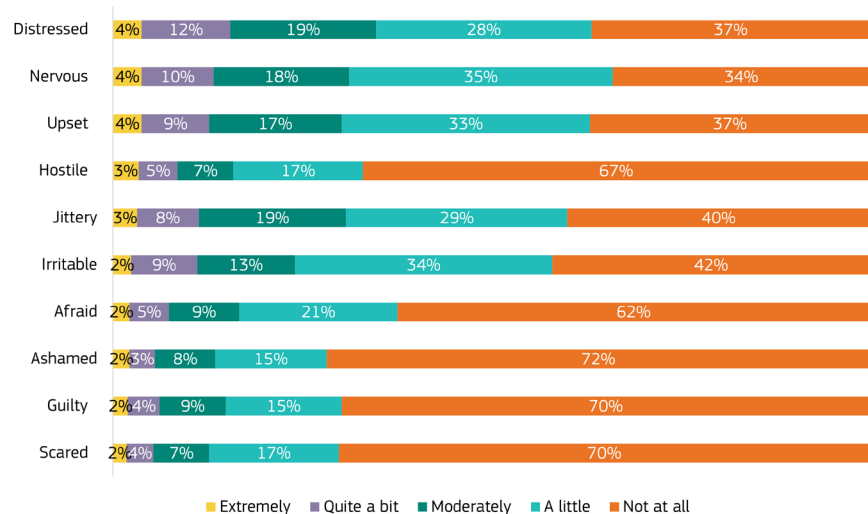
Concerning positive affect (Figure 24), a large proportion of teachers expressed high levels of positive emotions, with a majority feeling 'extremely' or 'quite a bit' active (88 %), interested (82 %), determined (77 %), enthusiastic (75 %), inspired (73 %), attentive (74 %), proud (68 %), strong (67 %), excited (60 %) and alert (28 %).

Figure 24: Current perception of emotional wellbeing – positive affect



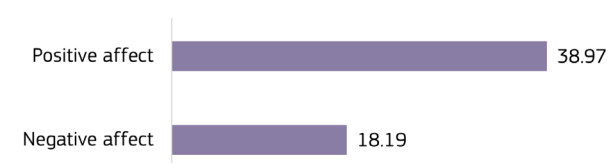
Regarding negative affect (Figure 25), 16 % reported feeling ‘extremely’ or ‘quite a bit’ distressed, followed by those feeling nervous (14 %) and upset (13 %). Approximately 11 % described feeling ‘extremely’ or ‘quite a bit’ jittery and irritable, and a notable proportion reported experiencing fear, with 7 % feeling afraid and 6 % feeling scared. Feelings of guilt and shame were also present, with 6 % and 5 % expressing each emotion respectively.

Figure 25: Current perception of emotional wellbeing – negative affect



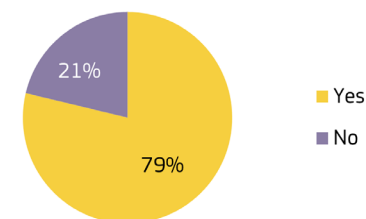
In computing the average scores of the positive and negative affect subscales (Figure 26), analysis revealed that the teachers surveyed reported high levels of positive affect ($M = 38.97$) and low levels of negative affect ($M = 18.19$), with a score range of 10–50. In research conducted by Watson, Clark and Tellegen (1988), the average score of positive affect of the sample they used was 33.33, and the average negative affect was 17.4, indicating that teachers’ average scores in this study are higher than those reported in the aforementioned study. Overall, these findings suggest that while many teachers experience high levels of positive affect, there are still some who may require additional support.

Figure 26: Current perception of emotional wellbeing – average scores



To explore the respondents’ **affect during eTwinning activities**, they were first asked to indicate whether they have participated in any activities in the eTwinning community in the last few days. As shown in Figure 27, 79 % of respondents ($N = 396$) indicated that they have participated in one or more of the following activities: networking, communicating with peers, participating in a professional development activity or implementing an eTwinning project.

Figure 27: Participation in eTwinning community activities over the last few days



Those who responded yes were asked to think of their experience of participating in eTwinning and report the extent to which they have had certain positive and negative feelings during this experience. For positive affect (figure 27), a substantial proportion of teachers expressed high levels of positive emotions, with a majority feeling ‘extremely’ or ‘quite a bit’ interested and active (89 %), inspired (87 %), enthusiastic (84 %), proud (80 %), determined (79 %), excited and attentive (74 %), strong (72 %) and alert (22 %).

Regarding negative affect (Figure 29), most teachers expressed low levels of negative emotions. Specifically, 10 % felt ‘extremely’ or ‘quite a bit’ hostile and/or distressed. Approximately 8 % described feeling ‘extremely’ or ‘quite a bit’ jittery, and 6 % scared, nervous or afraid. Even fewer respondents (5 %) felt ‘extremely’ or ‘quite a bit’ irritable, upset, ashamed or guilty.

Figure 28: Perceived impact on emotional wellbeing – positive affect

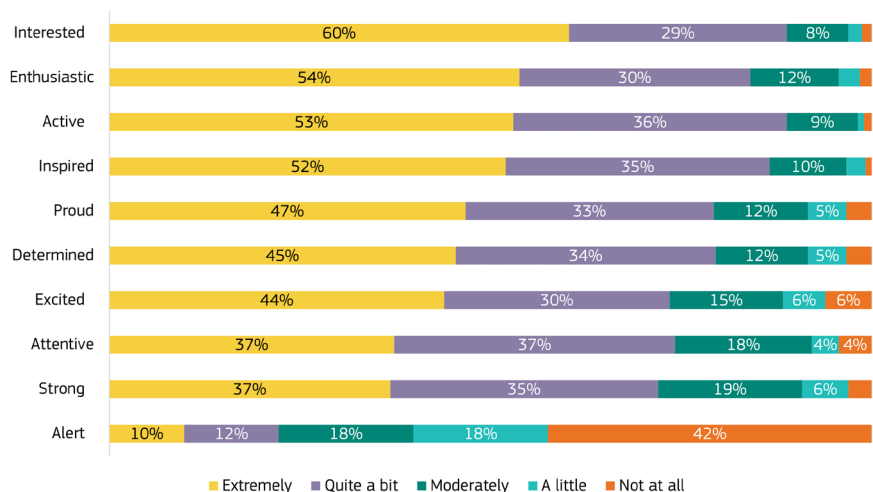
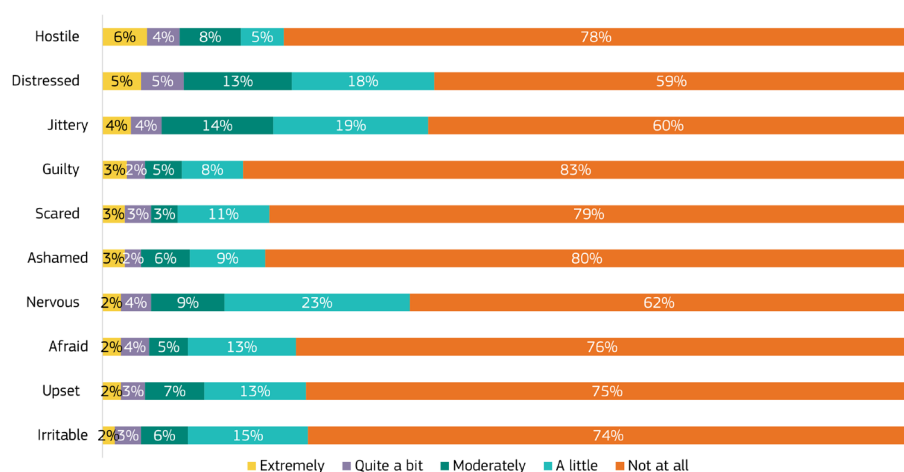
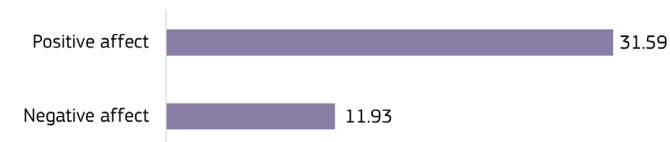


Figure 29: Perceived impact on emotional wellbeing – negative affect



In computing the average scores of the positive and negative affect subscales (Figure 30), analysis revealed high levels of positive affect ($M = 31.59$) and low levels of negative affect ($M = 11.93$), with a score range of 10–50. Teachers’ experiences during eTwinning activities are perceived to be positive, without implying the absence of negative emotions.

Figure 30: Perceived emotional wellbeing during eTwinning activities – average scores



3.2.3 Psychological wellbeing

To explore **psychological wellbeing**, respondents were asked to consider their current role and indicate the extent to which they agree with certain items of the ‘Autonomy’ and ‘Personal growth’ subscales. Autonomy reflects a sense of self-determination and personal growth and a sense of continued development as a person (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

As seen in Figure 31, a substantial 81 % (49 % strongly agree and 32 % somewhat agree) express confidence in their own opinions, even if they diverge from mainstream perspectives. Moreover, a significant majority (71 %) prioritise self-judgment based on personal values rather than conforming to societal norms. Along similar lines, a minority (28 %) tends to be influenced by strong opinions.

Figure 31: Current perception of psychological wellbeing: autonomy

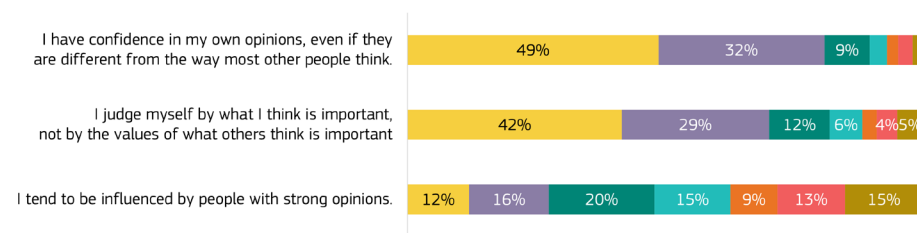
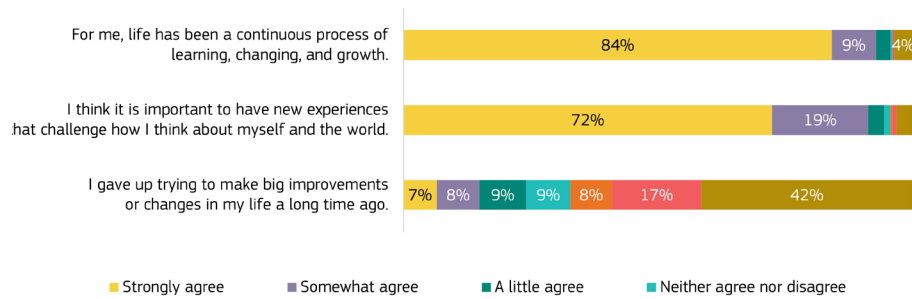


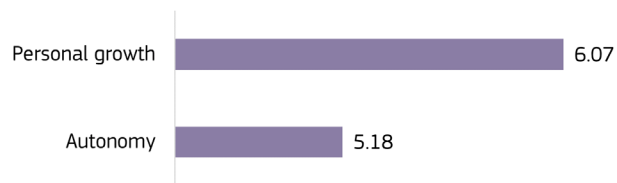
Figure 32 shows that a significant majority of respondents (84 %) strongly agree that for them life is an ongoing journey of learning, change and growth. 72 % of the teachers surveyed believe it is crucial to engage in novel experiences that challenge their perceptions of themselves and the world around them. Conversely, a smaller proportion (15 %) strongly or somewhat agreed with the idea that they have abandoned efforts to instigate significant changes or improvements in their lives.

Figure 32: Current perception of psychological wellbeing – personal growth



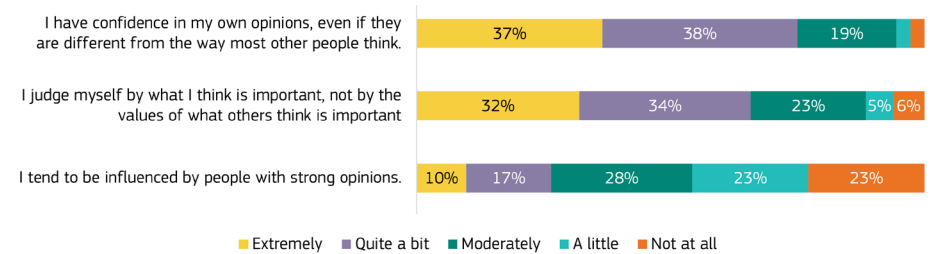
In computing the average scores of the autonomy and personal growth subscales (Figure 33), analysis revealed that the teachers surveyed reported lower levels of autonomy ($M = 5.18$) compared with personal growth ($M = 6.07$). However, both average scores may be considered high, considering that they can range from 1–7 (7 corresponds to ‘Strongly agree’). The findings suggest that the teachers surveyed exhibit a strong sense of autonomy and confidence in their beliefs, which could positively impact their psychological wellbeing. In addition, a considerable proportion of teachers prioritise personal growth and are receptive to experiences that foster continuous learning and development. Overall, the teachers surveyed perceive more opportunities for personal growth compared to their sense of autonomy.

Figure 33: Current perception of autonomy and personal growth – average scores



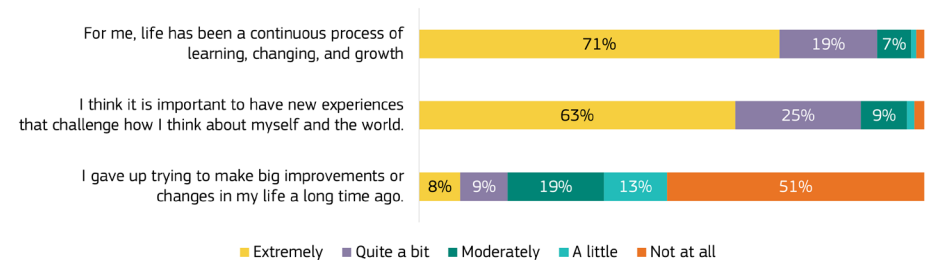
Respondents also indicated the extent to which they perceive that eTwinning has positively affected the personal growth and autonomy dimensions of psychological wellbeing (Figure 34). 75 % of respondents reported feeling positively impacted (extremely or quite a bit) in terms of confidence in their own opinions, even if they are different from the way most other people think. Likewise, 66 % indicated that they have been positively impacted in terms of judging themselves by what they think is important and not by the values of what others think is important. Only 27 % reported that eTwinning impacted their feeling of tending to be influenced by people with strong opinions.

Figure 34: Perceived impact on psychological wellbeing – autonomy



Regarding personal growth (Figure 35), 90 % of respondents reported feeling positively impacted (extremely or quite a bit) in terms of perceiving their life as a continuous process of learning, change and growth. Similarly, 88 % indicated that eTwinning positively affected their perception of having new experiences that challenge the way they think about themselves and the world. Only 17 % suggested that eTwinning impacted their feeling of giving up on making big improvements or changes in their lives.

Figure 35: Perceived impact on psychological wellbeing – personal growth



In computing the average scores of the autonomy and personal growth subscales (Figure 36), analysis revealed that the teachers surveyed reported a higher positive impact on personal growth ($M = 3.30$) compared with autonomy ($M = 2.72$); yet both average scores appear to be above average, considering that they can range from 1–5 (5 corresponds to ‘extremely’). This finding suggests that the teachers surveyed perceive a higher impact on their personal growth compared to their sense of autonomy.

Figure 36: Perceived impact on psychological wellbeing – average scores

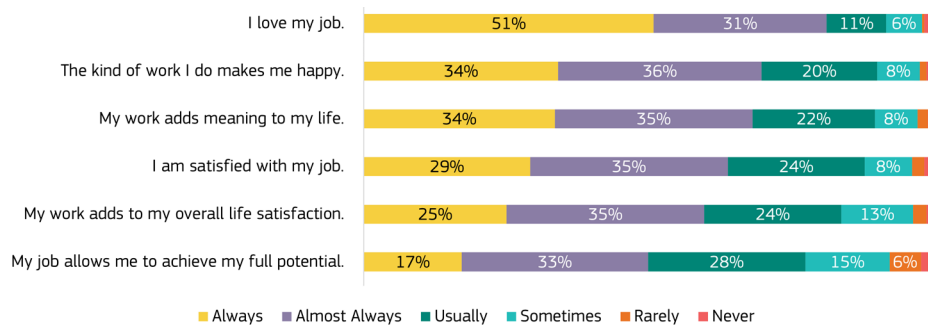


3.2.4 Thriving from work

Respondents were asked to indicate how they perceive their day-to-day work over the last month by completing the **‘Thriving from Work’** questionnaire (Peters et al., 2023). The questionnaire includes the following subscales: work-related emotional and psychological wellbeing, social wellbeing from work, work-life integration, basic needs for thriving, job design and experience of work, and health, physical and mental wellbeing from work.

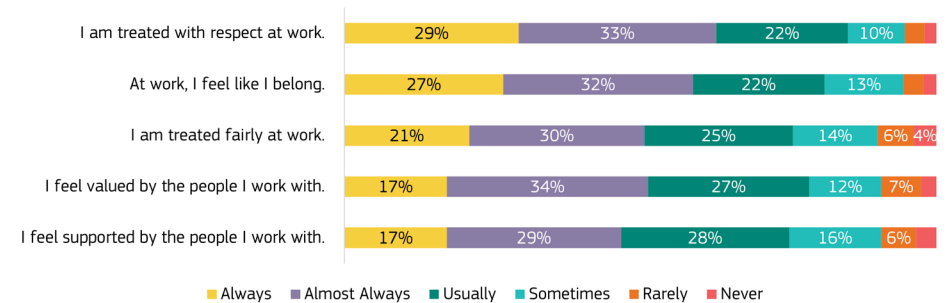
According to Figure 37, a significant proportion of respondents feel positively about their jobs. 82 % expressed that they ‘always’ or ‘almost always’ love their job. Moreover, a considerable number of teachers reported experiencing happiness in their roles, with a total of 70 % stating that the kind of work they engage in ‘always’ or ‘almost always’ brings them happiness. This is closely followed by the 69 % who reported ‘always’ or ‘almost always’ finding meaning in the work they do, indicating that their profession adds a sense of purpose to their lives. Similarly, most respondents expressed satisfaction with their jobs, with 64 % reporting overall job satisfaction ‘always’ or ‘almost always’ and 60% commenting that their work adds to their overall life satisfaction. Half of respondents (50 %) indicated that they can ‘always’ or ‘almost always’ achieve their full potential in their roles.

Figure 37: Current perception of work-related emotional and psychological wellbeing



Focusing on the social wellbeing of teachers in their work environment, the data reveal several key insights (Figure 38). Notably, 62 % indicated that they ‘always’ or ‘almost always’ feel that they are treated with respect in their work environment. 59 % expressed a sense of belonging at work, emphasising the importance of feeling included in and connected to the workplace community. 51 % of teachers ‘always’ or ‘almost always’ feel they are treated fairly at work and are valued by the people they work with. 46 % of respondents ‘always’ or ‘almost always’ feel supported by their colleagues.

Figure 38: Current perception of social wellbeing from work



Regarding work-life integration (Figure 39), a substantial proportion (70 %) of teachers reported ‘always’ or ‘almost always’ feeling safe during their commute to and from work. A considerable proportion of respondents (42 %) said that they can easily manage their job and attend to their own and their family needs. However, fewer respondents (36 %) reported feeling able to achieve a healthy balance between their work and life outside of work (12 % ‘always’ and 24 % ‘almost always’).

Figure 39: Current perception of work-life integration

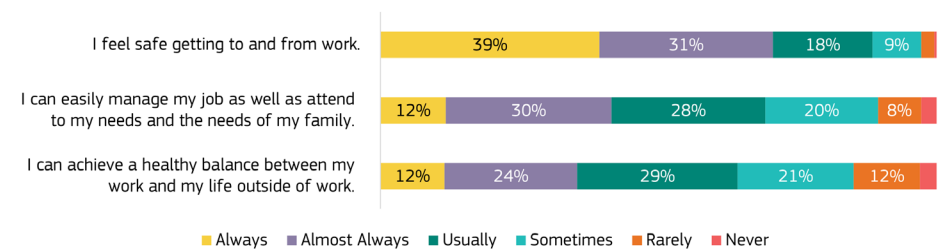
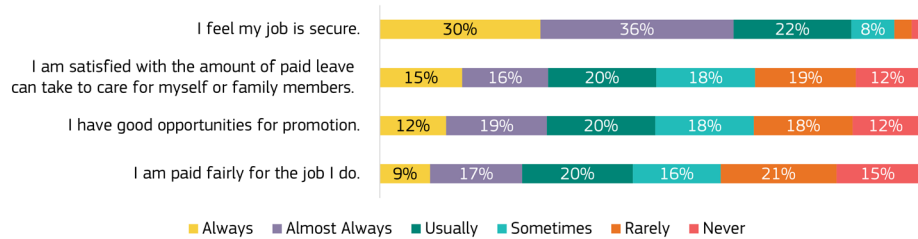


Figure 40 shows that a considerable proportion of respondents reported feeling secure in their jobs, with a combined 66 % indicating that they ‘almost always’ or ‘always’ feel their job is secure. On the other hand, fewer respondents (31 %) expressed satisfaction with their amount of paid leave and/or felt assured about their opportunities for promotion,

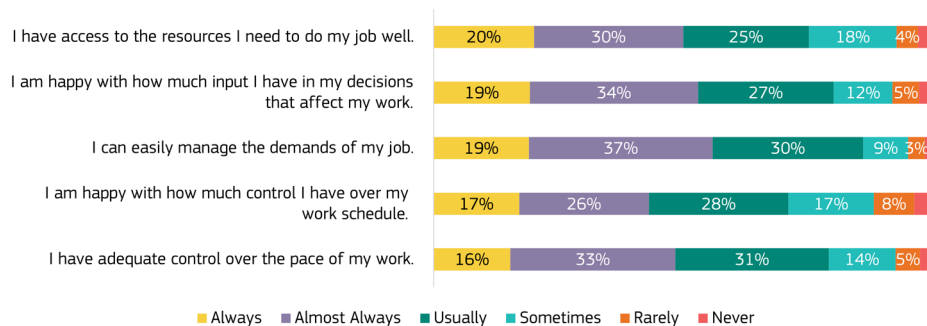
with only 31 % reporting 'almost always' or 'always' having good opportunities for advancement. A smaller proportion (26 %) feel they are paid fairly for the work they do.

Figure 40: Current perception of basic needs for thriving



Focusing on respondents' job design and experience of work (Figure 41), it is evident that a significant proportion of respondents feel they have substantial control and support in various aspects of their work. More than half of participants reported 'almost always' or 'always' feeling that they have adequate control over the pace of their work (49 %), can manage the demands of their job (56 %) or are happy with the level of input they have in decisions affecting their work (53 %). Moreover, a considerable proportion of teachers (50 %) indicated 'always' or 'almost always' having access to the resources needed for performing their duties effectively. Fewer respondents (43 %) 'almost always' or 'always' feel happy with the level of control they have over their work schedules.

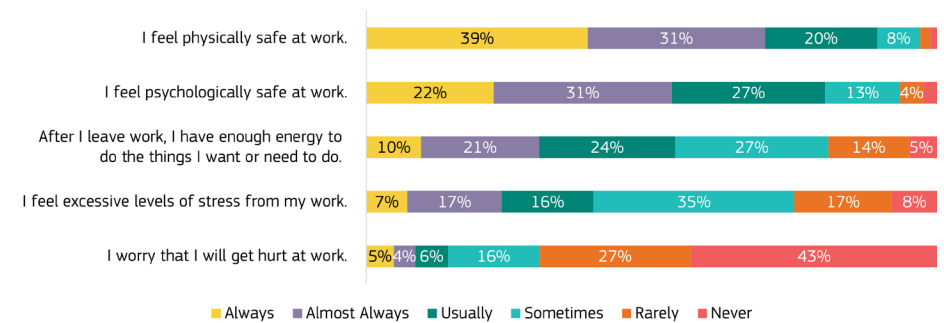
Figure 41: Current perception of job design and experience of work



Concerning respondents' health, physical and mental wellbeing from work (Figure 42), about 70 % 'always' or 'almost always' feel physically safe at work, and 53 % reported feeling psychologically safe at work. Moving to the lower combined percentages, only 31 % of the teachers surveyed reported feeling that they 'always' or 'almost always' have enough energy after work to engage in activities they desire or need to

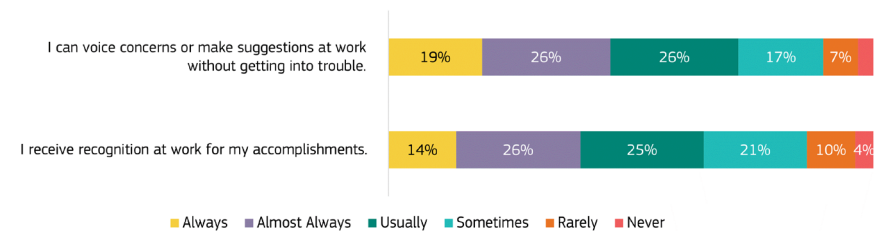
do, potentially reflecting a significant proportion of them feeling drained or fatigued by their work responsibilities. Similarly, 24 % of respondents expressed 'always' or 'almost always' experiencing excessive levels of stress from their work, highlighting a considerable proportion of teachers that encounter significant stressors in their professional roles. Finally, 9 % reported 'always' or 'almost always' worrying about getting hurt at work. While this is the lowest percentage, it still indicates a notable proportion of teachers having concerns about their physical and psychological safety in the workplace.

Figure 42: Current perception of health, physical and mental wellbeing from work



Finally, regarding the items contributing to the general feeling of thriving from work (Figure 43), 45 % of respondents 'always' or 'almost always' feel confident voicing concerns or suggestions without fear of repercussions, and fewer (40 %) feel that they 'always' or 'almost always' receive recognition for their accomplishments at work.

Figure 43: Current perception of general feeling of thriving from work

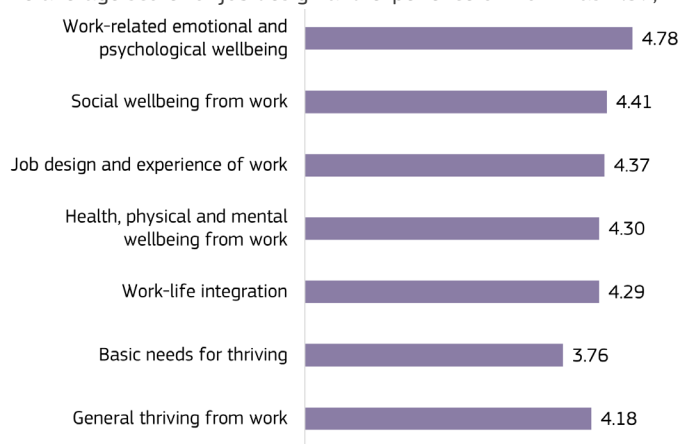


In computing the average scores of the subscales (Figure 44), analysis revealed several insights. In terms of respondents' work-related emotional and psychological wellbeing, the average score was 4.78 (scores may range from 1–6 where 6 corresponds to 'Always'). This finding indicates that while challenges may exist in their roles, a substantial proportion of teachers find fulfilment, satisfaction and happiness in their work, which

positively contributes to their emotional and psychological wellbeing. Regarding respondents' social wellbeing from work, the average score was 4.41, reflecting that a good proportion of teachers feel valued and accepted in their workplace community. However, fostering inclusion, respect, fairness and collegial support would promote teachers' social wellbeing from the workplace.

Figure 44: Current perception of thriving from work – average scores

The average score for job design and experience of work was 4.37,

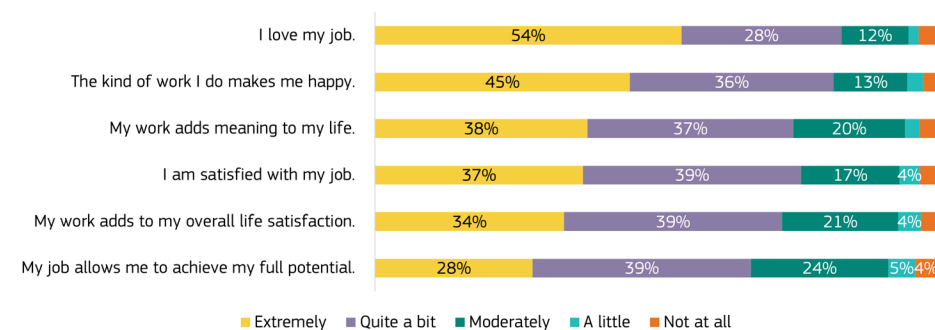


reflecting a positive perception of job autonomy and resource availability among the teachers surveyed. While there are areas of strength in terms of perceived job control and resource access, there are also opportunities for enhancement, particularly in managing workload demands and providing flexibility in work schedules. Regarding physical and mental wellbeing from work, the average score was 4.30. This finding indicates potential areas of concern among teachers in terms of both physical and mental wellbeing, such as emotional and psychological aspects of the workplace and fatigue or exhaustion due to work responsibilities.

The average score for work-life integration was 4.29, reflecting that while a considerable proportion of the teachers surveyed may be able to handle their responsibilities and personal/family needs individually, achieving a balance between work and personal life remains a challenge. Finally, the average score for basic needs for thriving was the lowest of all (3.76), suggesting that the importance of job security, paid leave benefits, opportunities for advancement and fair compensation are crucial. Overall, the average score of respondents' feeling of thriving from work was 4.18 out of 6, reflecting a moderate perceived level.

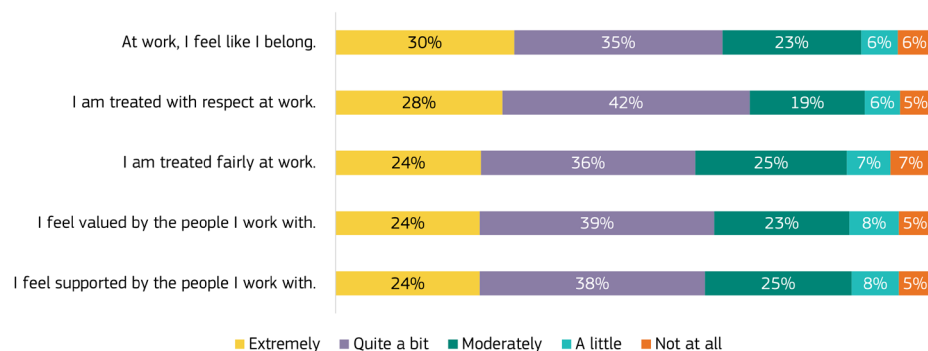
Respondents were also asked to indicate the extent to which eTwinning activities have impacted the aforementioned dimensions of thriving from work. As seen in Figure 45, a considerable proportion of respondents feel that eTwinning has positively affected their perceptions of several job-related aspects. 82 % expressed that eTwinning has impacted their feeling of loving their job 'extremely' or 'quite a bit'. A similar proportion reported experiencing happiness in their roles 'extremely' or 'quite a bit' (81 %). Most respondents stated that eTwinning has positively impacted their satisfaction with their jobs (76 %) 'extremely' or 'quite a bit', and their perception of work adding meaning in their life (75 %) and overall life satisfaction (73 %). Most respondents (67 %) indicated that eTwinning has positively impacted them achieving their full potential.

Figure 45: Perceived impact on work-related emotional and psychological wellbeing



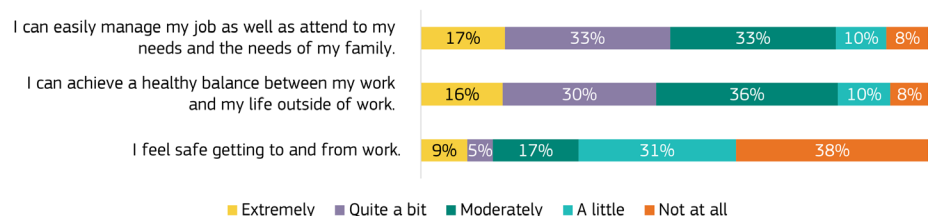
Focusing on the impact of eTwinning on teachers' social wellbeing in their work environment, the data reveal several key insights (Figure 46). Notably, a majority (70 %) indicated that eTwinning positively impacted them in terms of being treated with respect in their work environment 'extremely' or 'quite a bit', followed by those reporting a positive impact on their sense of belonging at work (65 %). Furthermore, 63 % of the teachers surveyed feel that eTwinning positively impacted the feeling that they are valued by the people they work with 'extremely' or 'quite a bit', and 62 % feel supported by their colleagues. Approximately 60 % feel that eTwinning positively impacted the feeling that they are treated fairly at work 'extremely' or 'quite a bit'.

Figure 46: Perceived impact on social wellbeing from work



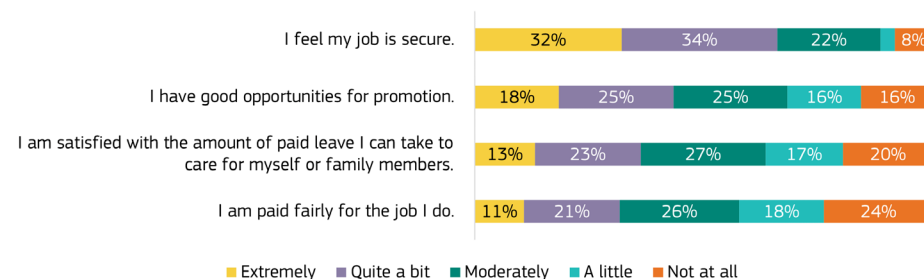
Regarding the impact of eTwinning on teachers' work-life integration (Figure 47), half of respondents (50 %) reported that eTwinning positively affected their ability to easily manage their job and attend to their own and family needs 'extremely' or 'quite a bit'. A considerable proportion of respondents (46 %) indicated that eTwinning positively affected their ability to achieve a healthy balance between their work and life outside of work 'extremely' or 'quite a bit', and 14 % said it impacted feeling safe during their commute to and from work 'extremely' or 'quite a bit'.

Figure 47: Perceived impact on work-life integration



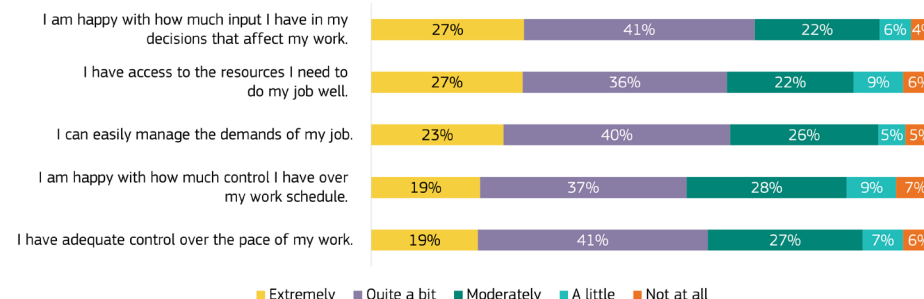
As seen in Figure 48, a significant proportion of respondents reported that eTwinning has positively impacted their feeling of job security (66 %) 'extremely' or 'quite a bit', followed by 43 % who perceived a positive impact on their opportunities for promotion. Only 36 % indicated a positive impact on their satisfaction with the amount of paid leave they can take to care for themselves or family members, and even fewer respondents (32 %) said it impacted their feeling of being paid fairly for the work they do 'extremely' or 'quite a bit'.

Figure 48: Perceived impact on basic needs for thriving



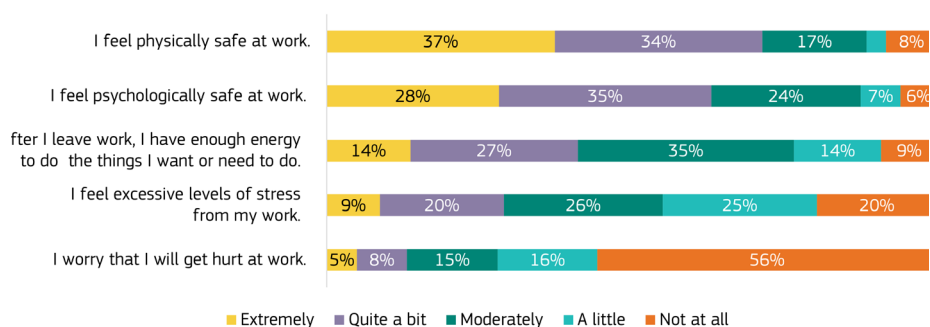
Focusing on respondents' perceived impact on aspects related to job design and their experience of work (Figure 49), a large proportion of respondents (68 %) feel that eTwinning has positively impacted their feeling of happiness with the level of input they have in decisions affecting their work 'extremely' or 'quite a bit'. Similarly, a considerable proportion of teachers (63 %) indicated a positive impact on their satisfaction with the resources available to them for performing their duties effectively. The same percentage reported a positive impact on their ability to easily manage the demands of their job. Fewer respondents, but still a considerable percentage, indicated a positive impact on feeling they have substantial control over their pace of their work (60 %) and their work schedules (56 %) 'extremely' or 'quite a bit'.

Figure 49: Perceived impact on job design and experience of work



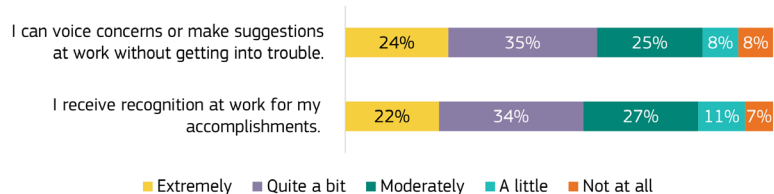
Concerning respondents' perceptions of the impact of eTwinning on aspects related to health, physical and mental wellbeing from work (Figure 50), about 71 % perceived a positive impact on feeling physically safe at work and 63 % on feeling psychologically safe at work ('extremely' or 'quite a bit'). Fewer respondents (41 %) observed an impact on having sufficient energy to do the things they want or need to do, and even fewer (29 %) on feeling excessive levels of stress from their work. Finally, 13 % reported that eTwinning made them feel less likely to be hurt at work.

Figure 50: Perceived impact on physical and mental wellbeing from work



Finally, regarding the dimensions related to general thriving from work (Figure 51), 59 % of respondents perceive that eTwinning has positively impacted their confidence in voicing concerns or suggestions without fear of repercussions ‘extremely’ or ‘quite a bit’, and 56 % feel that eTwinning has impacted how their accomplishments at work are recognised ‘extremely’ or ‘quite a bit’.

Figure 51: Perceived impact on general thriving from work



In computing the average scores of the subscales (Figure 52), analysis revealed several insights. In terms of respondents' perceptions of the impact of eTwinning on work-related emotional and psychological wellbeing, the average score was 4.05 (scores range from 1–5, where 5 corresponds to ‘Extremely’). This finding indicates that while challenges may exist, a considerable proportion of teachers feel that eTwinning has positively affected their sense of fulfilment, satisfaction and happiness in their work, positively contributing to their emotional and psychological wellbeing. The average score for the perceived impact on social wellbeing from work was 3.72, reflecting that a significant proportion of teachers feel that eTwinning has positively affected their sense of feeling valued and accepted in their workplace community.

Figure 52: Perceived impact on general thriving from work – average scores



The average score for job design and experience of work was 3.67, reflecting a generally positive perception of the impact of eTwinning on respondents' job autonomy and availability of resources. Similarly, the average score of work-life integration was 3.53, reflecting that respondents perceive a positive impact on their ability to handle their responsibilities and personal/family needs. A moderately positive impact was perceived in basic needs for thriving ($M = 3.15$), suggesting that eTwinning only moderately impacted respondents' feelings of job security, paid leave benefits, opportunities for advancement and fair compensation. Similarly, the average score for health, physical and mental wellbeing from work was 3.10, indicating that eTwinning had a less positive impact on respondents' emotional and psychological aspects of the workplace, and on their fatigue or exhaustion due to their work responsibilities. Overall, the average score of respondents' views concerning the impact of eTwinning on their perceptions of thriving from work was 3.57 out of 5, reflecting a moderate perceived impact.

3.3 Profile of participants interviewed

Moving to qualitative analysis of the data, this section illustrates the insights gathered from the in-depth interviews conducted with a subset of participants. As mentioned earlier, the participants interviewed were derived from a pool of participants who expressed interest while filling in the survey. Seven participants were selected based on the criteria mentioned in the ‘Data collection and data analysis’ section. This section briefly illustrates their profiles, covering areas such as their **current role**

and professional experience, engagement with different eTwinning activities and motivation for joining these activities.

The participant from Croatia has a tenure of over two decades in teaching and a diverse professional journey. Initially teaching English and German at an elementary school, she later began engaging with Erasmus+ and eTwinning activities. After being a full-time teacher, she became a freelancer and joined a course provider, where she facilitates courses focusing on ICT integration, intercultural communication, tolerance and inclusivity. She recalled her engagement with eTwinning, dating back nearly a decade to when she first became an ambassador and subsequently closely collaborated with the Erasmus+ National Agency in Croatia. Reflecting on her tenure, she highlighted the significance of the onsite eTwinning conferences and events, her participation in eTwinning projects, her presentation at a TED Talk event and the eTwinning community in relation to bridging gaps between teachers with varied backgrounds and experiences.

Participating in eTwinning activities has been a transformative experience for her. Working in a small rural school under challenging conditions left her feeling disappointed and stagnant in her professional life. Despite putting considerable effort into her work and education, a lack of resources and isolation had an adverse effect. Recognising the need for change, she decided to shift her approach to her job, initiating projects and engaging her pupils in eTwinning. She felt that eTwinning offered her the sense of connection and collaboration she craved. The opportunity to connect with like-minded teachers, share ideas and receive feedback was vital. Beyond that, eTwinning introduced her to new ICT tools and teaching methods.

The participant from Greece is an English language teacher and school principal working in lower secondary education. She joined eTwinning 15 years ago and became an eTwinning ambassador in 2009. She is passionate about international collaboration, something that recently led her to become a member of the Greek National Support Organisation. Beyond her official role in the National Support Organisation, she invests considerable time and effort in teaching and training, both as teacher trainer and as a learner. While reflecting on her engagement with eTwinning activities, she proudly recalled her involvement in many eTwinning projects (with approximately 15 awards received, including several national and European Quality Labels). Her school also received the eTwinning School Label under her leadership.

She also has a longstanding commitment to professional development in eTwinning training sessions and courses. She is member of multiple eTwinning groups and the moderator of a large online community for

Greek teachers. Her participation in eTwinning activities was driven by a profound commitment to belonging to a vibrant teacher community, finding support and inspiration in the enthusiasm of her peers. As a school leader and trainer, she felt the responsibility to cultivate a supportive learning environment and instil a deep understanding of pedagogical methods and how they are applied in daily practice through eTwinning.

The participant from Hungary is a primary school teacher with 28 years of teaching experience, living and working in a town. She has an academic background in primary school teaching and professional certification in measurement and evaluation. She has been extensively involved in eTwinning activities over the years, at both national and European level. She has contributed to numerous projects, many of which have gained European recognition. Additionally, she played a pivotal role in promoting eTwinning in her school community, acting as the coordinator for a five-member team. Her commitment to professional development is evident in her participation in eTwinning training sessions and her active involvement in delivering presentations at both national and European events (webinars, conferences etc.).

Her main motivation to engage with eTwinning is her enthusiasm for employing project-based methodologies, complemented by digital tools. She also highlighted community-building and learner-centred professional development activities, which encourage peer learning and peer collaboration. She appreciates her autonomy in running eTwinning projects, enabling herself and her pupils to select topics that align with their abilities and interests without compromising classroom teaching time. Finally, she mentioned that eTwinning served as a bridge that connects teachers across geographical boundaries, which is particularly important for participants in small towns and rural areas.

The participant from Romania is a primary school teacher from a small town with more than 20 years of teaching experience. She devotes around six hours a day to her profession. As an eTwinning ambassador since 2019 and a member of an eTwinning School since 2022, she eagerly embraces opportunities for collaboration and growth in the community. She has become deeply engaged in eTwinning activities, expressing clear enthusiasm for her participation. She actively participates in eTwinning projects and collaborates with ambassadors from other countries.

Despite a busy schedule, she expressed a desire to engage in more professional development activities and plans to initiate courses soon. Her primary motive for engaging with eTwinning activities is a desire for novelty and innovation in her teaching practices. She expressed a need to break away from the monotony of traditional methods and explore new avenues with like-minded colleagues. Moreover, since her pupils were

becoming increasingly adept at using ICT tools, she felt that she needed to adapt her approaches to resonate with their needs and interests.

The participant from Serbia is an English language teacher with over two decades of experience in a village school. Her responsibilities extend beyond traditional classroom duties, engaging in translation, writing, proofreading and online teaching. She manages the demands of teaching with familial responsibilities, striving to maintain a balance. With a daily workload spanning six hours, her commitment to the profession extends into her personal time, mainly due to course preparation and pupil assessment. She became an active member of eTwinning in the last five years and is currently an eTwinning ambassador (the first in her region), a position she eagerly anticipated and views as a significant achievement.

Beyond project participation, she has engaged in professional development activities such as webinars, conferences and online events. She promotes eTwinning in her school, organising presentations and encouraging colleagues to join. Her main reason for participating in eTwinning activities is a strong desire for continuous learning and professional growth. She emphasised that participating in eTwinning is an opportunity to gain new experiences, explore alternative teaching methods and discover innovative strategies that can benefit her pupils. She also expressed enthusiasm for collaborating with other teachers in Europe and learning from diverse perspectives.

The participant from Spain is an English language teacher and Erasmus+ and eTwinning pedagogical advisor based in the outskirts of a large city. She has a variety of professional experience. She works in a state primary school and an initial teacher education institution, preparing future teachers. She has two master's degrees – one in eLearning and another in teaching English as a second language – and is currently working on her PhD, which focuses on eTwinning and pupils' communicative competence. Her journey with eTwinning spans over a decade. She moderates a variety of eTwinning groups and provides online courses to fellow teachers, with a focus on European collaboration and community-building.

In her motivation to join eTwinning, one prevalent theme was an initial drive to enhance her pupils' English skills, recognising the platform's potential. However, as she delved deeper into eTwinning, her focus shifted towards professional development opportunities. She highlighted the significance of engaging in learning events, encountering new people and acquiring new methodologies, all of which contributed to her professional growth. Moreover, she emphasised the value of embracing diverse cultural perspectives, fostering open-mindedness and facilitating meaningful intercultural exchanges.

Finally, the participant from Türkiye is also an English language teacher with 19 years of experience. She holds a master's degree in English language teaching and is currently working at a vocational high school. Her teaching workload amounts to 20 hours per week, supplemented by project activities at her school, ranging from science projects and fairs to being involved in eTwinning and Erasmus+ projects. She initially engaged with eTwinning in 2009 while working at a primary school. After several life events, she reconnected with eTwinning in 2019 just before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. She has actively participated in numerous projects and regularly participates in online learning activities, including workshops and courses.

Her main reason for participating in eTwinning is her belief that teaching transcends conventional classroom teaching; it encompasses collaboration and the cultivation of diverse learning experiences for both teachers and pupils. She also emphasised the accessibility and inclusivity of eTwinning projects compared to alternatives like Erasmus+ projects, in which logistical constraints such as budget limitations often pose barriers. As reported, through eTwinning she found a path on which collaboration knows no boundaries, facilitated by technology that enables interaction with colleagues and pupils from diverse cultural backgrounds. She perceives the virtual exchange of ideas and experiences in the eTwinning community to foster a sense of interconnectedness, enriching her professional development and reinforcing a commitment to lifelong learning.

3.4 Qualitative analysis

3.4.1 Cognitive wellbeing

The qualitative data on the impact of the eTwinning activities on participants' continuous learning and cognitive enrichment revealed several key themes.

Peer learning and collaboration

Regarding practices that promote teachers' learning, participants discussed the significance of **peer learning and collaboration** in the eTwinning community, which enabled them to 'learn a lot from fellow colleagues'. In this context, teachers stressed that the knowledge gained through eTwinning is **practical and directly applicable to their work**, contrasting it with more theoretical forms of professional development ('That is the power of eTwinning ... learning in practice, not learning in theory.'). One teacher reflected on the impact of eTwinning on her **creativity and practical skills**, 'I can say that I feel that I am more creative now. I have creative ideas and I believe that I'm more practical

now.' This suggests that the collaborative nature of eTwinning not only enhances practical application, but also stimulates creative thinking.

Another participant recalled her discussions with other eTwinners, which she perceived to be key contributors to enhancing focus and concentration, 'We have discussions and I feel more focused and concentrated', indicating that intellectual engagement with colleagues helped her maintain a higher level of **cognitive stimulation and attention**. Similarly, one participant collaborated with her colleagues and observed that their methods gave them insights into what makes an eTwinning project successful. She noted, 'I am extremely grateful to the project leaders and the partners who always approached me with a helpful attitude. I learned the most from my colleagues.' These views stress the importance of knowledge exchange among peers, where individuals can freely share ideas **without fear of judgment or disrespect** ('There is no room for feeling (...) mocked or disrespected.'). Nevertheless, one participant emphasised that even when encountering ideas that diverged from her own, she expressed a **willingness to explore alternatives and embrace experimentation** in her teaching, emphasising the supportive and inclusive nature of the eTwinning community.

The interviews also shed light on the **cultural aspect of cognitive enrichment** that occurs in eTwinning collaborations. Teachers noted that working in diverse groups often presented challenges, particularly in understanding different behaviours and perspectives. However, these challenges were seen as opportunities for growth. One teacher said, 'You face some challenges. Sometimes when you are in these groups, you see that some people behave in a certain way and you do not understand why at first. But then you learn that everything has this cultural aspect and then you become even more open-minded.' This exposure to diverse cultural practices not only broadened her worldview, it also enhanced her ability to manage multicultural contexts.

Professional development opportunities

Professional development opportunities offered by eTwinning were another critical aspect highlighted by respondents. One of them reported that the online learning opportunities were 'instrumental in staying updated on new teaching methods and tools, which further contributed to my cognitive enrichment and professional development'. Another participant emphasised the **practical benefits of these learning experiences**. She mentioned learning about new classroom tools and techniques such as warm-up games that she could directly apply in her classes. Other teachers shared specific examples of acquiring digital literacy skills such as video production and utilising innovative apps.

One teacher discussed the **variety of learning opportunities**, ranging from webinars and courses led by experts and teachers to self-paced courses, providing teachers with valuable resources for continuous professional growth. She noted, 'You learn from an expert, from other teachers and the self-paced courses or these courses in which you have to develop something and then you get insights from other people, other perspectives.' This diversity of professional development formats seems to have enabled teachers to **tailor their learning experiences** to their individual needs and preferences. An important element, reflected above, is that these learning opportunities also facilitate **self-directed learning**, enabling individuals to delve into a variety of aspects and gradually expand their repertoires.

Peer assessment emerged as another important source of learning. Through collaborative endeavours and exchanging feedback with fellow teachers, one participant reported experiencing growth and refinement in her pedagogical practices. She said, 'In some courses we had to do learning plans and other teachers provided me feedback ... it was quite enlightening ... and it made my work better and better', suggesting an improvement in reflective practice and instructional design skills. Another participant emphasised that she can 'adopt different materials and select the most suitable teaching strategies for my pupils'. This process of **learning by example** was also emphasised as a crucial benefit, with one teacher noting, 'Learning by example. Let's say this is the most important thing that I took from my colleagues.'

Reflection and reflective practice

In terms of reflection, the data from the interviews suggest that eTwinning activities significantly contributed to teachers' engagement in reflective practices, ultimately enhancing their ability to adapt to new teaching approaches and ideas. One teacher described an iterative process of reflection, involving **initial self-reflection, followed by peer reflection and a return to self-reflection**, creating a continuous loop of professional growth. The teacher illustrated this cycle by saying, 'I feel a process starting from self-reflection then opening up to peer reflection and then again going back to self-reflection.'

One respondent's narrative illustrated a journey of **increased confidence and professional growth** from reflection. At the onset of her career she felt enthusiastic but unprepared for classroom challenges. Over time, through participation in eTwinning, she became more confident in her teaching abilities and more **receptive to constructive feedback** from colleagues. This is evident in her statement, 'So now I feel more confident and I don't take my colleagues' feedback as something bad. I see it more like a way to improve my work. And it really helps. Sometimes you

get nice ideas, other perspectives.' Another respondent similarly noted a transformation from reluctance to openness in discussing her work, influenced by the supportive community of eTwinners. She expressed a **shift from perceiving feedback as judgmental to understanding it as a means of constructive improvement**, 'I was pretty reluctant to talk about my work because I thought that people were judging ... but by participating in and being a member of the eTwinning community, I realised that we are all helping each other to improve ourselves.'

In addition, respondents highlighted the value of reflection while sharing experiences with colleagues through eTwinning, which facilitated a comprehensive understanding of various strategies and practices. One teacher noted that, through eTwinning, she explored methods of classroom assessment strategies by engaging with other teachers. This **exchange of ideas enabled her to identify and adopt good practices**. As the respondent stated, 'Talking to other eTwinners helped me choose the best practices. Let's say that the practices that I thought would be most interesting for my pupils would make me feel good as a teacher, make me successful.' This indicates that the reflective practice initiated in eTwinning activities not only improved her teaching efficacy but also positively influenced her emotional wellbeing. Similarly, another teacher described an **iterative process of trying different methods and observing outcomes**, 'Some pupils responded one way to my teaching method. I tried a different method, or I did it better and the outcomes were better. It worked.' She further expressed her view that continuous reflection and adaptation are essential to **maintaining engagement and avoiding the dangers of stagnation in teaching practice**, 'If you do the same old, same old all the time, you get bored. And so do your pupils, and the outcomes are not that great.'

The opportunity to **compare teaching strategies and outcomes with colleagues was particularly valued**. One teacher said, 'You get specific examples, and you can compare ... so one of the things that I really appreciated was that ability to compare.' This comparative approach helped the teacher to refine her approaches, learn from others' successes and avoid potential pitfalls. She also cultivated the ability to **integrate these new strategies into her personal teaching style**, indicating that eTwinning not only helped her adopt new techniques but also made her aware of the need to tailor these strategies. 'I have been learning and adapting new educational methods to my own practices and personality. Not everything worked for me, so I had to think, to choose what is right for me and my pupils.' Another teacher explained how eTwinning projects facilitated an **ongoing reflection on decision-making processes**. She recalled participating in online meetings with colleagues to determine the final product of the project. During these interactions, she engaged in **critical reflection** on the suitability of different project ideas, ultimately leading to informed decision-making. She stated, 'We hadn't decided on

the final product back then, so we arranged to meet online and we talked about it. Actually, we needed more than a meeting because we had to think in between, note down our suggestions and then discuss all together and combine our thoughts.'

Another teacher articulated a **shift in her perspective on teaching**, crediting eTwinning for this change. She emphasised that eTwinning encourages **flexibility and adaptability in teaching methods**, a necessity in today's rapidly evolving educational landscape. She explained, 'It influences a lot ... It also helps you to be more flexible to adapt ... It changes your whole perspective on teaching.' This reflection highlights how eTwinning has not only **prompted teachers to reconsider traditional methods** but also motivated them to explore and embrace innovative approaches. Along similar lines, another teacher observed that some colleagues resist change, adhering to the belief that if a method works, it should not change. She countered this mindset by stressing the **necessity of experimentation for growth**, saying, 'You cannot improve if you don't try new things', reflecting a broader trend of recognising the need for ongoing adaptation and flexibility. For example, a notable change reported was the practice of **abandoning the teacher-centred approach in favour of a pupil-centred approach**. One teacher explicitly stated, 'I stopped being involved in the teacher-centred approach. The pupil-centred approach and eTwinning changed the way I perceive teaching.' She further illustrated the practical implementation of project-based learning (PBL) as a direct result of her involvement with eTwinning. She explained, 'I employed PBL in my everyday teaching procedure in my classes ... The pupils are the centre of the performance, so they start thinking, they reflect, they collaborate and they finally produce what they produce.'

Lifelong learning

The responses also shed light on the impact of eTwinning participation on teachers' **perceptions of lifelong learning and subsequent personal and professional development**. Teachers perceive eTwinning as a source of continuous learning. One participant emphasised, 'Continuous learning is identical to eTwinning', highlighting the community's role in fostering an environment where learning is a constant, daily experience.

Some of the teachers interviewed articulated a significant shift in their attitudes towards lifelong learning, expressing **enthusiasm and a desire for continuous growth**. One of them remarked, 'Now I want more, and what I really want is to share this feeling with my pupils.' The participant's aspiration to **impart this ethos of lifelong learning to her pupils** also highlights the influence of eTwinning on her professional outlook. Another teacher expressed a deeper commitment to lifelong learning, stating

that 'eTwinning made me a lifelong learner'. This view was echoed in her description of **actively scheduling time for the continuous learning opportunities offered by eTwinning** such as webinars, conferences and online courses. The participant's dedication to planning, as evidenced by her diary, highlights the effect that eTwinning had on her approaches to personal and professional growth.

Another teacher articulated a steadfast commitment to continuous learning and self-improvement, saying that participating in eTwinning activities did not alter her existing views on lifelong learning. However, she acknowledged that **eTwinning had broadened her learning opportunities**, particularly in relation to geographical constraints. She noted that residing in a small town with limited access to funds for travel and accommodation posed challenges to participating in onsite events. However, eTwinning provided a means through which she could engage with diverse content and other teachers, thereby enhancing her learning experiences and enriching her professional practice. Similarly, another respondent articulated a key advantage of eTwinning as its **user-friendly interface and diverse array of topics**. She noted how easily teachers can access content tailored to their interests and professional needs, ranging from artificial intelligence to innovative teaching methodologies. This sentiment is echoed in her observation that 'There's plenty where you can choose ... you apply, and you are in most of the times'.

Likewise, one of the teachers interviewed highlighted a **contrast between how accessible eTwinning is compared to other professional development activities**. She emphasised the bureaucratic hurdles often associated with government-sponsored courses, in which waiting periods and selection processes can extend the time between initial interest and active engagement. She said, 'It's so easy to participate [in eTwinning] ... you just have to join. Here [in her country], if you want to attend a course or something, you have to wait. It's twice a year and you have to apply and then you have to wait.'

Another prevalent aspect highlighted by participants is that their **understanding of and engagement with lifelong learning initiatives is expanded, even beyond the scope of eTwinning itself**. One teacher articulated how participating in eTwinning activities prompted her to seek further education, exemplified by her enrolment in masterclasses focusing on educational management. She expressed a newfound confidence and determination to **pursue learning opportunities, against prejudices and stereotypes of ageism**, citing eTwinning for this mindset shift. She said, 'eTwinning gave me the courage ... although I am not 20 or even 30.' She also reported witnessing older teachers actively engaging in webinars, courses and conferences, **challenging traditional notions of age-related limitations on learning**. In particular, she noted that, 'Seeing other colleagues close to

retirement, older, attending webinars, courses, conferences ... has also effected [my] perception', reinforcing the idea that lifelong learning knows no age boundaries.

Personal and professional development

In terms of specific areas of personal and professional development, participants identified several key areas influenced by being involved in eTwinning. **Leadership skills** emerged as a prominent theme, with one teacher noting, 'I have become louder, more assertive than I used to be', suggesting a new confidence and decisiveness. Similarly, another participant recognised the broader impact of eTwinning on her professional trajectory, beyond the classroom setting. She articulated how engaging with eTwinning activities **has equipped her with the additional competences and qualities necessary for leadership roles**, such as that of principal. This acknowledgment speaks to the multifaceted nature of professional development, encompassing not only pedagogical expertise but also leadership skills and career advancement opportunities.

Developing **soft skills** such as communication, sharing, listening and reflection was highlighted as integral to participants' growth. **Self-assessment and future planning** emerged as significant outcomes of participating in eTwinning. Participants described a heightened awareness of their strengths and areas for improvement, linked with a strategic approach to identifying and pursuing future opportunities for growth. Furthermore, participants identified improvements in **ICT skills** to be directly applicable in both their personal lives and teaching activities. Some emphasised developing essential competences such as **communication, creativity, collaboration and critical thinking** (referred to as the '4Cs'). One teacher remarked, 'Without eTwinning, I couldn't say what critical thinking was.'

One teacher mentioned improvements in communication, particularly in **professional interactions with colleagues**. She attributed this enhancement to the challenges posed by facilitating communication across cultural and linguistic backgrounds in the eTwinning community. Another respondent identified personal growth beyond professional development. She noted an **increased sense of openness and self-awareness**, with new-found confidence in her English language skills.

Recognition

It is evident that the emotional impact of recognition on teachers' cognitive wellbeing **extends beyond mere affirmation to fuelling**

motivation and enthusiasm for future endeavours. Participants reported feeling motivated to continue their work with renewed vigour following recognition. One teacher said, 'It gave me new motivation for my work', emphasising how recognition serves as a means for **sustained professional engagement and growth**. Another teacher vividly recalled her excitement, 'You get an email saying "Congratulations". And you become excited, ecstatic. You are very happy. You feel great. And then you want to learn more, engage more.' This reaction demonstrates the significant positive impact of formal recognition on teachers' cognitive wellbeing, reinforcing their **sense of accomplishment and desire for learning**. Similarly, recognition from formal authorities such as ministries and National Support Organisations has also played a crucial role in motivating teachers to continue their professional development. One teacher said that 'Both the ministry and the National Support Organisation ... motivate me to continue learning. I am invited to share my experiences in multiple places. Which positively impacts my self-esteem and my learning. I am always learning new things from colleagues.' Another participant said that receiving formal recognition is not merely symbolic but also translates into tangible benefits, such as additional **career points that can aid in career advancement**, motivating them to keep learning. She noted, 'In the recent law ... you get some extra points if you are involved in European projects or cooperation. Then you also have a practical reason to get involved. I am not saying that this is the main reason, but it helps.'

Another participant emphasised informal recognition, which she identified as a critical factor in her emotional and cognitive wellbeing. She emphasised the importance of recognition from her pupils and colleagues over formal awards. She stated, 'What has really influenced me is the recognition ... more the informal than the formal, because I see the appreciation of my pupils and my colleagues and that gives me motive to continue learning and become better.' **Collegial recognition through sharing best practices** in webinars and conferences is another crucial aspect. Teachers take pride in presenting their work and learning from others, which fosters a sense of belonging and professional growth in the eTwinning community. One teacher highlighted the value of these interactions, 'We often ... do what we call a good practices webinar ... to share, disseminate our work and make others follow as well. And we learn so many things. These are sessions from teachers to teachers.'

3.4.2 Emotional wellbeing

The qualitative data on the impact of the eTwinning activities on participants' emotional wellbeing revealed several key themes.

Sense of belonging

One recurring theme among participants is a sense of belonging fostered by their involvement in eTwinning activities. One respondent said, 'You know, that made me feel that I really belong in a particular group.' This **feeling of belonging** is attributed to the shared passion for lifelong learning and professional development that is prevalent in the eTwinning community. She expanded, '... We all share the same ideas and the same passions', highlighting a collective enthusiasm for teaching and self-improvement. Another teacher noted, 'We share the same problems; we face the same challenges', suggesting **solidarity based on common experiences and challenges**. Similarly, one of the teachers interviewed added that '[eTwinning] made me realise that teachers across European countries share similar goals and challenges in teaching.' This realisation of shared experience led to a profound shift in her emotional state, making her feel 'less alone and more connected to a community of teachers'. This sense of connection has had a positive impact on teachers' emotional wellbeing, as indicated by another participant, who expressed feeling enthusiastic about eTwinning.

Several participants also described a **shift from feeling like solitary figures in their teaching endeavours to being embraced by a network** of enthusiastic teachers. In particular, one respondent recounted the sense of isolation she felt when introducing eTwinning to her school community. She described being the sole advocate for eTwinning among a large cohort of colleagues, who initially met it with indifference or reluctance. This isolation was evident in her narrative, as she expressed feeling 'kind of lonely'. However, the turning point came when she connected with fellow eTwinners and ambassadors, describing that moment as finding a community where she finally felt understood and appreciated. As she aptly put it, 'It is people that are speaking my language', highlighting the importance of **finding common ground and shared purpose** for her emotional wellbeing.

Furthermore, eTwinning emerged as a **protective factor against burnout and stagnation**, enabling teachers to embrace continuous development rather than succumb to exhaustion. One respondent credited eTwinning with being 'lifesaving', emphasising its role in fostering a **sense of purpose and renewal in her teaching career**. This highlights the significance of eTwinning, not only in promoting professional growth but also in safeguarding teachers' emotional wellbeing. Another teacher conveyed a notable transformation **from initial feelings of unhappiness to a heightened sense of enthusiasm and fulfilment** in her professional role. She vividly described a shift from a state of desolation to one of excitement upon engaging with the eTwinning community. She said, 'After being a little bit sad and disappointed about my work, I started being very, very excited going to work and checking my

emails. I was looking forward to chatting with other eTwinners and my project partners and seeing updates.'

One respondent eloquently expressed the feeling of being 'filled up with enthusiasm' and 'positiveness' because of her involvement in various online eTwinner communities. This sense of positivity was not confined to virtual interactions, but extended to real-world relationships, which **transitioned from being mere acquaintances to genuine friends**. This shift significantly enhanced her emotional wellbeing. She said, 'And when you become friends with a colleague, then the feelings change, the bonds are stronger than friendship. It is a stronger feeling. It is not just happiness, you know.'

Emotional support

The realisation that others encounter similar challenges and difficulties fostered a **sense of empathy and resilience**. Participants described how witnessing shared struggles among peers provided reassurance and motivation to persevere. One respondent said, 'If I am sad or angry, I realise that I'm not the only one in the world.' According to the teachers who were interviewed, eTwinning serves as a source of emotional support in the community, highlighting the encouragement and reassurance they received during challenging phases, **mitigating stress and fostering a sense of belonging**. One teacher recalled instances when the support and encouragement received from the community helped her effectively **overcome challenges**. Specifically, she noted how engaging in collaborative projects facilitated **coping mechanisms including patience, stress management and resilience**, 'I'm able to feel that I'm successfully handling the project ... It helps me develop my ... patience. I am not stressed anymore. I know that even if problems arise, we will sort things out.'

Similarly, one teacher reflected on the role of eTwinning during the COVID-19 pandemic. She recalled, 'When we faced lockdown and COVID and the schools were closed, the eTwinners were like in the front ... showing other teachers how to use all the tools. This was extremely fulfilling. I was helping others. It was meaningful.' Another respondent vividly described the emotional strain experienced during the pandemic. The **sense of isolation and abrupt transition to remote teaching** presented significant challenges, highlighting the role of eTwinning in strengthening her emotional wellbeing. She aptly stated, 'We felt isolated. We felt we were in a very awkward situation. However, eTwinning was there to support, to connect us.' A third teacher emphasised the community support, commenting that, 'Without a community, it's hard to try on your own. The support from eTwinning is essential.' This highlights

the significance of belonging to a supportive network, especially during times of adversity.

On a more practical level, one teacher recounted a challenge she encountered when she first started participating in eTwinning projects: a struggle with the eTwinning platform. Despite her initial frustration, she **found comfort and reassurance** in the supportive messages received from colleagues across different countries. She recalled, 'Nothing to worry about ... So, it really helped me because their words were soothing ... It is not a big deal ... They were really supportive and encouraging.' Moreover, the supportive messages served as a **source of encouragement, affirming the teacher's value and contributions** in the community, 'I realise that I am appreciated ... My work is appreciated, recognised.' This acknowledgment played a significant role in **mitigating negative emotions, fostering a sense of resilience and optimism** even in the face of adversity, 'So, OK, let's calm down ... Everything is going to be better.' Likewise, another teacher described feeling at ease due to the availability of assistance when encountering technical problems. This was exemplified by her ability to **reach out to colleagues, even across borders, for immediate guidance and support**.

Another participant reflected on moments of **contemplating quitting but finding relief and guidance in the community of ambassadors**. She highlighted the role of mentorship and guidance, stating that, 'During hard times with my work, I was thinking of quitting. It was just too much; I was tired and disappointed. Putting so much energy in without any support and not being appreciated for what I am doing. But then the eTwinning community of ambassadors helped me ... Honestly, it was as if I found a therapist. This mentoring gave me strength, gave me optimism.' Another teacher also **compared her eTwinning experience to therapy**, highlighting the sense of support extending beyond formal gatherings, as indicated by what she said, 'We are always in touch and offering this emotional support to one another, so it's amazing. We meet online, we discuss professional but also personal things. It's like therapy.'

Despite challenges like these, teachers reported **optimistic perspectives** on participating in eTwinning. For instance, one participant stressed how the community facilitated a shift towards her **viewing situations from a positive perspective**, emphasising the importance of focusing on the bright side even amidst challenges. She remarked, 'Let's find the best things. Positive things in every situation and let's start from there and then all these negative things would seem less negative.' Another teacher described her experience of **alleviating the fears and uncertainties associated with her profession**. She reflected on her fear of technological mishaps during online meetings but found reassurance in her colleagues' help with technical issues. This experience reinforced her idea that openness and support provoke a sense of optimism. Moreover,

another respondent's experience illustrates how participating in eTwinning projects cultivated a **sense of optimism and joy** in her professional life. She described a shift from feeling 'sad and disappointed' before going to school to feeling 'very happy' after engaging with eTwinning projects.

Autonomy and self-determination

While reflecting on her initial lack of experience in teaching, one of the interviewees highlighted a **transition from a sense of limited to increased autonomy**, attributing this part of this change to her involvement in eTwinning activities. She emphasised how exposure to diverse perspectives, creative ideas and opportunities for professional growth afforded by the eTwinning community helped her gain autonomy and feel more confident. 'With the activities I joined ... I had all these years, I gained experience in projects and met new people, had new creative ideas, so I feel that I have a sense of autonomy now.' When referring to acquiring new methodologies and tools through eTwinning, one respondent commented that she was able to learn more about project-based learning, which helped her to **better deliver her national curriculum while allowing for customisation** to meet individual pupils' needs. She further commented that feeling and having such autonomy allowed her to 'create meaningful learning experiences tailored to my pupils' interests and abilities'.

One respondent commented on how engaging in online courses facilitated through eTwinning contributed to cultivating her autonomy. She emphasised the process of self-regulation that is inherent in these activities, in which teachers take charge of their learning journeys. She described how participating in online courses requires **setting targets, managing time effectively and actively engaging** with course materials. This process, characterised by setting and achieving personalised goals, not only enhanced her pedagogical skills, but also cultivated a sense of autonomy in her professional development, 'When you attend an online course, for example, you are trained to become an autonomous learner. Because you regulate your own learning. So, in that way, you try, and you are trained not only as a teacher, but you are trained as a person ... to regulate your own learning, and you become autonomous in that way.'

Another participant described her experience of organising a museum night with her pupils. She commented, 'It was my idea and I wanted to do it. And I did it', emphasising the **personal agency and ownership** she felt in leading initiatives inspired by her eTwinning experiences. This autonomy fostered a deeper connection to her teaching practice, enabling her to go beyond traditional teaching methods and create meaningful learning opportunities for her pupils. She further reflected

on the emotional significance of her experiences, describing them as 'absolutely amazing', and attributing her **fulfilment as a teacher to the opportunities afforded by eTwinning**. Through these collaborative endeavours, she nurtured a sense of belonging and connection to her school community.

Recognition, self-worth and self-confidence

All participants emphasised the **emotional support** deriving from this sense of community. The recognition and appreciation received from fellow eTwinners for their contributions stimulated **feelings of validation and affirmation**. This was captured by a respondent who stated, 'It makes you feel really proud of what you're doing ... It's like someone telling you, "Whatever you're doing, I know you're doing great."' Likewise, another teacher commented, 'I learned so many things concerning digital tools and I enhanced my digital competences so much that I can boast and be very proud and say that sometimes I found myself in the position of teaching things to my IT colleague.' Another participant added, 'I am respected, recognised, somebody appreciates what I post, what I write, what I do.' These acknowledgments of their efforts **improve teachers' self-esteem** and validate their experiences and emotions. Moreover, one teacher commented on the enhancement of her **self-efficacy and confidence**, 'I feel more confident that I can carry out a project', also noting a shift from being a 'shy person' to feeling self-assured in her abilities.

Similarly, another respondent highlighted the personal fulfilment derived from her involvement in eTwinning. She expressed an improved **sense of self-worth and self-confidence**, indicating a positive link between engaging in eTwinning and enhanced wellbeing. She expressed how participating in multiple eTwinning projects instilled a sense of confidence, appreciation and support from her peers. Attaining national and European Quality Labels was highlighted as **a significant, tangible way to evoke feelings of happiness and recognition**. Specifically, she said that '... somebody out there recognised my skills, my abilities, my work. I did something. I felt proud. And this increased my confidence. It made me feel happy. You will laugh now, but it truly did. When I opened the email and read congratulations, I was like, "Is this really true?"' Similarly, the rest of the teachers interviewed highlighted the **significance of certifications and success in project competitions as sources of recognition**. One teacher noted that, 'My successes in project competitions have boosted my self-esteem. Several times, I received an eTwinning prize and it has really impacted the way I see myself as a teacher.' Another said, 'Receiving recognition and labels help your self-image. It is like someone actually saying, "Hey you did a good job." And this is needed, sometimes we cannot see this ourselves.' Another teacher recalled a moment when she received news about winning an eTwinning prize. She said, 'I

didn't believe it at first. I was shocked. I was so happy.' One participant expressed a profound sense of validation and satisfaction upon receiving recognition, saying, 'So you realise that somebody actually read all the things that you wrote, and you know you get the post, saying they choose you and really, I am very happy.' Statements like these suggest that participating in eTwinning activities led to tangible recognition of teachers' work, which in turn fostered a sense of value and worth.

Furthermore, being selected for 'higher' roles in the eTwinning community was another source of recognition for some teachers. For instance, one participant mentioned **feeling particularly honoured when she was chosen as an ambassador** by the national educational authorities of her country. This recognition not only affirmed her expertise, but also provided a sense of pride, self-worth and accomplishment. She commented, 'I felt the most recognition for my work when I was selected by the educational authorities and ambassador. It was such an honour.' Another teacher described how engaging with eTwinning led to a gradual progression towards being recognised as a pedagogical advisor for eTwinning projects. She expressed pride in being among a limited number of recognised teachers, saying that there are '... 15 teachers in [name of country], and I am one of them'. This sense of belonging reinforces the emotional benefits of being recognised, as individuals feel valued in and esteemed by their professional community. Therefore, these acknowledgments reflect **personal satisfaction and a sense of professional pride**.

At school level, another participant expressed a similar feeling of **pride in the recognition of her school's achievements**, positioning it as an eTwinning School. She reported instances when she was invited to share her experiences in various media, such as radio and television, to promote eTwinning and encourage others to participate. These experiences affirmed her dedication, **elevated her status in the educational community and increased her sense of self-worth**. She stated, 'My school became an eTwinning School and that made us known, made us visible. And at some point, people started asking me to give training on eTwinning and even talk about eTwinning on radio shows and on TV. It made me feel so proud ... It was magical. I felt so nice with what I am doing, because I really love it.' A similar experience in her school was shared by another teacher who was interviewed, who expressed feeling appreciated and validated as a professional and had an enhanced sense of self-worth due to being recognised. As the teacher reflected on her experience, she noted a **transition from anonymity to visibility**, 'Now when I go to these meetings and when I say my name people just say, "I know you ... you work at the school" or when I say the name of the school, they say "We know about that school because you won a prize or were in the newspaper."'.

However, the impact of **informal recognition on emotional wellbeing was also emphasised** in some teachers' introspective comments on self-worth and identity. For instance, one remarked, 'It mainly affects my emotional wellbeing. Like, am I worth it? Well, I do not know. Some would say I am; some would say I am not, but it is more like this pleasure of everything that I am learning. The person that I was, the person that I am and the person I'll be.' Another teacher vividly described the profound emotional rewards derived from informal recognition, particularly from pupils and parents. She recounted instances when **former pupils had visited the school to express gratitude**, with some attributing life-changing decisions directly to the teacher's influence. The emotional resonance of these moments was evident as the teacher recounted **receiving a video from a parent showing their child's academic success**. The teacher emphasised that these personal connections and tangible evidence of impact far outweighed formal recognition. In the words of the teacher, 'I still have pupils that come to my school to see me, and they are like, you know, "My life changed because of you", the parents tell me, "She's in Canada studying." "She's making a change because you planted that seed."' She further commented 'papers don't say anything', highlighting a disconnect between institutional recognition and the profound sense of fulfilment derived from making a difference in individual lives.

3.4.3 Social wellbeing

The qualitative data regarding the impact of the eTwinning activities on participants' social wellbeing revealed several key themes.

Interpersonal relationships

The eTwinning community has been instrumental in **fostering strong interpersonal connections among teachers**. One respondent expressed pride in having created a robust social network through her role in moderating an eTwinning group on social media, with approximately 5 000 teachers from diverse educational backgrounds in her country. The respondent noted, 'We share news of eTwinning and we have each other. Whenever somebody has a problem ... every challenge we face is there, they feel very free to set it up and try to find us.' The collaborative nature of this group is further enhanced by distributed administrative roles. While the respondent holds the position of main moderator, she emphasised that **the true value lies in the collective effort**, in which members take on roles, contributing to problem-solving and offering suggestions. This approach not only alleviates the burden on individual administrators, but also empowers teachers, fostering a sense of **ownership, community and mutual support**. The respondent said, 'All of them become kind of administrators and the others take the role of giving solutions or suggesting things.' Another teacher shared her experience, highlighting the **impact of eTwinning on her interpersonal dynamics**.

at school. Initially, she noted a certain stagnation in relationships with colleagues, describing them as ‘The same old colleagues all the time’, picturing an environment in which conversations were predominantly confined to teaching and student-related topics. However, she further commented that eTwinning taught her to ‘communicate better with just a few’ colleagues, suggesting a more **targeted and effective approach to meaningful connections.**

Teachers also frequently reported that their involvement with eTwinning led to developing **friendly relationships with partners.** One respondent shared that, ‘A friendly relationship developed with partners, some of whom I met in person, and we discussed not only professional matters but also personal ones.’ This indicates that eTwinning facilitated deeper connections that extend professional collaboration, allowing teachers to engage in personal interactions. Apart from the regional and national levels, **the eTwinning community extends its influence across Europe and beyond,** significantly broadening the scope of interpersonal relationships. One respondent highlighted her involvement in a network of European ambassadors, formed through various conferences, courses and collaborative projects. These interactions have evolved **from professional acquaintances to genuine friendships,** highlighting the deep personal connections facilitated by the eTwinning platform. She remarked that, ‘At a certain point, because we’ve met in conferences, we’ve met in courses, we’ve cooperated in projects lots of times ... we are friends now.’

Collaboration and support

Furthermore, the **collaborative nature of eTwinning projects fosters a sense of teamwork and mutual support** among teachers. One participant noted, ‘During projects that our schools participate in, colleagues and I have grown closer, forming a great team.’ This sense of collective effort strengthens interpersonal bonds, creating an environment in which teachers feel that they can rely on each other for support. The ability to ‘ask each other for help anytime’ highlights the reciprocal nature of these relationships, **enhancing participants’ sense of security and belonging.** Another respondent highlighted the comfort and security fostered by these relationships, stating that, ‘[It] increased my sense of security and belonging ... and anytime I have a problem, I can go to my colleagues and ask anything.’ She further articulated the **emotional reassurance** derived from knowing that fellow teachers are willing to help during challenging times. The respondent said, ‘During hard times, when you have the eTwinning community and all these colleagues around that are willing to help you and support you, [it has] a positive effect on your wellbeing.’ She also commented on the **shared workload and mutual assistance among colleagues,** noting that, ‘I can ask somebody to do a part of this task, and they will help me.’

One teacher highlighted the importance of collaboration to build trust and reliability between colleagues. Through shared projects, teachers learn to **depend on one another, which reinforces their relationships.** This experience is not only beneficial in the context of eTwinning projects, but also becomes a valuable lesson that the respondent imparts to her pupils and in teacher training courses. She said, ‘I was telling them, you have to learn from people as they work with you, and you need to know that partners are reliable. If you start a project, you would be able to finish the project.’ By relying on each other to complete projects, teachers build **a foundation of trust and mutual respect, which are essential components of social wellbeing.**

One respondent highlighted that eTwinning encourages teachers to become **more open and communicative** with their peers. The necessity of initially interacting primarily through written messages, and later through video calls, fosters a level of trust and openness that might not be as easily achieved through traditional means. The respondent noted, ‘Well, it helps you be more outgoing with people that you just know through a screen, so you need to be more open.’ Similarly, one of the respondents stressed the role of eTwinning in nurturing **empathy** among teachers. She highlighted how the community encouraged her to pay closer attention to the needs of others.

Another teacher emphasised the **multifaceted opportunities offered by eTwinning,** including engaging in various projects and interactions with a diverse community of teachers. She expressed gratitude for the platform’s capacity to facilitate such rich experiences, noting, ‘I’m really happy ... you can give me everything.’ Another respondent commented that ‘Being a part of a great community ... gives you a sense of belonging and joy.’ This connection **instils happiness and ensures that teachers feel valued** in their professional circle. The respondent further elaborated on how this community support acted as a buffer against professional challenges, especially when faced with colleagues who may not share the same enthusiasm or dedication. She said that, ‘You feel happy, you feel valued ... Whenever you come across a problem ... you try to separate professional from personal life.’

A notable aspect of the respondent’s experience is the way that she managed to **mitigate the impact of negative interactions** in her immediate professional environment. The respondent also highlighted the size of the eTwinning community as a critical factor in **reinforcing her sense of belonging.** With access to a vast network of supportive peers, she felt reassured and empowered, knowing that the community’s collective strength vastly outnumbered any singular negative influence. She remarked, ‘I know that in my school I have around, let’s say, 40 teachers. But on the other hand, I am a member of eTwinning of, let’s say,

3 000 teachers ... So, I know that I have lots behind me, supporting me, so who cares about this one?’

The **sense of shared experience** in the eTwinning community was another critical factor in strengthening interpersonal relationships. One of the respondents said that being part of the community allowed her to **connect with other teachers over common challenges and experiences and support each other**. She stated that, ‘It’s not easy to be a teacher, so we help. We have to help each other and being an eTwinning member, you know, we share similar problems and similar challenges.’ In addition, respondents expressed the view that the **sense of connectedness and support** significantly enhanced their wellbeing. For instance, one teacher stated that, ‘... When the teacher feels connected to other teachers and supported with ideas that they have, it’s really great.’

Participants detailed instances when they sought support, particularly in overcoming **technological hurdles** in their teaching practice. One teacher clarified, ‘I really got this help related to using digital tools’, while others referred to resolving issues such as internet connectivity, installing apps and technical glitches. Moreover, the data highlights the community’s role in addressing **motivational challenges among pupils and colleagues alike**. Teachers shared concrete examples of strategies and resources that were exchanged in the community to strengthen pupil engagement and support fellow teachers facing demotivated peers. One participant reported receiving a plethora of tools and techniques, ‘Lots of exercises, maybe even games ... things that I can make myself or with their [colleagues’] help.’

Similarly, one teacher expressed a **profound sense of fulfilment derived from actively supporting others** in the community. She described a proactive approach to assisting colleagues when they encountered challenges, illustrating a genuine eagerness to contribute positively. In particular, she said, ‘Yes, I feel very happy to help others. It makes me feel so much better knowing that I have helped someone.’ Another respondent, who is an **eTwinning ambassador**, highlighted the significant role they play in disseminating information about eTwinning and supporting fellow teachers. She described actively offering support by providing targeted answers to queries and assisting teachers in navigating the platform’s features.

Recognition

The qualitative data highlighted the multifaceted nature of recognition, extending beyond tangible rewards to encompass intangible aspects such as **status and respect in the professional community**. One respondent articulated how formal recognition validated her contributions,

providing a sense of affirmation of her expertise and dedication. She explained, ‘So that’s definitely impacted my status because when I applied, I could show what I had done, and I was recognised for it.’ Similarly, another teacher expressed a **profound sense of validation and belonging from formal recognition**, stating that, ‘It made me feel that I belong in a larger group. You know, that people appreciate whatever I do’, highlighting the importance of official recognition from ministries and other official bodies, fostering a sense of value and validation in the professional community. Another teacher focused on the recognition provided by specific roles such as eTwinning ambassador. She mentioned being ‘invited to different schools to show what I do’, which highlights the formal acknowledgment of her expertise and the value placed on her contributions.

Another teacher **recounted times when their profession was undervalued**, with remarks such as, ‘Come on. You are working as a teacher. Nobody knows anything about you.’ However, receiving recognition – particularly in the form of becoming an ambassador – provided a counter-narrative to these perceptions. The participant described the effect of recognition, saying that, ‘It makes you feel special.’ This suggests that formal acknowledgment from ministries and official bodies serves not only to validate individual efforts but also to **challenge societal misconceptions and elevate the status of teaching as a profession**.

Moreover, **informal recognition, particularly from pupils, was highlighted as a significant contributor to social wellbeing**. The teacher noted how pupils recognise and value innovative approaches to teaching, fostering a reciprocal relationship where pupils actively engage with the teacher and seek their guidance. She remarked, ‘You know when pupils see that you are the one who is using different things. Or encouraging them to be creative, innovative, to think differently and to say openly whatever they think. They recognise your value and your strength, and you know they always turn to you.’ Teachers also reported receiving overwhelmingly positive feedback from pupils, parents and colleagues about their eTwinning activities; this **positive feedback fostered better relationships with them**. For instance, one teacher noted that these activities have alleviated some concerns parents have about the educational opportunities in smaller towns. She noted that, ‘In a little town, parents are afraid of ... in a big, big, big town ... they have children who can get a better education ... they fear that their children ... can’t get the same opportunity [in a smaller town].’

Another respondent highlighted the positive impact of formal recognition by sharing their experience of receiving national and European Quality Labels and becoming an eTwinning ambassador. The teacher noted that **these achievements increased their visibility among colleagues**,

'Usually when we receive a national Quality Label or European Quality Label or when you become an eTwinning ambassador, other teachers somehow say, "Oh, you are an ambassador" or "You got the label", so we become more visible, let's say, to others.' This visibility fosters a sense of pride and boosts self-esteem, positively contributing to their social wellbeing. Likewise, another teacher shared her experience of attending a conference where **she was recognised by people she had only met online** through eTwinning. This recognition was not only surprising but also deeply gratifying. She described feeling 'very happy and very close to people'. Another teacher vividly described how being active in eTwinning made her 'more visible' and allowed others to recognise her contributions ('... people were coming to you, and they were like "Oh you are [name of the teacher], and you work in this school"'.)

3.4.4 Existential wellbeing

The qualitative data regarding the impact of the eTwinning activities on participants' existential wellbeing reveal several key themes.

Professional identity

In terms of how the eTwinning community has helped teachers articulate or refine their broader purpose as teachers, several insights were obtained from the analysis. Initially, one teacher described a limited self-view, seeing herself merely as an English teacher in a small country. However, upon joining the eTwinning community, she experienced a 'paradigm shift'. She expressed this realisation vividly, 'So you realise that among, let's say, the 3 000 or 10 000 teachers, you are the one ... So, you are one of the 10 000 people who are doing something good.' She further elaborated on this sense of belonging to a larger, impactful community, which also **reinforced her self-worth and professional identity**. She articulated this by stating that, 'It really made me feel good about myself and it really made me realise that I'm a great teacher', reflecting a deeper shift in which **she no longer saw herself as a small part of a system**, but rather as an integral member of a broader community.

One prevalent theme that emerged from the analysis is the notion of eTwinning as a means of **personal fulfilment and professional growth**. Respondents frequently expressed how engaging with eTwinning stemmed from a desire for a creative outlet and a sense of happiness. One participant said, 'I started working in eTwinning and creating this project because it was a happy place for me where I could, you know, be creative.' Another respondent said, 'I was working in that field for three years and then I took the English minor and then I discovered eTwinning.' This teacher described a moment of realisation concerning engaging with eTwinning, considering that her initial goal was to teach English, but she ended up 'learning from everyone and all the courses, the webinars, the

learning events and everything, I think, yeah, it shaped the person I am today professionally'. This response highlights the significant role that eTwinning played in **shaping her professional identity**.

Work-life balance

In the sphere of work-life balance, eTwinning was reported to contribute to the development of **organisational skills and time management strategies**. Through engaging with fellow teachers and participating in events, teachers have gained valuable insights into prioritising and completing tasks. One respondent said, 'I really like to finish things on time, but it [eTwinning] really helped me because, you know, you attend a lot of events, you have so many things and tasks in projects. So, if you are not organised then it is tough. And every time you get better at it.' Enhancing organisational skills not only **improved teachers' efficiency in professional duties but also in their personal life**, helping them maintain a healthy work-life balance. For instance, one teacher mentioned that she no longer wastes time sending emails and guidelines. Instead, she develops tutorials to be more time efficient. She emphasised the practicality of this approach, noting its 'efficiency in achieving desired outcomes within a shorter timeframe'. Another respondent mentioned task prioritisation, citing the 'eat your frog' technique, which emphasises tackling the most challenging tasks early in the day.

One of the teachers highlighted the importance of **perseverance and adaptability in overcoming obstacles**, whether they stem from within the eTwinning project or from broader life circumstances. She suggested that while plans may not always unfold as intended, it is essential to maintain a positive attitude and willingness to overcome challenges collaboratively. In particular, she acknowledged that **effective delegation is a crucial strategy** for achieving work-life balance. 'I told my colleagues that you don't have to work at the weekends. It is better if we split the work between the partners. We had our plans, but you see that things have changed in between. There is no need to get crazy about it.' Another respondent discussed the role of **collaborative partnerships in alleviating stress and distributing responsibilities** more effectively. She emphasised the value of teamwork in managing project tasks and coordinating schedules, enabling them to strike a better balance between professional commitments and personal life. She remarked, 'I found the perfect partner ... we made things easy for each other ... we handle our daily chores, duties and school ... now I feel more experienced ... I find my partners who are eager to share the duties ... eTwinning projects don't make me feel stressed.'

Another teacher highlighted the importance of **planning as a key strategy for achieving a work-life balance**. For instance, she

emphasised the necessity of aligning project activities with school timetables and holidays, indicating a conscious effort to respect periods designated for rest and personal time. This approach demonstrates recognising the need for boundaries between work and leisure, as expressed in her statement, ‘So I definitely realised that you can also stop working during holidays, although you enjoy it a lot, you need to take some time off.’

Another recurring theme that emerged was integrating eTwinning projects into daily teaching practices to enhance efficiency and reduce workload. One respondent highlighted the strategy of aligning eTwinning projects with curriculum objectives, minimising the need for additional preparation and streamlining integration into lessons. She noted, ‘I develop projects that are closely related to my curriculum and this way I integrate them into my lesson without requiring a lot of extra time because it is there already.’ Another respondent described her experience moving **from viewing eTwinning as an additional task to integrating it seamlessly into her teaching practice**. She noted, ‘Before, it was an extra thing to do. Nowadays, it’s a part of the curriculum that I teach, and this helps a lot to increase my productivity and efficiency.’ Likewise, another teacher reported integrating eTwinning activities into her teaching repertoire to mitigate stress and manage her workload more efficiently. She said, ‘I learned to integrate eTwinning into my teaching ... so there is a part of the curriculum that I stopped teaching the way I used to. Do you know how relieving this is? [I am] less stressed and more consistent.’

Several teachers highlighted the **necessity of separating professional and personal life** – an essential aspect of work-life balance. One of them highlighted the importance of setting boundaries and prioritising commitments for maintaining a balanced schedule (‘I learned how to say no gracefully, and I tried to keep an agenda with exactly what I had to do’). This suggests that participating in eTwinning projects has honed her time management skills, enabling her to allocate time efficiently between work-related tasks and personal obligations. Nevertheless, it was also acknowledged that **achieving a perfect work-life balance remains an ongoing journey** for many teachers. While eTwinning provides valuable resources and support, finding the right balance requires ongoing reflection, adjustment and self-awareness. One participant noted, ‘I’m probably far from having found my work-life balance’, reflecting the complexity of this endeavour and the need for continued effort and exploration.

Conscious life decisions

The responses obtained from the interviews shed light on the profound impact of eTwinning on teachers’ existential wellbeing, particularly in their

ability to make conscious life decisions. One respondent articulated how participating in the eTwinning community stimulated her aspirations for **professional growth and geographical mobility**. She expressed her desire to transcend her current role as a teacher and potentially relocate, exemplifying how eTwinning has ignited a sense of purpose and ambition in her professional trajectory, ‘I am working at school, but I would really love to do something more, so in my head I have a plan. OK, I want to be an educator, so maybe I want to go to Brussels and work from there.’

The data also revealed an impact on teachers’ career trajectories, by transitioning from traditional teaching roles to more diversified opportunities facilitated by eTwinning and other European programmes. One respondent reflected on her **decision to leave a longstanding teaching position** after over two decades, attributing this choice to her involvement in eTwinning and Erasmus+ initiatives. She described how her engagement provided valuable experiences and connections, ultimately empowering her to explore new avenues as a freelancer. Another respondent highlighted a significant life decision influenced by her eTwinning experience, in **transitioning to a new school**. The decision to change schools was informed by aligning the schools’ educational approach with the project-based learning fostered in eTwinning. She said, ‘Yes, because of eTwinning I decided to change school. I felt that I am closer and more in line with the way, the philosophy of this school. They [teachers in the new school] mainly use project-based learning and this is exactly what eTwinning is. So, when I applied, and they saw that I am doing eTwinning projects, they considered it as a positive element.’ Another participant attributed significant life decisions, such as transitioning from working as a pre-primary/primary teacher to **assuming a role as an Erasmus+ pedagogical coordinator**, to her engagement with the eTwinning community. Likewise, another participant described how her involvement in eTwinning projects boosted her confidence and **empowered her to pursue new opportunities and become a teacher trainer**. She remarked that, ‘It made me feel more self-confident, so after some time I really felt self-confident enough to offer myself exclusively as a teacher trainer.’

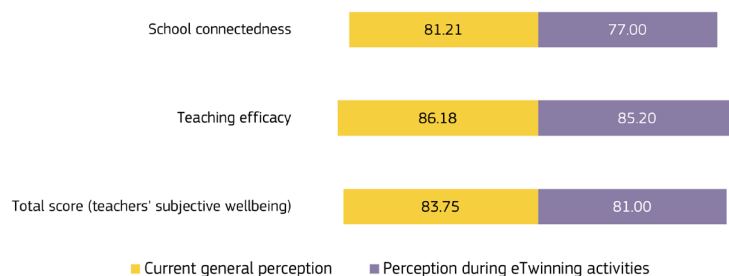
4. SYNOPSIS

This section aims to provide a brief visualised overview of the main key findings derived from the quantitative and qualitative analyses.

4.1 Quantitative data

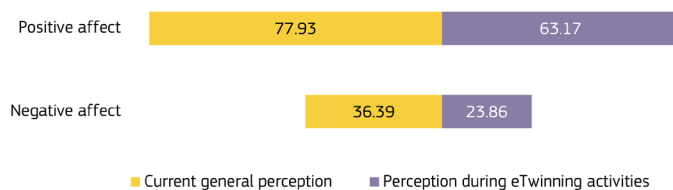
The aim of the survey was to uncover respondents' current perceptions of their wellbeing and the perceived impact of eTwinning on their wellbeing. To improve readability and facilitate comparison, **the data in this section have been recalculated as percentages**, considering the variations in scoring (refer to the notes below each graph).

Figure 53: Respondents' perception of their subjective wellbeing and the impact of eTwinning



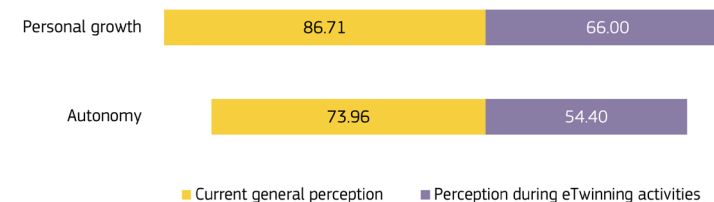
NOTE: The maximum value for 'current perception' was 4 ('Almost always'). The maximum value for the 'perceived impact' was 5 ('Extremely').

Figure 54: Respondents' perception of their emotional wellbeing in general and during eTwinning activities



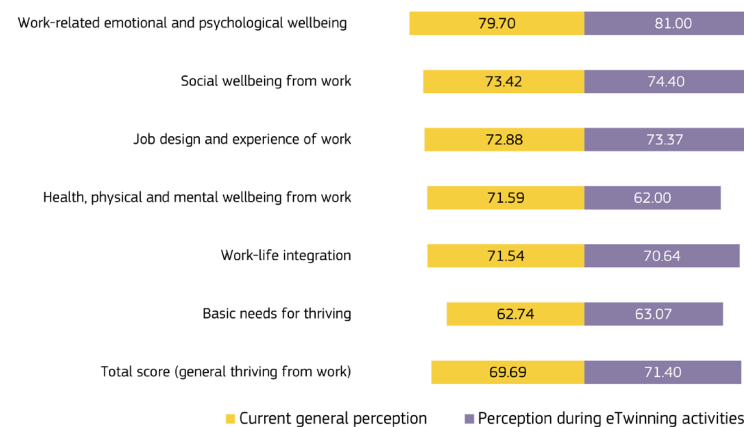
NOTE: The maximum value for both 'current general perception' and 'perception during the eTwinning activities' was 50.

Figure 55: Respondents' perception of their psychological wellbeing and the impact of eTwinning



NOTE: The maximum value for 'current perception' was 7 ('Strongly agree'). The maximum value for 'perceived impact' was 5 ('Extremely').

Figure 56: Respondents' perception of their thriving from work and the impact of eTwinning



NOTE: The maximum value for 'current perception' was 6 ('Always'). The maximum value for 'perceived impact' was 5 ('Extremely').

4.2 Qualitative data

The aim of the interviews was to capture respondents' perceptions of the impact of eTwinning on the wellbeing dimensions not covered in the quantitative section (cognitive and existential wellbeing), and to highlight which eTwinning features/aspects/activities contribute to teachers' wellbeing. The results below reflect a brief overview of the qualitative analysis.

Cognitive wellbeing:

- professional development opportunities
- peer and interdependent collaboration
- avoidance of stagnation in teaching
- self-directed learning and reflective practice
- tailored learning experiences
- positive impact on teachers' perceptions of lifelong learning
- recognition and appreciation from authorities, pupils, parents and colleagues strongly motivate teachers to join professional development activities

Social wellbeing:

- professional and friendly relationships
- openness and communication
- respect, trust, empathy
- deeper relationships and collegiality
- community roles strengthen a sense of ownership and collective responsibility
- shared interests, needs and challenges strengthen their sense of belonging,
- mutual support and shared workload
- formal and informal recognition of eTwinning activities enhance the perceived value and status of teachers in the community

Emotional wellbeing:

- increased enthusiasm and optimism
- deeper personal relationships
- emotional fulfilment
- supportive environment
- trust, respect and shared values
- social and emotional bonds
- support and practical guidance
- sense of belonging
- recognition and appreciation from authorities, pupils, parents and colleagues boost teachers' validation, pride, and self-esteem

Existential wellbeing:

- professional growth and reflection on their roles and goals
- a refined sense of purpose and ambition in teachers' careers
- from isolated teachers to an integral part of a community
- enhanced perseverance and adaptability
- ample resources for informed decisions aligned with their life-career goals
- skills development for work-life balance
- lower contemplation of quitting
- facilitation of career transitions in teachers' trajectories

5. DISCUSSION

The results of the study on the impact of eTwinning on teachers' wellbeing provide an in-depth analysis of aspects of their personal and professional experiences, comprehensively illustrating their wellbeing.

However, the report's findings should be read with caution, considering the limited size of the sample and their experience with eTwinning. Approximately 76 % of survey respondents have been registered in eTwinning for at least three years and visit eTwinning on at least a weekly basis. In addition, approximately 92 % have participated in eTwinning activities in the last two years, 29 % are eTwinning ambassadors and 44 % work in a school that has been awarded the eTwinning School Label.

The teachers have extensive experience with eTwinning and engage in a variety of activities (networking, projects, professional development). Some of them are eTwinning ambassadors or work in a school that has been awarded the eTwinning School Label. On one hand, both the survey respondents and the teachers who were interviewed are well acquainted with eTwinning; on the other hand, this might reflect an important potential bias, considering the decreased possibility of such engaged teachers to indicate a negative or no effect of eTwinning on their (perceived) wellbeing.

5.1 Teachers' subjective wellbeing

Key findings

- Overall, teachers who are active in eTwinning expressed a high level of subjective wellbeing, and eTwinning was perceived to have positively impacted this perception.
- Teachers reported high levels of teaching efficacy and slightly lower levels of school connectedness.
- Teachers noted a higher positive impact of eTwinning on their teaching efficacy compared with their sense of school connectedness.
- eTwinning positively impacts interpersonal school dynamics by revitalising collegial relationships into meaningful collaborations.

Teachers' subjective wellbeing is conceptualised based on respondents' perceptions of their teaching efficacy and sense of school connectedness (Renshaw, 2020). The high level of teaching efficacy reported by survey

respondents suggests that teachers who are involved in eTwinning have confidence in their competence and feel capable of meeting the demands of their work. In fact, **eTwinning was reported to have a high positive impact on teachers' teaching efficacy**, which respondents attribute to the collaborative and innovative nature of eTwinning activities. These activities provide teachers with new skills and teaching strategies, reinforcing their belief in their ability to effectively meet educational demands.

Previous European monitoring reports on eTwinning (Gilleran, Scimeca & Wastiau, 2019; Mouratoglou, Gilleran, Pateraki & Scimeca, 2022) and a plethora of relevant research (i.e. Auramo, 2017; Nawrot, 2018; Arampatzis, 2020; Cîmpean & Bocoş, 2022; Kostas & Ioannidou, 2023; Başar & Ada, 2023) further validate these results, suggesting that eTwinning promotes teachers' confidence in their competence and ability to meet the demands of their work. These findings are particularly important, considering that teachers with higher teaching efficacy are more likely to have higher levels of job satisfaction, which in turn associates with teachers' and pupils' wellbeing, teacher retention, school cohesion and an enhanced status for the teaching profession (Toropova, Myrberg & Johansson, 2020).

However, the slightly lower (but still considerably high) sense of school connectedness compared with teaching efficacy indicates that while teachers who are active in eTwinning feel proficient in their roles, they may not feel as integrated or supported in their school environments. This could be due to several factors, such as the isolated nature of certain teaching roles and/or a lack of collaborative opportunities in their school (Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikahmadi, 2016; De Jong, Meirink & Admiraal, 2019). Concerning the perceived impact of eTwinning on their sense of school connectedness, teachers reported a more moderate effect. While teachers feel that eTwinning has empowered them in their teaching, **they do not feel the same high impact on their feeling of being connected or supported in their school environments**. This finding might result from the fact that eTwinning is perceived more as a community that connects teachers, allowing them to ask for and receive support from peers across and beyond Europe, rather than from peers in their schools. Another potential reason might be that teachers in their schools do not share the same mentality, creating this discrepancy.

To enhance school connectedness, it is essential to foster more collaborative projects, peer learning and peer support practices at school level. These initiatives could help teachers feel more connected and supported by their colleagues. Additionally, implementing eTwinning Schools mission statements could play a pivotal role in this regard (Licht, Pateraki & Scimeca, 2020). These schools can serve as hubs for collaboration, offering structured opportunities for teachers to work

together, share best practices and build a stronger sense of community. By creating an environment that promotes collegial support and collaboration, eTwinning Schools can help address this gap in school connectedness and contribute to teachers' overall wellbeing.

The qualitative data also revealed that **eTwinning activities are perceived to contribute to teachers' teaching efficacy by improving their confidence and self-esteem in relation to professional and teaching practices** (see 'Cognitive wellbeing'). This finding is particularly significant given that teacher confidence is a crucial aspect of teacher professionalism; teachers become more confident when they have a strong knowledge base, a supportive collegial network and the ability to make informed decisions (Nolan & Molla, 2017). Regarding school connectedness, although most participants referred to aspects of interpersonal relationships with other members of the eTwinning community (see 'Emotional wellbeing' and 'Social wellbeing'), nonetheless, a few reported an impact on their interpersonal dynamics at school. Specifically, participating in eTwinning aided some teachers in transforming some stagnated collegial relationships into more targeted and meaningful connections and collaborations. This finding might be linked with 'identified regulation', which reflects engagement in activities due to the perceived personal meaningfulness and importance (Van den Broeck, Howard, Van Vaerenbergh, Leroy & Gagné, 2021).

Another notable aspect was teachers' ability to mitigate the impact of negative interactions in their immediate professional environments. The size of the eTwinning community was identified as a critical factor for solidarity and collective strength and support, which outweighed any negative interactions they encountered at their schools. These findings align with relevant research indicating that involvement in professional learning networks (PLNs) is driven by teachers who have unmet needs from their typical community or deficiencies in their daily routines. Central to this involvement is peer collaboration marked by open communication, which eventually fosters a positive school environment (Ventista, Kaldi, Kolokitha, Govaris & Brown, 2024).

5.2 Emotional wellbeing

Key findings

- Overall, teachers who are active in eTwinning experience a positive emotional state in general and during eTwinning activities.
- eTwinning fosters a supportive environment of trust, respect and shared values, enhancing social and emotional connectedness.

- *eTwinning positively impacts teachers' emotional wellbeing by providing support, practical guidance and a sense of belonging.*
- *Teachers credited their participation in eTwinning with fostering optimism despite certain daily challenges.*
- *Recognition and appreciation from authorities, pupils, parents and colleagues boost teachers' validation, pride and self-esteem.*
- *Engaging with the eTwinning community leads to increased enthusiasm, deeper personal relationships and emotional fulfilment.*

The high levels of positive emotions found among teachers are encouraging, suggesting that teachers who are involved in eTwinning have a positive emotional state. However, the presence of certain negative emotions indicates that not all teachers are entirely satisfied or stress-free. Regarding their emotional status during various eTwinning activities (projects, professional development activities, networking etc.), respondents reported experiencing positive emotions, without implying the absence of negative emotions. **While eTwinning fosters a positive emotional environment, it does not eliminate all sources of stress.** This emotional response highlights that, despite its benefits, there are aspects of the eTwinning experience that can still be challenging or stressful for some teachers. For instance, more time and resources for planning (Akdemir, 2017), coordinating project activities and tasks and ensuring consistency across different countries and time zones (Demir & Kayaoglu, 2021) have been cited as challenges for teachers who are active in eTwinning projects.

These qualitative results offer deeper insights into how eTwinning activities are perceived to impact teachers' emotional wellbeing. Several testimonies reveal how **the eTwinning community served as a lifeline for teachers, providing emotional support, practical guidance and a sense of belonging.** This finding is in line with Cenkseven-Onder and Sari (2009), who highlight that teacher support networks protect teachers' wellbeing, and with the conclusions drawn by Kampylis, Bocconi and Punie (2012), which highlight the role of eTwinning in promoting social and emotional connectedness facilitated by ICT. Similarly, Holmes (2013) observed that teachers who are involved in eTwinning benefit from a supportive environment that promotes trust, mutual respect and shared values.

This sense of belonging experienced by the teachers was reported to not only alleviate feelings of isolation but also contribute to a positive emotional state. Through shared experience and empathetic encouragement, teachers were perceived to not only be equipped to

overcome challenges, but also to thrive in adversity. Teachers reported finding comfort in knowing that they were not alone in their struggles, receiving encouragement and support from fellow teachers. Collaborative projects not only facilitated problem-solving but also nurtured essential coping mechanisms such as patience, stress management and resilience. Overall, the results reflect the buffering model of the social support theory, which indicates that receiving social support protects individuals' wellbeing against harmful effects caused by stressful events (Cohen & Wills, 1985).

Despite facing challenges, teachers reported a positive outlook, which they attributed to participating in eTwinning. They emphasised the importance of focusing on the bright side and leveraging community support to manage uncertainties, ultimately experiencing a renewed sense of joy and fulfilment in their professional lives. Participants also reported a notable shift from feelings of unhappiness to excitement and fulfilment in their professional roles, attributing this change to their involvement in eTwinning. Engaging with the community not only filled them with enthusiasm but also built personal relationships, leading to deeper connections and more emotional fulfilment. Literature suggests that belonging and positive emotions are both considered to be key factors that affect teachers' job satisfaction and motivation to leave the teaching profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011), and wellbeing (Toropova, Myrberg & Johansson, 2020). Therefore, it can be inferred **that by fostering a sense of belonging and facilitating positive emotions among teachers, eTwinning has the potential to sustain or even enhance job satisfaction, while simultaneously reducing teachers' motivation to leave the teaching profession.** However, further empirical research is needed to comprehensively explore the extent of eTwinning's impact on teacher retention and job satisfaction.

Recognition and appreciation from official authorities, pupils, parents and colleagues were reported to stimulate feelings of validation, pride and self-esteem. This finding is in line with studies showing that recognition and appreciation from stakeholders play crucial roles in enhancing teachers' motivation, professional pride, self-esteem and job satisfaction (Day & Qing, 2009; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Moreover, **tangible rewards such as national and European Quality Labels were perceived to serve as significant sources of recognition, boosting teachers' confidence and sense of worth.** Being selected as eTwinning ambassadors not only validated teachers' expertise, but also instilled a profound sense of pride. Participants expressed gratitude for recognition, emphasising its emotional resonance in their professional roles. These findings suggest that recognition in eTwinning might function as a lever for (re-)gaining recognition of their professional self, restoring the workplace conditions necessary for good job performance (Kelchtermans, 1996).

5.3 Psychological wellbeing

Key findings

- Overall, eTwinning is perceived to positively impact teachers' psychological wellbeing, contributing at varying levels to the fulfilment of the three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence and connectedness.
- The teachers surveyed reported higher levels in terms of their personal growth, compared to their sense of autonomy; similarly, they noted a greater positive impact of eTwinning on their personal growth, compared to their sense of autonomy.
- Nevertheless, some teachers described a transition from limited autonomy to increased confidence and self-determination due to their involvement in eTwinning.
- eTwinning was described as positively impacting teachers' didactical-pedagogical autonomy, and their overall attitudes towards autonomy.

Teachers' psychological wellbeing was conceptualised through respondents' perceptions of autonomy and personal growth. Teachers reported high levels of both autonomy and personal growth, though autonomy was slightly lower compared to personal growth. This suggests that, while teachers feel they have ample personal development opportunities, they perceive less independence in their roles. The perceived impact of eTwinning activities highlights this distinction further. Respondents felt a more substantial impact on their personal growth compared to their sense of autonomy. This indicates that **eTwinning effectively supports teachers in their professional development, providing them with valuable learning experiences and new skills and opportunities to innovate in their teaching practices.** Teachers feel more capable and enriched through these experiences, which contributes to their overall sense of personal growth (see 'Cognitive wellbeing'). However, the slightly lower perception of autonomy suggests that while teachers are developing professionally, they may not feel as empowered to make independent decisions or have as much control over their work environment as they would like. This could be due to structural constraints in their school system or the nature of a teaching role that requires adherence to certain curriculum guidelines and expectations. For instance, the OECD (2020) reports that only a few teachers are involved in making decisions about school policies, curriculum and instruction.

According to self-determination theory, an organismic theory for understanding factors that facilitate or undermine intrinsic motivation,

autonomous extrinsic motivation and psychological wellbeing, autonomy, competence and connectedness are considered fundamental needs for psychological wellbeing and flourishing (Ryan, Ryan, Di Domenico & Deci, 2019). As reflected in the theory, all individuals have an inherent tendency towards psychological growth and integration; however, they need supportive conditions to thrive. For teachers who are involved in eTwinning activities, the findings of this report suggest that eTwinning is indeed perceived to contribute to the fulfilment of these needs.

Specifically, Ryan and Deci (2020) defined autonomy as feeling a sense of initiative and ownership over one's actions, strengthened by experiences that are interesting and valuable. The qualitative data revealed that respondents perceive their participation in eTwinning activities to positively impact their autonomy and confidence. Through exposure to diverse perspectives, creative ideas and professional development opportunities in the eTwinning community, teachers reported a transition from feeling limited autonomy to a heightened sense of confidence and self-determination. This autonomy enabled them to implement new methodologies and tools in their daily practice, tailor learning experiences to individual student needs and strengthen their personal agency. This is especially significant given the overall positive effect of eTwinning on teachers' subjective, emotional, social and existential wellbeing, which reflects the concept of 'flourishing'. This concept encompasses positive relationships, meaningfulness in life and work and a sense of mastery and personal growth, as well as autonomy and achievement (Huta & Ryan, 2010), which are all increasingly recognised as being experienced on a continuum (Seligman, 2011).

By approaching these findings in conjunction with the perceived impact of eTwinning on teachers' pedagogical, collaborative and digital competences (Pateraki, 2018; Gilleran, Scimeca & Wastiau, 2019), we can infer that eTwinning impacts teachers' didactical-pedagogical autonomy and attitudes towards autonomy. Vangrieken, Grosemans and Kyndt (2017) made a distinction between didactical-pedagogical autonomy (teachers' actual classroom practices such as preparing their lessons and managing their classrooms) and curricular autonomy (the content of the curriculum, instructional methods), which are usually determined by ministries of education. A third dimension relates to teachers' attitudes towards collaboration in various aspects of autonomy. It reflects the extent to which teachers find collaboration with colleagues beneficial and desirable, or their preference for working individually and independently.

Ryan and Deci (2020) defined competence as a feeling of mastery and the belief that one can achieve success and develop further. As cited by the authors, this need is best fulfilled in well-structured environments that provide optimal challenges, positive feedback and opportunities for growth (see 'Cognitive wellbeing'). Finally, relatedness involves feeling like part of

a group and establishing connections; it is fostered through demonstrating respect and compassion. As already discussed, eTwinning has been reported to positively impact teachers' sense of 'school connectedness' (see 'Subjective wellbeing') and teachers' perceptions of their emotions (see 'Emotional wellbeing' and their peers (see 'Thriving from work' and 'Social wellbeing').

Overall, eTwinning has been reported to contribute to satisfying teachers' basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, relatedness), which is considered significant, given that low levels of basic psychological need satisfaction negatively impact individuals' wellbeing, including in burnout (Van den Broeck, Ferris, Chang & Rosen, 2016).

5.4 Cognitive wellbeing

Key findings

- *eTwinning promotes ongoing learning and cognitive enrichment via available professional development opportunities.*
- *eTwinning enables peer and interdependent collaboration, which enhance intellectual engagement and benefit teachers' practices.*
- *Participation in eTwinning activities is seen as crucial to maintaining engagement and avoiding stagnation in teaching practices.*
- *eTwinning activities promote teachers' self-directed learning and reflective practice, refining their current pedagogical practices.*
- *eTwinning's diverse professional development activities enable teachers to tailor their learning experiences to their needs and preferences.*
- *eTwinning's accessible professional development activities benefit teachers who are dealing with geographical or bureaucratic constraints.*
- *eTwinning significantly influences teachers' perceptions of lifelong learning, contributing to their personal-professional development.*
- *Both formal and informal recognition in eTwinning strongly motivate teachers in ongoing professional development.*

The results suggest that the eTwinning community promotes teachers' ongoing learning and cognitive enrichment. **Through peer collaboration, observation, knowledge sharing and experiential learning, teachers benefit from a supportive network that empowers them**

to enhance their pedagogical practices, integrate innovative technologies and cultivate a mindset of lifelong learning.

Discussions with colleagues were perceived to enhance focus and concentration, indicating that intellectual engagement with peers helped maintain cognitive stimulation. This finding holds significance, considering that prior research suggests that teachers who take part in more interdependent forms of collaboration (collaborative learning) also tend to report using cognitive activation practices more frequently for teaching, and higher levels of job satisfaction and self-efficacy (OECD, 2020). Additional research on teachers' professional development suggested that informal learning aligns better with participants' daily workplace needs, compared with structured and formal learning formats (Tran & Pasura, 2023).

Overall, participating in eTwinning activities was viewed as a way to maintain engagement and avoid the dangers of stagnation in teaching practices.

The responses revealed how eTwinning functions as more than merely a platform for resource sharing, but rather as a dynamic community that nurtures continuous learning and fosters collaboration. Through self-directed exploration, peer interaction and reflective practice, teachers harness the learning opportunities to refine their skills, expand their knowledge base and ultimately enhance their professional practice. These findings echo the benefits of reflective practice, including provision of space for deeper thinking, reviewing practices, avoiding stagnation and building professional knowledge (Bassot, 2016).

The findings also highlight that **eTwinning contributes to teachers' professional competence, which includes both cognitive dimensions (professional knowledge and beliefs) and motivational-affective aspects (enthusiasm and self-regulation)** (Baumert & Kunter, 2013). In particular, eTwinning activities substantially contributed to enhancing their confidence, communication skills and ability to provide and receive constructive feedback. Peer assessment emerged as another key component of pedagogical refinement, as teachers exchanged feedback and learned from each other's experiences. These outcomes seem to be in line with Holmes and Sime (2014), who concluded that eTwinning offers professional development in which teachers can engage with peers, contemplate their methods and offer mutual support, strengthening their resilience and dedication to their profession.

Professional development opportunities offered by eTwinning were crucial to teachers' professional growth. Participants reported that online learning opportunities helped them stay updated about new teaching methods and tools, with practical benefits such as acquiring digital literacy skills and classroom techniques that are directly applicable

to their teaching. In addition, the variety of professional development formats enabled teachers to tailor their learning experiences to their individual needs and preferences, facilitating self-directed learning. Another element that positively impacted teachers' learning experiences, particularly for those facing geographical or bureaucratic constraints, is the accessibility and diversity of eTwinning professional development activities. In this regard, Moore Johnson (2006) highlights that good teachers will be retained in the profession only if they are provided with resources such as peer collaboration, support, resources and professional development, among other things. In addition, research has shown that teachers with more exposure to professional development and more efficient teachers tended to have higher levels of job satisfaction. At the same time, job satisfaction contributes to the wellbeing of teachers and their pupils, overall school cohesion and enhanced status for the teaching profession (Toropova, Myrberg & Johansson, 2020).

Participating in eTwinning also significantly influenced teachers' perceptions of lifelong learning and their subsequent personal and professional development. **Teachers view eTwinning as a means for continuous learning, with some expressing a newfound enthusiasm for lifelong learning and a desire to instil this ethos in their pupils.** eTwinning was also cited as contributing to the expansion of teachers' understanding and engagement with lifelong learning initiatives beyond eTwinning itself. Participating in eTwinning activities often motivates teachers to pursue further education and challenge age-related stereotypes. These findings reflect eTwinning's positive impacts on teachers' constructivist beliefs (reflection, self-regulated learning, ownership, intrinsic motivation), along with their passion for the subjects they teach and their enjoyment in the act of teaching, integral components of their professional competence and crucial for achieving success in their careers (Keller, Hoy, Goetz, & Frenzel, 2016).

Regarding recognition, it was reported that **receiving acknowledgement significantly impacts teachers' motivation and enthusiasm for continued professional development.** Recognition goes beyond mere validation; it serves as a catalyst for growth and sustained engagement, reinforcing teachers' sense of accomplishment and desire for learning. Both formal and informal recognition (including appreciation from pupils and colleagues) contribute to teachers' emotional and cognitive wellbeing, fostering a greater desire for professional growth. In addition, appreciating teachers' work is perceived as a job resource that impacts teachers' work engagement (Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti & Xanthopoulou, 2007). At a more tangible level, some participants remarked that participating in eTwinning offers them career points that can aid their career advancement, motivating them to keep learning. As evidenced by previous eTwinning reports, eTwinning not only boosts teachers' morale but also promotes teachers' ongoing commitment to excellence. It is perceived

to be an incentive that motivates teachers to maintain their interest and commitment to their professional development (Pateraki 2018; Gilleran, Scimeca & Wastiau, 2019; Mouratoglou, Gilleran & Scimeca, 2021).

5.5 Thriving from work

Key findings

- *Teachers expressed a moderately high level of thriving from work (fulfilment, satisfaction and happiness in their profession), with eTwinning significantly impacting this perception.*
- *The greatest positive impact of eTwinning was reported on teachers' work-related emotional, psychological and social wellbeing.*
- *A moderate positive impact was noted on teachers' job design and experience of work, and on their work-life integration.*
- *A less positive impact was perceived on teachers' basic needs for thriving and health and physical and mental wellbeing.*
- *eTwinning was described to enhance job resources such as social and emotional support, and their perceived value in the workplace, contributing to teachers' overall wellbeing.*
- *eTwinning was cited as a protective factor against burnout and stagnation, enabling teachers to embrace continuous development rather than succumb to exhaustion.*

Overall, respondents' feeling of thriving from work is at a moderately high level. The results suggest that teachers find fulfilment, satisfaction and happiness in their work, which positively affects their work-related emotional and psychological wellbeing. This finding is particularly significant considering that satisfied teachers are less susceptible to stress and burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011), and offer higher instructional quality and better learning support for their pupils (Kunter, Klusmann, Baumert, Richter, Voss & Hachfeld, 2013). Regarding teachers' social wellbeing at work, these findings indicate that many teachers feel valued and accepted in their workplace communities. This positive perception of social support and belonging enhances their professional experience, considering that the teaching profession is not limited to technical skills or cognitive abilities, but is deeply rooted in social dynamics, emphasising relationships and emotions, and all interactions in the school community (Aspfors & Bondas, 2013). It is further linked to the broader job demands-resources model, which examines how job demands

(time pressure, workload) and a lack of job resources (autonomy, social support) contribute to burnout and employees not thriving from work (Van Den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte & Lens, 2008).

In terms of job design and experience of work, teachers view their jobs positively, particularly regarding autonomy and resource availability. Nonetheless, challenges such as managing workload and a need for more flexible work schedules were noted, echoing the results of the OECD report (OECD, 2020). Conversely, teachers reported lower levels of health, physical and mental wellbeing from work. This reflects the emotional and psychological effects of their work environments, including stress, fatigue and potential for burnout. Emotional exhaustion is linked to adverse mental health outcomes, including symptoms of depression and anxiety and heightened stress levels (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Recent research findings highlight that emotional exhaustion is associated with chronic stressors that are inherent in the teaching profession (Cui, 2022; Klusmann Aldrup, Roloff-Bruchmann, Carstensen, Wartenberg, Hansen & Hanewinkel, 2023). For instance, enduring stress from student needs, administrative pressures and workload adds significantly to this strain (Kyriacou, 2001), often leading to detachment from work, pupils and colleagues and impacting their wellbeing, professional effectiveness and educational quality (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

The findings of this report suggest that **work-life integration remains a significant challenge for many teachers**; the lowest reported levels relate to teachers' basic needs for thriving, such as job security, benefits, opportunities for advancement and fair compensation (see also OECD, 2020). In terms of work-life balance, and specifically regarding the use of digital platforms beyond teaching hours, the literature presents contradicting findings. Some researchers have concluded that using digital platforms creates an imbalance between work and life responsibilities (Adkins & Premeaux, 2014; Gadeyne, Verbruggen, Delanoëije, & De Cooman, 2018), whereas other studies (Golden, 2013; Derks, Bakker, Peters, & Van Wingerden, 2016) emphasise that using digital platforms can restore this balance.

Regarding the perceived impact of eTwinning activities, respondents observed a high positive impact on their work-related emotional and psychological wellbeing, social wellbeing and job design and experience. Teachers feel that eTwinning enhances their emotional satisfaction, social connections and job autonomy, contributing positively to these aspects of their professional lives (see 'Emotional wellbeing', 'Psychological wellbeing' and 'Social wellbeing'). However, **eTwinning was perceived to be less impactful on work-life integration, job security, basic needs for thriving and health and physical and mental wellbeing.**

Nevertheless, the qualitative data offer some deeper insights. eTwinning was reported to assist teachers in developing projects that align with established curriculum frameworks, capitalising on existing resources and pedagogical approaches, which in turn resulted in optimising time allocation and minimising workload demands. This finding is in line with relevant research (Parding and Berg-Jansson, 2018), which suggests that teachers' professional learning is mainly affected by temporal rather than spatial factors, due to the use of technology. Moreover, eTwinning's perceived contributions to increasing teachers' autonomy might have further implications for teachers' job satisfaction and burnout, as suggested by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011). eTwinning was cited as a protective factor against burnout and stagnation, enabling teachers to embrace continuous development rather than succumb to exhaustion.

5.6 Social wellbeing

Key findings

- *eTwinning activities are inherently collaborative, enabling teachers to build professional relationships.*
- *eTwinning facilitates the development of friendly relationships among participants that extend beyond professional collaboration.*
- *eTwinning promotes openness and communication, respect, trust, empathy, deeper relationships and collegiality among teachers.*
- *Community roles such as being an ambassador or group moderator strengthen a sense of ownership and collective responsibility.*
- *Shared interests, needs and challenges among teachers who are active in eTwinning are perceived to strengthen their sense of belonging.*
- *Mutual support and shared workload contribute to heightened feelings of security and belonging.*
- *National and European recognition enables teachers to transition from anonymity to visibility, fostering pride and self-esteem.*
- *Recognition for eTwinning activities enhances the perceived value and status of teachers in the community, often countering the societal undervaluation of the teaching profession.*

eTwinning was perceived to impact teachers' social wellbeing with an increased positive impact reported in the following areas: being treated with respect in their work, a sense of belonging at work, being valued by

the people they work with, being supported by their colleagues and being treated fairly at work. The qualitative data provided further insights into how eTwinning positively affects teachers' social wellbeing.

eTwinning was reported to encourage teachers to become more open and communicative, fostering trust and empathy among peers. Interpersonal relationships in the eTwinning community were described as robust and diverse, nurturing a sense of teamwork and collegial respect devoid of any fear of judgment or disrespect. This finding is particularly significant, since it reflects a 'bottom-up' rather than a 'top-down' approach. According to Hargreaves (2000), collegiality is crucial to teachers' professional growth and development, but collaboration should not be mandated – enforced collegiality is unlikely to result in notable change.

eTwinning was also reported to facilitate the development of friendly relationships with other peers, extending beyond mere professional collaboration. Participants were able to develop deeper connections with colleagues, locally and across and beyond Europe, resulting in meaningful friendships formed during eTwinning activities (projects, conferences). This finding is in line with Brouwer, Brekelmans, Nieuwenhuis and Simons (2012) who noted that community members usually collaborate and form personal relationships. Decentralised roles in the community, such as being an eTwinning ambassador or an eTwinning group moderator, were reported to further empower members, fostering a sense of ownership and collective responsibility. According to Wenger's social learning theory on communities of practice, mutual engagement and commitment are strengthened and promoted when community members share and undertake active roles in the community and thus in their learning (Wenger, 2000).

Participants also expressed pride in being members of a community that functions not only as a platform for sharing eTwinning-related news but also as a space for mutual support and problem-solving. For instance, collaborating in eTwinning projects was found to cultivate trust and reliability among colleagues. Through shared experiences and common challenges, teachers learned to depend on one another, reinforcing their professional relationships. Considering that opportunities for networking and collaboration among teachers result in lower attrition rates (Borman & Dowling, 2008), the findings suggest that the eTwinning community might also contribute to teacher retention. A key factor in retaining teachers is fostering a sense of emotional and social belonging that stems from a shared vision of educational goals and norms in the school (Kelchtermans, 2017). The findings of this report clearly highlight eTwinning's contribution to teachers' sense of emotional and social belonging.

Reciprocal assistance and shared workload often resulted in greater feelings of security and belonging in the professional community. This sense of belonging not only served as a source of support, but also acted as a buffer against professional challenges, providing emotional reassurance and empowerment in the face of adversity. Overall, these findings reflect Lavié's (2006) observation, which highlighted that professional learning communities enhance social aspects of learning such as collective inquiry, shared values and a supportive, collaborative learning culture.

Regarding recognition for eTwinning activities, teachers reported that not only does it validate individual contributions, it also enhances the perceived value and status of teachers in the community, counteracting societal perceptions that often undervalue the teaching profession. This finding is particularly significant, considering that teachers feel seriously undervalued in many countries (OECD, 2020), which in turn leads to less collective teacher effort for school improvement and job dissatisfaction (Akiba, Byun, Jiang, Kim & Moran, 2023). In addition, receiving national and European recognition enabled teachers to transition from anonymity to visibility, as evidenced by teachers' statements about being recognised for their work, fostering a sense of pride and self-esteem.

5.7 Existential wellbeing

Key findings

- *eTwinning fostered professional growth and encouraged teachers to reflect on and clarify their roles and goals.*
- *Participating in eTwinning stimulated a sense of purpose and ambition in teachers' professional paths.*
- *Some teachers experienced a transition from perceiving themselves as isolated to becoming an integral part of a vibrant European community.*
- *Teachers reported developing better perseverance and adaptability when faced with challenges thanks to eTwinning.*
- *eTwinning offered ample resources that help teachers make informed decisions that align with their life-career goals.*
- *Participating in eTwinning contributes to teachers' work-life balance by improving their time management, task allocation and self-care.*
- *eTwinning reduced contemplation of quitting and fostered aspirations for professional growth.*

- *eTwinning facilitated career transitions in teachers' trajectories, enabling shifts from traditional teaching roles to diverse opportunities such as pedagogical coordination and teacher training.*

The findings suggest that **eTwinning not only provided opportunities for growth and collaboration, but also reflective stimuli for re-evaluating and articulating teachers' roles and goals.** For instance, by connecting with peers globally, some teachers experienced a shift in perspective from viewing themselves as solitary individuals to integral members of a dynamic community. Others reported enhancing their perseverance and adaptability while encountering challenges and maintaining a positive attitude and a collaborative approach to effectively overcoming obstacles. According to Vangrieken, Grosemans and Kyndt (2017), teachers' attitudes to collaboration reflect the extent to which teachers find collaboration with colleagues beneficial and desirable, or their preference for working individually and independently. The findings also suggest that teachers who are involved in eTwinning engage with common collaborative practices (discussions, exchanges of teaching materials), and with less widespread practices (observing, receiving feedback, collaborative learning) (OECD, 2020).

Moreover, by providing a supportive community and a wealth of resources, **eTwinning assisted teachers in making conscious choices that align with their personal and professional aspirations.** This alignment fostered a more balanced work-life integration. For example, eTwinning contributed to the development of essential skills such as organising, planning, delegation, prioritisation, time management, task allocation and self-care, which enhanced their self-efficiency and extended to their personal lives, fostering a healthier work-life balance. These practices are considered important to promoting work-life harmony among educators (Winkler, 2010; Underdown, McCabe & McCabe, 2022). Nevertheless, teachers highlighted the importance of delineating their professional and personal spheres, although it was acknowledged that attaining perfect work-life balance is an ongoing journey, requiring continuous reflection, adjustment and self-awareness.

Finally, the data revealed the impact of eTwinning on teachers' existential wellbeing, particularly on contemplating quitting and fostering aspirations for professional growth and geographical mobility. Specifically, one teacher reflected on moments when they considered quitting but found relief and guidance in the eTwinning community (see earlier references on motivation and retention). **Participating in eTwinning projects was reported to stimulate a refined sense of purpose and ambition in teachers' professional trajectories, leading some to contemplate career transitions and geographical relocations to pursue their**

aspirations, which is in line with the objectives of Erasmus+ mobility actions (see European Commission, European Education and Culture Executive Agency, et al., 2021). eTwinning also influenced teachers' career trajectories by facilitating transitions from traditional teaching roles to more diversified opportunities, such as freelancing or assuming roles as pedagogical coordinators or teacher trainers.

These findings might reflect underlying motivations related to aspects of individuals pursuing sustainable careers; particularly adequate economic stability, aligning their career path with personal values, adjusting to evolving individual needs and interests and embracing opportunities for renewal (McDonald & Hite, 2018). Van der Heijden and De Vos (2015: 7) defined sustainable careers as, 'The sequence of an individual's different career experiences, reflected through a variety of patterns of continuity over time, crossing several social spaces and characterised by individual agency, herewith providing meaning to the individual.' According to the scholars, the notion of 'social spaces' refers to the influence of the social environment on peoples' trajectories, 'individual agency' relates to peoples' responsibility and accountability for their careers and 'meaning' describes the changes in the meaning of careers due to the rising variety of subjective (work-life balance) rather than objective (number of promotions) career success criteria. Participating in eTwinning may have affected teachers' perceptions in this regard.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

As indicated by the quantitative and qualitative findings, **teachers who engaged in eTwinning activities generally perceive themselves to be ‘happy’ and ‘satisfied’ in terms of their subjective, emotional, social and psychological wellbeing. eTwinning was cited as positively impacting these perceptions.** Participating in eTwinning activities was also seen to positively impact most dimensions of ‘thriving from work’, including job design and work-life balance, though it had less impact on teachers’ basic needs for thriving and their physical and mental health at work. Additionally, eTwinning’s **contribution to teachers’ cognitive and existential wellbeing was stressed** by fostering resilience, reflective practice, teaching efficacy and collaborative learning through peer learning and professional development activities, which sometimes lead to tangible career benefits such as career progression.

The report also shows that **eTwinning positively impacts teachers’ professional competence and practice, and their perception of lifelong learning.** In turn, their motivation, job satisfaction and sense of fulfilment were positively impacted, mitigating the dangers of stagnation. Another area that was **positively affected by eTwinning was teachers’ emotional state and sense of belonging** to a supportive community that provides ongoing support, especially in times of adversity. This is particularly important considering that teachers’ wellbeing may be enhanced through collaborative partnerships among schools, communities and stakeholders.

Teachers who engaged in eTwinning activities perceived an increased sense of autonomy, agency and ownership in their daily practice, and in their personal and professional development, promoting self-determination. Engaging with the eTwinning community was also reported to trigger reflection in terms of broader life and career goals, assisting teachers in making conscious choices that align with their personal and professional aspirations. As a result, on some occasions, a refined sense of purpose in teachers’ professional trajectories was cited, leading to more sustainable career transitions.

Finally, both **formal and informal recognition enhance feelings of validation and affirmation, positively impacting teachers’ sense of self-worth and self-confidence.** This positive influence also elevated the status of the teaching profession within and beyond the professional community, challenging societal misconceptions. This is particularly important considering that empowering teachers’ agency and promoting collaborative practices, along with fostering a positive school climate where all staff feel valued, respected, engaged and supported, are

cited as measures for safeguarding and supporting teachers’ wellbeing (European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2024b).

The **greatest impact** is observed on teachers’ subjective wellbeing, work-related emotional and psychological wellbeing, and on social wellbeing from work. However, there is a **less pronounced** (though still substantial) **impact** on teachers’ work-life balance, basic needs for thriving and physical and mental wellbeing from work for the majority of respondents. These findings align with the nature of eTwinning as an online community of active teachers who are engaged in social, co-constructed and collaborative learning activities, both within and beyond the community. Yet they also reflect the challenging working conditions associated with the teaching profession (including administrative tasks, heavy teaching loads and parental concerns) that may adversely affect teachers’ overall wellbeing, as highlighted by Eurydice (European Commission, European Education and Culture Executive Agency, et al., 2021).

Overall, eTwinning was perceived to positively impact all dimensions of wellbeing covered in this study (albeit to varying extents), providing evidence in support of the OECD’s emphasis (2020) on the critical importance of teachers’ health and satisfaction, both personally and professionally.

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Launched in 2022, the European School Education Platform is the meeting point for all school staff (from early childhood education and care to primary and secondary education, including initial vocational education and training), researchers, policy makers and other stakeholders in the school education field.

The European School Education Platform is the new home of eTwinning. Since its launch in 2005, eTwinning has grown from a grassroots initiative into an active school community, and has involved more than one million school staff across Europe and beyond.

eTwinning specific services on the platform are only accessible to validated school staff. This means that eTwinning provides a safe digital platform including resources, projects kits and pedagogical guidance where teachers are engaged in various activities from designing and implementing European collaborative projects to networking, participating in virtual groups and peer learning. In addition, the platform offers many professional development opportunities, such as webinars and training courses, many of which are designed specifically for eTwinners.

The European School Education Platform and the eTwinning community are funded by Erasmus+, the European programme for education, training, youth and sport. They are initiatives of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture. The eTwinning community also exists thanks to the support of the National Support Organisations, funded by Erasmus+ under grant agreements with the European Education and Culture Executive Agency, and the platform's Supportive Partners.

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