

ULRR

An exploration of wellbeing provision in the junior cycle within the education and training board (ETB) sector in the context of a whole school approach and guidance counselling delivery

Item Type	Thesis
Authors	Lawlor, Christine
Download date	2026-04-16 13:53:49
Item License	https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/1.0/
Link to Item	https://hdl.handle.net/10344/8383

**An exploration of Wellbeing provision in
the Junior Cycle within the Education and
Training Board (ETB) Sector in the context
of a whole school approach and Guidance
Counselling delivery**

Christine Lawlor

**Master of Arts in Guidance Counselling
and Lifespan Development**

2019



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK

OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Title of Research study:

An exploration of Wellbeing provision in the Junior Cycle within the Education and Training Board (ETB) Sector in the context of a whole school approach and Guidance Counselling delivery

By

Christine Lawlor

Student Number: 0022047

Research Supervisor: Dr. Lucy Hearne

**Submission in fulfilment of the requirement for the reward of Master of Arts in
Guidance Counselling and Lifespan Development**

Submitted to the University of Limerick, 8th October 2019

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is entirely my own work. No element of the work described in this dissertation has been previously submitted for any degree in University of Limerick, or in any other institution.

Signature

Christine Lawlor

Acknowledgements

The undertaking of this research study would not have been possible without the unwavering support and patience of my family who have helped me so much over the past two years.

To my husband Brendan and my children Emma, Amy and Paddy. I am deeply grateful for your continuous support, encouragement and patience over the past two years.

My Mam and Dad are such an important part of my life and I would like to thank them both for their support. Thank you for all the encouragement, babysitting and for always allowing me to pursue my goals. I am so grateful.

To my sister Ciara. Thank you for being you. You have been a constant support. Thanks for listening to me whilst I felt sorry for myself and for providing endless laughs.

I would sincerely like to thank my research supervisor, Dr. Lucy Hearne, for her time and dedication, encouragement and patience during this research study.

Finally I would like to thank the University of Limerick for giving me permission to complete the research study.

Table of Contents

Declaration	ii
Acknowledgement	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Charts	vii
List of Appendices	viii
Glossary	ix
Abstract	x

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1	Introduction	
1.2	Context and Justification for the Study	1
1.2	Positionality of the Researcher	3
1.3	Aims and Objectives of the Research	4
1.4	Research Methodology	4
1.5	Structure of the Thesis	5

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0	Introduction	7
2.1	Subjective Wellbeing (SWB) in Adolescence	7
2.2	Irish Policy on Wellbeing in Junior Cycle Education	10
2.3	Adolescent Development	11
	2.3.1 Sigmund Freud and the Psychosexual Framework	12
	2.3.2 Erik Erikson and James Marcia's Theories of Identity Formation	12
	2.3.3 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Development	13
	2.3.4 Marcia's theory of Identity Achievement	14
2.4	Guidance Counselling in Post Primary Education	14
	2.4.1 Definition of Guidance Counselling	14
	2.4.2 Whole School Approach to Guidance Counselling	15
2.6	Conclusion	17

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.0	Introduction	18
3.1	The Research Questions	18
	3.1.1 Secondary Research Questions	18
3.2	Methodology	19
	3.2.1 Research Paradigm: Positivist	19
3.3	Methods of Data Collection and Analysis	20
	3.3.1 Access and Sampling	20
	3.3.2 Data Collection Instrument: Online Survey	21
	3.3.2 Survey Design and Administration	21
	3.3.3 Data Analysis Method	23
3.4	Reliability and Validity	23
	3.4.1 Reliability	23
	3.4.2 Validity	24
3.5	Reflexivity	24
3.6	Ethical Considerations	25
3.7	Conclusion	27

Chapter 4: Findings

4.0	Introduction	27
4.1	Findings	27
	4.1.1 Section 1: Background Information	27
	4.2.2: Section 2: Delivery of a Wellbeing Programme	29
	4.2.3 Section 3: Involvement in the Wellbeing Programme at Junior Cycle	35
4.3	Conclusion	40

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.0	Introduction	41
-----	--------------	----

5.1	Whole School Approach and the Delivery of Junior Cycle Wellbeing in ETB Schools	41
5.2	Challenges and Implications associated with Delivery of Junior Cycle Wellbeing	45
5.3	Conclusion	50
Chapter 6: Conclusion		
6.0	Introduction	51
6.1	Overview of Findings	51
6.2	Strengths and Limitations of the Study	53
6.3	Recommendations	54
6.4	Reflexivity and Personal Learning	55
6.5	Conclusion	55
	References	56
	Appendices	67

List of Charts

Chart 4.1: Age Profile	31
Chart 4.2: Nationality	32
Chart 4.3: Level of involvement in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme.	33
Chart 4.4: Coherent delivery of the wellbeing programme	34
Chart 4.5: Support of management in the delivery of Junior Cycle Wellbeing	35
Chart 4.6: Level of consultation with teaching staff in the delivery of the Wellbeing Programme	36
Chart 4.7: Support of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme in the school	37
Chart 4.8: Planning time allocated for the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme	37
Chart 4.9: Area of Wellbeing	39
Chart 4.11: Familiarity with the Wellbeing Indicators (NCCA, 2017) at Junior Cycle	39
Chart 4.12: Level of CPD received to deliver the Wellbeing programme	40
Chart 4.14: Level of satisfaction with the Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme	41
Chart 4.13: Adequate guidelines on assessment methods	42

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Subject Information Letter (Gatekeeper)

Appendix B: Consent Form (Gatekeeper)

Appendix C: Subject information Email (Volunteer Participant)

Appendix D: Online Survey

Glossary

CPD	Curriculum Professional Development
CSPE	Civic, Social and Political Education
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
DES	Department of Education and Science (1997-2010)
DES	Department of Education and Skills (2010 – present)
EAP	Employee Assistance Programme
ETB	Education and Training Board
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
IGC	Institute of Guidance Counsellors
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NCGE	National Centre for Guidance in Education
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operations and Development
PE	Physical Education
PERMA	Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Achievement)
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education
SWB	Subjective Wellbeing
UL	University of Limerick
WHO	World Health Organisation
WSA	Whole School Approach

Abstract

The primary aim of this research is to examine the provision of a whole school approach to Wellbeing in Junior Cycle with specific reference to the curriculum and guidance provision. The objective is to provide recommendations for the development of a whole school approach to Wellbeing in post primary schools within the ETB sector.

The Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme was introduced in post primary schools in September 2017. In 2015 the DES *Framework for Junior Cycle* identified Wellbeing as a curricular area that would comprise of CSPE, SPHE, PE and Guidance Education (DES, 2015). Other modules and learning experiences through other subject areas can also be included alongside these subject areas including Guidance in order to provide 300 hours timetabled for Wellbeing at Junior Cycle. This will be increased by 400 by 2020 (NCCA, 2017). This study will scrutinise current practice in schools and will consider the challenges involved in the delivery of the Wellbeing Programme.

A positivist approach was utilised in this study to collect data (Gray, 2014). This involved surveying 96 post primary teaching staff directly involved in the delivery of the Wellbeing Programme in nine ETB schools through the use of an online survey. The findings were exported and organised in Microsoft Excel and the data was analysed. The quantitative data is presented in graphical and numerical format. It includes qualitative data pertinent to the specific survey questions.

The key findings of this study highlight that the Wellbeing programme is still in the early days of development. The findings illuminate concerns from the respondents about factors involved in the delivery of the Wellbeing Programme that could potentially impact on students' opportunity to enhance their physical, emotional and social wellbeing. The main challenges identified are the lack of collaboration amongst school staff and the need for more structured guidelines in the delivery and evaluation of the programme.

Finally a number of recommendations are put forward to inform future policy, practice and research.

Chapter 1: Introduction

2.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research topic in the context of the relevant policy, theory and practice. It discusses the justification of the study and the positionality of the researcher. The aim, objectives and the research methodology, which underpin this study are addressed. Finally, this chapter presents a plan for the thesis.

1.1. Context and Justification for the Study

This research examines Wellbeing provision in Junior Cycle in the context of a whole school approach and its implications for guidance counselling services in ETB post primary schools. Although, wellbeing has become one of the core principles that underpin Junior Cycle Education (DES, 2015), it is a concept that is difficult to define. The definitions are often varied and multi-faceted. Student well-being according to one perspective is viewed as students' "overall development and quality of life", (PISA, 2017 pg.61). Another perspective of the definition of Wellbeing is given by the World Health Organisation who define wellbeing as an integral part of health and "it reflects the quality of life and the various factors which can influence it over the course of a person's life' (WHO, 2001 pg. 9).

The importance of the introduction of Wellbeing at Junior Cycle is critical during this developmental stage of the adolescent. Adolescence is a fundamental time of change and stress in the young person's life (Boyd and Bee, 2017). It can be a stage of development where the young person may be experiencing an identity crisis (Erikson, 1968). Erikson (1968) asserts this stage of development as one where the young person examines the set of beliefs they had as a child and replaces them with their own set of values forming their own identity. Furthermore Sigmund Freud asserts that the young person can develop defence mechanism to help manage difficult situations (Boyd and Bee, 2017). Sweeney (2017) claims adolescence is often a period filled with anxiety for many adolescents.

In 2010, The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA, 2010) carried out a consultation process with regard to changes in Junior Cycle Education. One of the key areas that emerged from this consultation process was the "concern for the wellbeing of young people at this critical stage of their journey from childhood to adulthood in a complex and

challenging environment” (NCCA, 2011 pg. 3). The *Framework for Junior Cycle* envisages engaging students with learning related to wellbeing through the “school culture and students’ experience of the implementation of related whole-school policies” (DES, 2015 pg. 23). The NCCA (2017) highlights the value of wellbeing to enable students to feel confident and connected, and have an active role in their learning. Wellbeing is a multi-faceted concept and efforts to promote students wellbeing require a whole school approach (NCCA, 2017). This means looking at structures, experiences, resources and other elements that the whole school community can provide to enhance young people’s sense of wellbeing (NCCA, 2017).

The rationale for the study is to explore the current delivery of the Wellbeing programme at Junior Cycle from the perception of the teaching staff in the nine ETB schools. Wellbeing is included as a curricular area that includes the junior cycle subjects of CSPE, SPHE, PE and Guidance Education (DES, 2015). The NCCA (2017) outline the other subject areas that can be included in the Wellbeing Programme as well as the curricular subjects. The Wellbeing Programme is to provide 300 hours timetabled at Junior Cycle. This will be increased by 400 by 2020 (NCCA, 2017). The delivery of a whole school approach to Wellbeing has been identified as best practice (DES, 2015). However in a recent study, Hearne et al. (2016) highlight the complexities and challenges involved in the delivery of a whole school approach to guidance counselling. The NCCA (2017) states that guidance related learning plays an integral role in the delivery of the new wellbeing programme. . The NCCA (2017) asset that the input from the guidance counsellor is fundamental in the development of a whole school approach to wellbeing, but it cannot just be the guidance counsellor working solely on this. It requires a collaborative and consultative approach amongst all members of staff (NCCA, 2017). This study will explore the views and of teaching staff involved in the delivery of the programme. It is hoped by looking at a number of schools within an ETB that it will be possible to get a broader view of the experiences of the teaching staff involved. It is envisaged that this study will inform national and local school policies regarding the strategies for implementing the new Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme in post primary schools.

1.2 Positionality of the Researcher

The positionality of the researcher is significant in the context of this particular research study and it should be stated at the outset of the research (Thomas, 2017). The researcher

has worked for 14 years in the ETB sector. She has a personal interest in the research topic due to her involvement in the Wellbeing Programme and as a trainee guidance counsellor where this subject will be involved in the guidance work. The researcher adopted a reflexive approach in evaluating any assumptions about the issues involved in the research. A reflective diary was kept throughout the research as outlined in Bassot (2013).

1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Research

The primary aim of this research is to examine the provision of a whole school approach to Wellbeing in Junior Cycle with specific reference to the curriculum and guidance provision. A further aim is to provide recommendations for the development of a whole school approach to Wellbeing in post primary schools.

The specific objectives are:

1. To review the literature in relation to policy, theory and practice with regard to the implementation of the new Wellbeing programme at Junior Cycle.
2. To identify the level of involvement teaching and guidance staff has in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme in ETB schools.
3. To identify the current practices for curricular assessment of Wellbeing in ETB schools.
4. To illuminate the current challenges in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme in ETB schools.
5. To make recommendations that may inform practice, policy and further research.

1.4 Research Methodology

A positivist paradigm was selected for the purpose of the research (Thomas, 2013). The rationale for choosing the quantitative approach is that the researcher wanted to gather descriptive data from a large number of respondents. The survey design was a fixed design in the form of a survey method through the online platform Survey Monkey was disseminated to the nine ETB schools to the teaching staff directly involved in the delivery of the Wellbeing Programme. The data was analysed using Microsoft Excel for graphical representation. At all times, the research adhered to the Institutional ethical requirements of the University of Limerick Faculty of Education and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee, the Institute

of Guidance Counsellors (2012) *Code of Ethics*, and the National Centre for Guidance in Education (2008) *Research Code of Ethics*.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 1: The introduction chapter has set out the context and justification for the research. It outlined the positionality of the researcher. In addition, it described the aim, objectives and methodology of the study. Finally it presented an outline of each chapter.

Chapter 2: This chapter discusses the relevant literature on the topic. It presents a critical evaluation of previous research and discourse on the topic. It examines a selection of resources and aims to provide a point of reference for the researcher's own primary data, methodology and findings.

Chapter 3: The methodology chapter describes the theoretical and practical application of the research design. A rationale for the chosen paradigm is presented. The primary and secondary research questions are listed. The method of data collection and analysis are also explained including data collection instrument and analysis. Reliability, validity, reflexivity and ethical considerations were also addresses.

Chapter 4: This chapter presents and examines the main findings from the online survey completed by the teaching staff directly involved in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme. The quantitative data is presented in graphical and numerical format. It also includes qualitative data pertinent to the specific survey questions.

Chapter 5: The discussion presents a critical interpretation of the research findings with the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Two overarching themes emerged from the study and are discussed in terms of the primary and secondary research questions. The first section of the discussion explores the current delivery of the Wellbeing Programme in the context of a whole school approach. The second section of the discussion identifies the challenges and implications associated with the delivery of the Wellbeing programme.

Chapter 6: The conclusion, Chapter 6, will summarise the main findings of the research. It will outline the recommendations from the study in terms of practice, policy pertaining to the Wellbeing programme at Junior Cycle in ETB schools.

Chapter 2 will provide an in-depth examination of the literature in a theoretical and practice context.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

Thomas (2017) asserts the purpose of a literature review is to provide the reader with a background to the study. This literature review will set the context of this research study by exploring the literature on Wellbeing at Junior Cycle in the context of a whole school approach and guidance counselling delivery. The literature was sourced from a wide range of sources including journal articles, Irish and international policy documents, and educational databases to provide a picture to the reader pertaining to this topic (Bell, 2010).

This chapter is divided into four thematic sections. The first section examines subjective wellbeing (SWB) relating to definitions, concepts and discourse on its relevance in adolescence and post primary education. The second section explores policies, both nationally and internationally, pertaining to wellbeing. To this end, educational circulars and publications from organisations and relevant bodies in the area of wellbeing will be reviewed. The next section investigates adolescent development in the context of the wellbeing of post primary students. Finally, the role of the guidance counsellor and the whole school approach is investigated in relation to the delivery of a whole school approach to wellbeing.

2.1 Subjective Wellbeing (SWB) in Adolescence

The importance of student wellbeing has received worldwide attention in recent years and has been identified as a vital protective factor against mental health issues (Gargiulo and Stokes, 2009). However, wellbeing can be hard to define. The Oxford English dictionary defines well-being as ‘the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy’. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment defines wellbeing within the school context as children “being confident, happy and healthy (NCCA, 2009, pg.1). The World Health Organisation defines wellbeing as an integral part of health and “it reflects the quality of life and the various factors which can influence it over the course of a person’s life’ (WHO, 2001 pg. 9).

The literature indicates that the wellbeing of young people has become a significant issue and schools have a vital role to play in promoting subjective wellbeing (SWB). In a school context, there are a number of perspectives on the importance of supporting student wellbeing. Park (2004) stated that positive SWB or, in other words life satisfaction, has an important role in predicting positive youth development ‘the notion of SWB incorporates positive factors and not just the absence of negative factors’ (Park, 2004 pg. 26). Research

indicates that the level of parental involvement, engagement in challenging activities, high quality interaction with significant others and positive life events can be correlated to life satisfaction (Park, 2004). Furthermore challenges faced by young people such as family dysfunction, academic pressure, peer pressure and drug problems can have a negative impact on a young person's SWB (Park, 2004).

Student well-being, which is viewed as students' overall development and quality of life, has become increasingly integrated into education policy in recent years (PISA, 2017). Peterson (2006) has argued that schools need to extend their focus beyond academic learning and include the promotion of student wellbeing within the school. Furthermore, Seligman et al. (2009) assert that wellbeing should be part of the school curriculum as most young people attend school, therefore allowing schools the opportunity to reach young people and enhance their wellbeing on a large scale. They conclude that if wellbeing is taught in school it could potentially increase life satisfaction and also provide better learning and more creative thinkers. Various reasons explored in this section are proposed for the adoption of a positive education approach in schools. "Positive education is defined as education for both traditional skills and for happiness" (Seligman et al., 2009, pg. 293).

Similarly, Weare and Nind (2011) highlight the importance of wellbeing by outlining the important role schools have in creating an atmosphere of positive mental health and building resilience amongst young people. They assert that schools can provide adolescents with resources to help them cope in difficult situations, whilst also providing an environment they feel safe in. The school environment can foster the development of the social and emotional skills and resources to assist the young person to have positive youth development (Weare and Nind, 2011). In Ireland, "schools have an important function in nurturing children's social and emotional development as well as their academic and cognitive development" (Simovska and Mannix-McNamara, 2015, pg. 313). Although, Smyth and McCoy (2013) believe that our post primary education system focuses more on the academic results than the wellbeing of our students, Simovska and Mannix-McNamara (2015) argue that schools can improve their ability to learn and to achieve academically as well as their capacity to become responsible adults and citizens.

As outlined by O'Connor et al. (2016), positive mental health in adolescence may help young people meet the many demands placed on them as they progress into early adulthood. O'

Connor (2016) explains positive mental health is a framework that has a similar alignment to Seligman's (2011) PERMA framework (positive emotional experiences, engagement, relationships, purpose and accomplishment) which underpins the new Irish Junior Cycle Wellbeing module. These five pillars in the PERMA model are believed to contribute to overall wellbeing and can be defined and measured independently of one another (Seligman, 2011). Furthermore, Seligman (2011) asserts that these five pillars fall on the positive side of the mental health spectrum and that wellbeing is not simply the lack of mental illness. Kern et al. (2014) suggest the use of the PERMA model as a means of measuring and meeting the needs of a student's wellbeing as it may allow schools to offer more information to students. The PERMA model allows teachers to develop a systematic approach to work towards developing a student's wellbeing (NCCA, 2017).

Smyth (1999) and Smyth et al. (2011) highlight the significance of positive student teacher relationships on student outcomes; both academic and non-academic. According to the My World Survey (Dooley and Fitzgerald, 2011) 75% of mental health issues emerge between the ages of 15-25. The findings also highlight that 33% of young people had experienced some type of mental health difficulty, 20% had engaged in self-harm and 7% had attempted suicide. The My World Survey highlighted that the most powerful predictor of good mental health was the "presence in their lives of at least one good adult" (Dooley and Fitzgerald, 2011, pg. 6). Similarly, the PISA (2015) results, which examined students' life satisfaction and the role of the school in the positive mental health of students ascertained that their school experience has a significant role in understanding whether they enjoy good physical and mental health, given that a considerable amount of their time is spent in a school environment; i.e. in class, peer interactions and relationships developed with teachers and staff members. Furthermore, Smyth's (2017) study on primary school experiences and the transition to second-level education highlights the critical importance of the development of a school climate where positive interaction and mutual respect between teachers and students could serve to improve student wellbeing and learning. Byrne, Rietdijk and Pickett (2018) suggest that the importance of student wellbeing in our schools cannot be underestimated in facilitating the life chances of our students in both academic and non-academic success. In the next section the policy development pertaining to the implementation of Wellbeing at Junior Cycle will be examined.

2.2 Irish Policy on Wellbeing in Junior Cycle Education

In recent years, Irish policy discourse has focused increasingly on the importance of the young person's wellbeing (Smyth, 2015). This section examines Irish policy on wellbeing in the Junior Cycle in particular. Although the term wellbeing is not specifically used in the Education Act (1998), the role of the school is to:

Promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and to provide health education for them in consultation with their parents, having regards to the characteristic spirit of the school.

(Government of Ireland, 1998 pg. 13)

In 2000, the Irish Government developed the National Children's Strategy (2000), which set out a number of objectives to guide policy for young people in the subsequent ten years. This document was intended to set the foundation for change in relation to policy with regard to the young person developing holistically and reaching their potential. Following on from this a number of policy developments have emerged to address the wellbeing of young people. In 2011, the NCCA produced a document examining the concerns surrounding an overcrowded Junior Certificate curriculum (NCCA, 2011). Consequently, it emerged from this consultation process that there were concerns regarding the "wellbeing of young people at this critical stage of their journey from childhood to adulthood in a complex and challenging environment" (NCCA, 2011 pg. 50). Subsequently it was identified that there was a need for schools to have the required protocols and support systems in place to support the wellbeing of students during this critical time in their lives (DES, 2013). During the same period in 2013, the Department of Health developed *Healthy Ireland: A framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013 to 2025*. This document further emphasised the significance of all sectors coming together to support the health and wellbeing in society.

However, the most significant development has been the reform of the Junior Cycle Curriculum. In 2015, the DES produced the *Framework for Junior Cycle*, which aimed to give more autonomy and flexibility to schools to implement programmes suited to the needs and the context of the school. The DES (2015) included Wellbeing as one of the eight core principles of learning at Junior Cycle. Following this, wellbeing has become part of the curriculum over the three years and its aim is to build on and provide guidance for the work already being carried out in schools (DES, 2015). The principle of Wellbeing at Junior Cycle recognises that the 'student experience contributes directly to their physical, mental,

emotional and social wellbeing and resilience' (DES, 2015, pg. 11). The DES (2015) outlined that students will also engage with learning related to wellbeing through the school's culture and student experience by the implementation of whole school policies. Moreover, the DES (2017a) Circular outlines the arrangements for the implementation of the framework of Junior Cycle, which states that all students who began Junior Cycle in 2017 and thereafter are to undertake Wellbeing.

In the new Junior Cycle, wellbeing is comprised of two distinct yet intertwined components. The first component is the whole school approach (creating a school culture that fosters students' wellbeing and brings the wellbeing indicators to life), and the second component is the curricular component (CSPE, SPHE, PE, Guidance and other wellbeing related learning) (NCCA, 2017). The NCCA guidelines state that student wellbeing can be "enhanced when important aspects of wellbeing are the subject of teaching and learning in specific curricular areas" (NCCA, 2017, pg. 17). The allocation of time available for Wellbeing was to begin with a minimum of 300 hours commencing from 2017 onwards with an increase to a minimum of 400 hours from 2020 (DES, 2017a). Schools have been given some flexibility in the initial setting up process in relation to how these hours are implemented in school. From 2017, all schools must include CSPE for a minimum 70 hours, SPHE for a minimum of 70 hours and PE for a minimum of 135 hours as well as 25 hours of other guidance related learning (NCCA, 2017).

Finally, further policy developments saw a continued emphasis on the wellbeing of students. In the DES Action Plan for Education 2016-2019 one of the main goals is to improve services and resources to enhance the delivery of Wellbeing in schools. In 2018, the DES developed a Wellbeing Policy Statement Framework for practice. The aim of this document is to address the challenges and opportunities in the delivery of wellbeing in post primary schools (DES, 2018).

2.3 Adolescent Development

This section will explore the literature pertaining to adolescent development as there are a number of key psychological changes occurring during adolescence. It is widely recognised that this stage of development is a complex time and there are many factors impacting on the young person (Weare and Nind, 2011). Especially, adolescence is a particularly vulnerable

life stage during which mental health challenges can arise for young people (Boyd and Bee, 2017).

2.3.1 Sigmund Freud and the Psychosexual Framework

Freud's theory proposed that human behaviour is founded in the conscious and unconscious awareness and was based on psycho sexual stages (Boyd and Bee, 2017), An individual cannot progress to the next stage until the current one is mastered (Sugarman, 2001),. Freud argued that an individual's personality has three parts, all playing a vital role in satisfying the libido (Boyd and Bee, 2017). The id is the source of all wishes and desires (Boyd and Bee, 2017). "The superego is the part of the personality that acts as a moral judge" (Boyd and Bee, 2017, pg. 46). The ego is the part of the personality that is in charge of keeping the personality in balance and acts as a mediator between the id and reality (Boyd and Bee, 2017). Freud argued that the ego generates defence mechanisms, projection, denial and displacement to cope with areas of a person's life that can cause anxiety or emotional conflict (Berk, 2014).

The defence mechanism can be used by young people to cope with difficult situations (Boyd and Bee, 2017). Sweeney (2017) claims adolescence is often a period filled with anxiety for many adolescents. Unresolved childhood issues impact on the adolescent. "Early attachment problems have an effect on the adolescent's later experiences and influences how they deal with stressful situations" (Sweeney, 2017, pg. 74). "A disruptive emotion of early adolescence is shame and adolescents tend to develop strong defence mechanisms like denial, regression and projection to cope with situations and interact with others" (O'Higgins Norman, 2014 pg. 73).

Some weaknesses in Freud's theory have been identified. One of its limitations is that the development is supposed to be complete by the age of 12 or the fact that he failed to appreciate the importance of culture and his clinical experience is based on a group of affluent women (Boyd and Bee, 2017). However, Freud's work is still useful today to help our understanding of the issues affecting the wellbeing of young people.

2.3.2 Erik Erikson and James Marcia's Theories of Identity Formation

Developmental theorists such as Erikson propose that the formation of an identity is a crucial part of adolescent development. Erikson (1968) described identity formation as a stage where the adolescent leaves behind the beliefs they had as a child and replaces them with their own

set of values thus forming their own identity. The young person develops a sense of who he or she is, and what pathway he or she wishes to follow. Kilmstra (2012) describes it as the stage when profound personality changes occur. Erikson's theory is divided into psychosocial stages, which are defined by a particular issue or crisis (Boyd and Bee, 2017). During adolescence, the main crisis identified is that of *identity versus role confusion* (Boyd and Bee, 2017).

More recently Ecclestone (2010) states that identity is formed through many complex interactions and relationships in various contexts. It is a time when the young person strives for an understanding of themselves (O'Higgins-Norman, 2014). He states that identity has occurred when the young person has developed a sense of who they are as a person and that it is a significant time in the cognitive development of the person. O'Higgins-Norman (2014) describes this time as the young person coming to terms with the difference between when he was as a child and comparing it to the person they are becoming. He also describes the changes that are taking place in family relationships where the young person may detach themselves from the beliefs of the family in order to establish their own personal identity. The focus in this stage of development is to the peer group (Boyd and Bee, 2017). In an Irish context, the promotion of wellbeing is vital to the emotional development of young people.

2.3.3 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Development

Bronfenbrenner examined the development of individuals in terms of their relationships and their environment (ecology). Bronfenbrenner did not focus on a specific area of development but examined the context of the person's life and the interrelationships of the different processes. His theory is composed of four systems with the person in the centre of the circle (biological system). Each system has an influence of the development of the person, the microsystem, macro system and the exosystem. The micro system illustrates the most direct interaction with the person is with parents, friends and teachers (Boyd and Bee, 2017).

According to Darling (2007) Bronfenbrenner's theory has helped policy makers to consider the context and environmental factors that play a role in the lives of a young person and has a significant role in the development of the Wellbeing programme at Junior Cycle. The systems based approach to wellbeing recognises the individual and his or her immediate relationships and then moves outwards to show the importance of the wider community and the context of the young person's lives (NCCA, 2017). Another aspect of the new Junior Cycle Wellbeing is the development of resilience in our young people (NCCA, 2017). According to Schoon

(2006), “resilience is based on the complex and bi – directional transactions between the individual and context” (pg.18). Resilience from an ecological perspective implicates those who facilitate wellbeing in the proximal processes (e.g. creating a sense of belonging in the community or having access to holistic education) (Ungar 2013).

2.3.4 Marcia’s theory of Identity Achievement

Marcia’s theory on identity achievement is rooted in Erikson’s ideas on identity processes. Marcia’s theory comprises of two parts: a crisis and commitment. The crisis is the period of decision making when old values and old choices are re-examined. This reevaluation leads to commitment to some specific role, e.g., a value a goal or an ideology (Boyd and Bee, 2017). Similarly to Erikson’s theory cultural differences may impact on the formation of identity achievement.

2.4 Guidance Counselling in Post Primary Education

This section will explore the role of guidance counselling in post primary education in the context of the delivery of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme.

2.4.1 Definition of Guidance Counselling

The Education Act 1998, states the provision of guidance counselling in post primary education is a statutory requirement and schools need to “ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices (Government of Ireland, 1998, pg. 13).

The DES Inspectorate (2005) provides guidelines relating to students access to appropriate guidance and guidance counselling is viewed as a holistic model where guidance and counselling are interrelated but also defined separately:

Guidance in schools refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence that assists students to develop self-management skills which lead to the effective choices and decisions about their lives. It encompasses the three separate, but interlinked areas of personal and social development, emotional guidance and career guidance.

Counselling is also a key part of school guidance programme, offered on an individual or group basis as part of a developmental learning process and at moments of crisis. Counselling has at its objective the empower of students so that they can make decision, solve problems, address behavioural issue, develop coping strategies and resolve difficulties that they may be experiencing. Counselling in school

may include personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling or a combination of these

(DES, 2005, p.4)

Internationally, the OECD (2004) definition of career guidance echoes key elements of the DES (2005) definition stating that guidance can assist people to acquire the necessary skills needed for developing a career. However, the OECD (2004) also outlines the significance of career guidance in informing the labour market.

2.4.2 Whole School Approach to Guidance Counselling

The guidance counsellor's role is multi-faceted within the school environment. The DES (2017) views guidance as:

A whole school activity where each school collaboratively develops a whole school guidance plan as a means of supporting the needs of the students. It is important that all members of staff fully recognise and ensure that guidance permeates every aspect of school life

(DES, 2017, pg. 2)

The DES (2005) proposed that guidance counselling be formalised as part of whole school planning to ensure continuity of changing school circumstances. The whole school approach has been put forward as a model of best practice in Irish post primary schools (Hearne and Galvin, 2014). By developing a whole school approach to guidance counselling, students develop a greater sense of self (DES, 2009) The DES states that 'guidance encompasses the three separate but interlinked areas of personal and social development, educational guidance and career guidance' (DES, 2005, Pg.1). Hearne et al (2016) define the whole school approach as one that is delivered through a guidance plan and that clearly outlines the roles, responsibilities and practices of the guidance counsellor, school staff and management. As outlined by the NCGE (2004) the whole school guidance plan should be the main framework for whole school guidance delivery outlining the full range support structures in place in a school available to all students in varying degrees.

In terms of the Junior Cycle, the ACCS et al. (2017) produced a framework for whole school guidance which states that first year students should have some set hours of guidance in the course of the year. It further outlines how there are some areas of overlap in the area of the SPHE curriculum, and this further emphasises the need for collaboration amongst the guidance counsellor and teachers in planning and delivering the guidance programme in schools. National Educational Psychological Society (2010) provides a framework of a continuum of support for post primary students which are divided up into three levels. The first level is 'support for all' which aims to effectively meet the needs to most students. The

second level is ‘support for some’ which provides support for students who require additional input and final the third level is ‘support for few’ which provides support for students with complex and enduring needs. This framework can be useful for planning the school wellbeing programme and policies in the school for supporting the students' wellbeing (NCCA, 2017).

In terms of support for guidance provision, the NCGE's (2017) Whole School Guidance Framework for Junior Cycle contains the areas of learning of developing myself, developing my learning and developing my career path. It asserts that these areas of learning and their associated competencies are closely linked to a number of the key skills outlined in the new Junior Cycle. The NCGE (2017) ascertains that because the areas of learning outlined in the framework are closely associated with the wellbeing indicators it is, therefore, important and vital for the guidance counsellor to have a role in the planning and delivery of the wellbeing programme within the school.

However, Hui (2002) discusses the complexity of implementing a whole school approach, which requires not only engagement by school personnel, but a positive attitude towards guidance and the members involved in guidance in the school. In Ireland, low levels of collaboration with respect to the delivery of a whole school approach were identified some time back (McCoy et. al., 2006). Mannix McNamara (2015) states that teachers have articulated a growing sense of disempowerment in the current educational climate, often highlighting feeling ineffective and untrained on the one hand. Some of the factors contributing to this reluctance to collaborate may include the educational cutbacks, staff shortages, time pressures and increased paperwork along with the feeling that the regular teacher does not feel adequately qualified (Hearne et. al 2016).

This section will examine the role of the guidance counsellor in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme. The NCCA (2017) states that guidance related learning plays an integral role in the delivery of the new wellbeing programme. The IGC (2017) outlines one of the roles of the guidance counsellor is to assist in creating and delivering the guidance programme. School guidance supports and promotes the positive, social, academic and career development of students. Consequently, this strengthens their resilience (IGC, 2017). This is a significant role for the guidance counsellor to manage and coordinate whilst still being underpinned by their professional and ethical practice. It is also important to take into

consideration that many guidance counsellors are already acting in dual roles since the removal of the ex- quota hours.

The NCCA (2017) highlights the importance of guidance related learning and the important role it plays in the new Junior Cycle Wellbeing guidelines. DES (2017a) state that “Schools may also choose to include other areas in their provision of wellbeing. Examples are set out in the NCCA Guidelines for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle and include areas such as guidance” (DES, 2017a, pg. 11). Clarke and Barry (2010), in their primary school study, state that programmes with a whole school approach are particularly likely to lead to positive mental health, social and educational outcomes for students. The DES (2017) describe the whole school approach as one that takes into account all aspects of school life, including student involvement, teachers, principals and all other staff within the school.

2.6 Conclusion

The literature highlights the significant role schools can play in the promotion of the wellbeing of students. The New Framework for Junior Cycle argues the importance of using a whole school approach to the delivery of the Wellbeing programme at Junior Cycle. The (NCCA, 2017) However, the development of a whole school approach to wellbeing is not a straightforward task. It requires a collaborative and consultative approach amongst all members of staff. There needs to be flexibility to respond to students' needs. The guidance counsellor plays a fundamental role in providing input into the whole school approach to wellbeing, but it cannot just be the guidance counsellor working solely on this. It is also essential that planning for wellbeing be tied closely with the development of all policies within the school. It is vital that teachers are supported in their teaching and learning activities by other members of the school staff including guidance counsellors and school chaplains as well as parents (O'Higgins-Norman, 2014). This study will examine the delivery of Wellbeing in the school system and the Methodology is addressed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the views of teachers on the topic of Wellbeing provision in the Junior Cycle within the ETB sector in the context of a whole school approach and guidance counselling delivery. This chapter will outline the primary and secondary research questions of the study and the underlying paradigm. It will then describe methods of data collection used and outline how this data was analysed. Finally, it will look at issues of validity, reliability and reflexivity and the ethical issues associated with undertaking the study.

3.1 The Research Questions

Bryman (2012) refers to the design of research questions as one of the most crucial parts of the research design and it is critical in the selection of the appropriate methodology. This can only be accomplished after reviewing the relevant literature (Hogan et al. 2009). A research question should address a socially relevant issue and be specific and focused (Flick, 2009). Furthermore, Cohen et al. (2011) highlight the importance of the research question in the type of guidance it can provide for the study. Thomas (2017) claims these questions lie at the heart of the study. In studying the relevant literature in Chapter 2, the researcher identified the primary research question as:

How is the new Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme being delivered within the ETB sector in the context of a whole school approach and guidance counselling delivery?

3.1.1 Secondary Research Questions

The secondary research questions sought to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the topic:

1. *What level of involvement do teaching and guidance staff have in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme in ETB schools?*
2. *What are the current guidelines for curricular assessment of Wellbeing in ETB schools?*
3. *What are the challenges in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme in ETB schools?*

The next section will address the research methodology that underpinned this study to answer these research questions.

3.2 Methodology

Methodologies refer to the underlying approaches or philosophies adopted by the researcher in a study (Thomas, 2017). This section outlines the paradigm underpinning this research study. A paradigm is a belief system that shapes how an individual views the issue, topic and their worldview (Thomas, 2017). Cohen et al. (2011) suggest that the topic being investigated usually determines the paradigm being used and research paradigms provide a framework to the researcher. A paradigm is the lens by which the researcher views the world. Flick (2009) outlines the relevance of the epistemological backgrounds of the researcher and the impact they can have on the research. Epistemology is defined as “what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline” (Bryman, 2012, pg. 27). Epistemology relates to how the researcher looks at the kind of events that exist in the social world (Thomas, 2017). The worldview of this researcher is that scientific methods and approaches provide greater justification of knowledge and that knowledge about the social world can be obtained objectively.

3.2.1 Research Paradigm: Positivist

In the current study, the researcher needed to make a decision about the underpinning paradigm to guide the research design. The two main paradigms used in guidance counselling research are positivist and interpretative (Patton and McMahon, 2006). Research paradigms are shared ideas in a particular community of inquiry (Thomas, 2017). Interpretivism is associated with qualitative research methods, which is usually undertaken on a small number of participants through interview or case study methods (Cohen et al. 2011). This method of research can be critiqued because it cannot be measured scientifically and requires the researcher to interact with the subjective meaning of the social world (Flick, 2011).

Conversely, positivism is an “epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of reality and beyond” (Bryman, 2012, pg. 28). Thomas (2017) describes the positivist approach as having the ability to be measured and is quantitative, whereas the interpretivist approach is interested in individuals and their narratives so it is qualitative. According to Braun and Clarke (2013), positivism is based on the assumption that reality does exist. Thomas (2017) asserts that the approach uses scientific methods to explain causal factors and it claims to be more objective and easier to

generalise. “Quantitative studies usually aim at testing an assumption that has been formulated in advance of the study in the form of the hypothesis” (Flick, 2015 pg. 110).

Whilst the interpretivist paradigm is increasing as a research approach within guidance research (Patton and McMahon, 2006) this researcher wanted to gather larger amounts of objective data from participants, so this approach was deemed unsuitable for this study. The positivist approach was deemed more appropriate as it provides an objective, scientific and systematic approach to the research. The strengths include efficiency; are objective; higher reliability because of replicability and can give data which can be generalised. Some of the weaknesses of this approach are a lack of control of response rates, less depth and lower validity (Bryman 2012). Further limitations include that the findings are cold and abstract (Thomas, 2013), and it is overly focused on the gathering of measurable data (Gray, 2014). Finally, Cohen et al. (2011) argue that this paradigm does not consider the complexity of human nature in contrast to the interpretivist (qualitative) paradigm.

The rationale for choosing the quantitative approach in this study was to be able to generalise the results and gather standardised and comparable data. The use of an online survey gave the researcher access to a larger sample, therefore increasing the reliability of the study (Fink, 2009).

3.3 Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

This section discusses how the researcher accessed the sample participants and the chosen method of data collection for the research. Finally, the analysis technique used in the research will be explained.

3.3.1 Access and Sampling

The research was granted ethical approval on the 24th March 2019 by the University of Limerick. The fieldwork then took place between the 24th March 2019 and the 21st May 2019 (see Fig.3.1). Following this, the first step was the access and sampling of participants. Sampling is a situation where a group of people are drawn from a total research population who could potentially take part in the study (Thomas, 2017). In this study the participants were chosen through purposive sampling, which Cohen et al. (2011 pg. 256) describe as “deliberately and unashamedly selective and biased.” Purposive sampling is recommended for research involving the use of surveys as it involves selecting participants that hold specific criteria of the sample (Bryman, 2012). In this study all teaching staff who are

directly involved in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme at Junior Cycle in nine ETB schools were invited to take part in the online survey. In total, 96 teaching staff responded to the online survey by the close of the fieldwork.

24/3/19 Ethical Approval gained from UL	25/3/19 Piloting of Survey	24/3/19 – 8/4/19 Permission received from gatekeepers.	24/3/19 – 21/5/19 Fieldwork: Survey Monkey online questionnaire disseminated to nine schools
--	---	---	---

Fig. 3.1 Timeline of the Collection of Data

McFayden and Rankin (2006) highlight the need for the involvement of gatekeepers in the early stages of research. Access to the teaching staff in this study was negotiated with the principals (gatekeepers) in the nine schools. They were provided with detailed information letter about the research and a consent form requesting permission for the school to be involved (Appendix A and B). Once the gatekeeper granted permission, the researcher sent an email with information about the study and a link to the online survey to him/her, which was then disseminated to the teaching staff internally. (Appendix C and D)

3.3.2 Data Collection Instrument: Online Survey

The data collection method used in this study was an online survey. Fink (2009) defines a survey as a way of quantifying and measuring data from respondents. Cohen et al. (2011) describe surveys as useful instruments for data collection. The online survey provided reliable and comparable quantitative data (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006) concerning the research topic from participants in the nine schools on the delivery of wellbeing at Junior Cycle. A key factor a researcher needed to consider when using this method was the size of the sample to ensure enough people would complete the survey to be able to draw inferences and comparisons from the results. The researcher constructed comparative groups when designing the survey so that the researcher could standardize and control as many features of the group as possible (Flick, 2009).

The rationale for choosing the Survey Monkey platform was that it could be distributed to a wide range of participants online without the presence of the researcher being required

(Cohen et al 2011). It allowed participants to engage with and complete the online survey in a location and time that was convenient to them (Gray, 2014). It was easy to navigate for the user and offered a wide range of question types ranging from scale to open ended questions (Thomas, 2017). Survey Monkey is a flexible tool because it offers a range of question types ranging from scale to open ended questions and can also ensure anonymity (Masset et. al., 2009). The online survey method allows for greater objectivity as personal biases are avoided (Bell, 2010). However, Symonds (2011) highlights a number of limitations to using Survey Monkey. They include the researcher is relying on the fact the respondent is proficient in using the computer, preceded questions can be frustrating for respondents, and therefore, deter them from answering and surveys offer little opportunity for the researcher to check the truthfulness of the answers given by the respondents. Cohen et al. (2011) outline some of the methods that can be used to combat these issues. To address some of these issues the researcher placed interest based questions at the beginning of the survey and ensure clear instructions are given on how to complete it to alleviate issues for participants who do not have a high level of computer skills.

3.3.2 Survey Design and Administration

A crucial part of the research was the design and the development of the online survey content. The survey was formulated using both quantitative and qualitative data collection questions (22 questions). The questions ranged from rating scales, multiple choice, to open ended questions (appendix D). They had to be rewritten and refined a number of times to ensure that the research questions were addressed (Cooper, 2000). The open ended questions gathered more detailed information from the respondents. Open ended questions allowed the respondents to include their own personal comments as well ticking the boxes in the closed questions (Cohen et. al. 2011). The questions were grouped into three thematic sections. Section 1 “Background Information” collected data on the demographic profile of the participants. Section 2 “Delivery of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme” collected data on teacher’s views as to the level of involvement of the school in a whole school approach to Wellbeing. Section 3 “Involvement in the Wellbeing Programme” collected data on how teachers’ viewed the effectiveness of the Wellbeing Programme in their school.

Cohen et al., (2011) assert that pretesting an instrument is extremely important for its success, and to improve the validity and reliability of the instrument. The Survey Monkey survey was piloted on the 26th March by sending the email with the attached survey to three post primary

teachers. The only feedback from the piloting process was that one of the questions had two negative answers and only one positive answer. Consequently, the piloting of the survey highlighted an issue that would have affected the reliability, validity and response rate.

The survey was opened on the 24th of March, 2019 and closed on the 21st of May 2019. As online surveys, can generate low response rates the researcher emailed three reminders to the schools to gather the data and extended the original closing date to the 21st of May. The final number of completed online surveys was 96. Because the surveys were aimed at teaching staff directly involved in the delivery of the programme it is difficult to ascertain the total population the survey was aimed at.

3.3.3 Data Analysis Method

Data analysis is a method for using data collected from research to analyse the situations being investigated (Thomas, 2017). The online survey contained both quantitative and qualitative elements and these were analysed separately. The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive analysis (Fink, 2009). The quantitative data was downloaded from Survey Monkey and imported into Microsoft excel for coding, cleaning and correlation (Bryman, 2012). The ordinal data was presented in visual graphical representations using Microsoft Excel. The qualitative data was analysed using nomothetic coding (Cohen et al., 2011) and the constant comparative method to examine, interpret and identify themes, words and patterns within the data (Thomas, 2017).

3.4 Reliability and Validity

3.4.1 Reliability

Cohen et al. (2011) assert that quantitative research lends itself to the belief that studies can be replicated using the same measurement tools and, therefore, generate the same results. The researcher must consider what instruments are being used in order to ensure reliability and validity of the research “Reliability is the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions” (Bell, 2010, pg. 119). Reliability of data indicates how free it is from error (Sharf, 2010). Careful consideration for checking for reliability was carried out at the stage of preparing the questions for the survey. A means of increasing reliability in the design and administration stages was to have a large and

representative sample, the survey was piloted, and standardised instructions were given to respondents when completing the survey.

3.4.2 Validity

Babbie (2013) claims that whilst the reliability of a survey informs us about how reproducible the data is, validity can be described as a measure of how well the survey is measuring what it is supposed to measure. Fink (2009) asserts that because the variables in a survey are less flexible than qualitative interviews, quantitative survey research tends to have higher reliability and lower validity. He outlines some steps to increase validity when using an online questionnaire as a method of research. One step the researcher undertook to ensure content validity was piloting the survey. Content validity is subjectively measured by the reviewers and it is not a statistical measure. Because of time constraints both criterion and construct validity were hard to address prior to the administration of the questionnaire (Babbie, 2013). Validity was ensured by careful sampling and appropriate statistical analysis of the data by the researcher (Cohen et al, 2011).

The extent to which the findings of a study can be applied to other situations is known as external validity or generalisability (Thomas, 2017). Purposive sampling was the method of sampling chosen by the researcher for the online survey. This means the sample population that completed the online survey were representative of teachers in ETB schools who were directly involved in the delivery of the Wellbeing Programme (Fink, 2000).

3.5 Reflexivity

To increase the validity of the research a reflexive approach was employed by the researcher. Reflexivity in this study involved an ongoing evaluation of the researcher's assumptions about the issues involved in the research. It is defined as the:

process of a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of researcher's positionality as well as active acknowledgement and explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and the outcome.

(Berger, 2015 pg. 220)

The positionality of the researcher is vital to ensure reflexivity in the research. Thomas (2017) asserts that positionality is saying who you are and where you are coming from. Some of the benefits for the practitioner-researcher role are convenience, relevance and insider knowledge and understanding (Punch, 2005). It is imperative to be reflexive in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the research design in terms of credibility, reliability and

validity (Hearne, 2013). However, Punch (2005) asserts that there is also some limitations to this particular role, which include bias and subjectivity, generalisability and sometimes vested interest in the results.

To address the issues of rigor regarding subjectivity and bias it is important to discuss one's professional background and allegiances, pre-existing assumptions and experience of doing the study, as a means of being transparent about any potential source of bias (McLeod, 2010). As this researcher has been a teacher in a post primary school for the past 15 years and also a trainee guidance counsellor, it was vital that she was aware of the potential for bias in her research. The researcher was already involved in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme at Junior Cycle, so she already had some pre-existing assumptions about the delivery of the Wellbeing programme. The researcher needed to ensure she was aware of becoming too enmeshed and had to be mindful of the boundaries needed to carry out rigorous research. As the researcher worked through the research a reflective diary was used using Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (Bassot, 2013). This allowed the researcher to keep track of biases, assumptions and influences throughout the study.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethics are "standards of behaviour developed by a group of people to which members of that group should behave" (Sharf, 2010, pg. 16). They are "principles of conduct about what is right and wrong" (Thomas, 2017, pg. 38). In this research, the researcher was bound by the ethical principles of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors' *Code of Ethics* (IGC, 2012) and the National Centre for Guidance in Education *Research Code of Ethics* (NCGE, 2008). The NCGE highlights that the main ethical principles underpinning research are "respect for the rights and the dignity of the person, competence, responsibility and integrity" (NCGE, 2008, pg.2).

According to Hearne (2013), for research to be credible, trustworthy and scholarly, it is vital the researcher is clear about the context, methodology and ethical issues involved. As part of the research, a number of issues required ethical consideration. Initially, before any work began on this research study the researcher was required to seek ethical approval from UL's Faculty of Education and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee. Permission to access the sample population was required from the gatekeepers in the nine post primary schools.

As indicated by Hearne (2013), the participants were made aware of the online survey procedures prior to their participation in the research. The researcher had a duty of care towards participants and ensured the confidentiality of the participants as much as was possible (Hearne, 2013). The survey was completed online which ensured anonymity of the respondents.

The cost/benefit ratio is a “fundamental concept expressing the primary ethical dilemma in social research” (Cohen et al., 2011 pg. 75). A potential cost to the participants was the time inconvenience of approximately 20 minutes to complete the online survey in their already busy schedule. This was justified by giving the respondents an opportunity to express their views in relation to the provision of a whole school approach to Wellbeing at Junior Cycle and contributing their knowledge to the wider community of teaching staff and policy makers.

McLeod (2010) refers to the need for support to be provided to participants if required. ‘It is paramount that appropriate referral routes and supports are identified in advance of the data collection in the event that participants become upset during the fieldwork’ (Hearne, 2013, pg.8). It was clearly stated to the participants that their involvement was voluntary. The researcher anticipated a minimal risk to participants, however if any emotional or professional issues were to arise details of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) was provided at the end of the survey.

Finally, Thomas (2017) highlights the importance of informing participants about storage of information and how confidentiality is ensured. The surveys were anonymised and a coding system was applied to the data collected, which was encrypted and stored on a password protected external hard-drive. Confidentiality was ensured with regards to the information collected and also the information was stored according to GDPR and institutional guidelines. The researcher used a reflective diary throughout the research process and discussed any ethical concerns with her supervisor.

3.7 Conclusion

This methodology chapter has outlined the research questions, the positivist paradigm, and the method of data collection and analysis. The chapter has considered the reliability,

validity, reflexivity and ethical issues associated with this study. Chapter 4 presents the findings from the primary fieldwork.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and examines the main findings of the data collected from the online questionnaire completed by the teaching staff directly related to the delivery of the wellbeing programme. The quantitative data will be presented in graphical and numerical format. This will be followed by qualitative data pertinent to the specific question.

4.1 Findings

The findings will be presented in three sections in line with the online survey structure.

4.1.1 Section 1: Background Information

Questions 1 to 4 gathered data on the demographic profile of the teaching staff, i.e. age, gender, nationality and core teaching subjects. Question 1 examined the gender of the respondents. The response rate for this question was 100% (n=96) and consisted of, 75.6% (n=73) female and 24.4% (n=23) male. It is interesting to note that the majority of the teachers engaging in the Wellbeing programme in this study are female.

Question 2 examined the age profile. This question was answered by all respondents (100%, n=96). The majority of respondents were in the 31 to 40 age bracket at 56.76% (n=54), 29.73% (n=28) were aged between 41 to 50, 11.45% (n=11) were aged between 20 to 30, and 2.7% (n=3) were aged between 51 to 60. None of the respondents was over the age of 60.

(See chart 4.1)

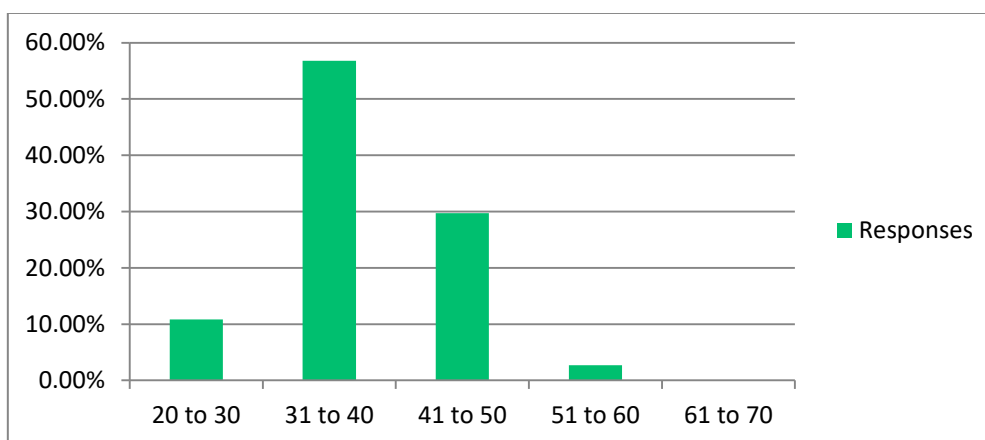


Chart 4.1 Age Profile

Questions 3 was an open ended question which was answered by 100% (n=96) of the respondents. The findings showed that all of the respondents were of Irish nationality with one exception, one was French nationality. (See chart 4.2)

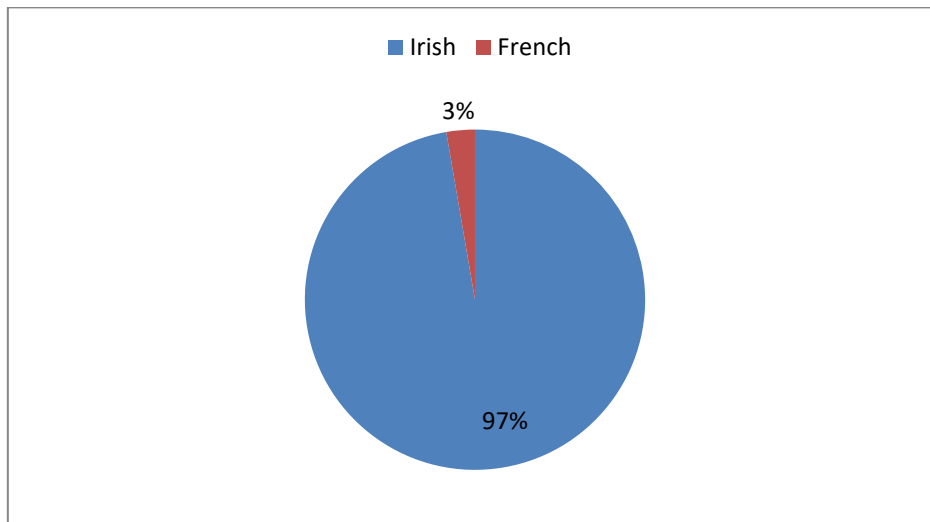


Chart 4.2: Nationality

Question 4 was an open ended question which asked the respondent to state their core teaching subject. The findings demonstrate the diverse profile of the respondents involved in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme. Respondents included guidance counsellors (n=8), Special Educational Needs (SEN) teachers (n=9), as well as teachers involved in the core teaching subjects in the school such as English (n=11), Irish (n=2), Mathematics (n=7), French (n=1), History(n=3), Geography (n=8), SPHE (n=24), PE (n=12), CSPE (n=6), Music (n=1), Art (n=2) and Home Economics (n=2).

4.2.2: Section 2: Delivery of a Wellbeing Programme

This section will present the findings from questions 5 to 14. These questions sought information in relation to the delivery of the wellbeing programmes in the schools in this section consisted of open, closed and Likert type questions.

Question 5 asked the respondents if there was a Junior Cycle Wellbeing policy in their school. This question had a 100% response rate. In this case 59.4% (n=57) of the respondents stated YES. However a very worrying finding from this question was 13.5% (n=13) stated NO and 27.1% (n=26) of the respondents were unsure if the school had a Wellbeing policy.

Question 6 sought to establish the level of involvement of respondents in the development of the Wellbeing policy in their school. This question had a 98% (n=94) response rate with one of the respondents skipping this question. This question showed that only 8.6% (n=8) of the respondents have had a great deal of involvement in policy development. However, the majority of the respondents stated they had little or no involvement in the development of a Wellbeing Policy. The results were that 52.6% (n=50) had a little involvement and 38.71% (n=36) had no involvement at all in the development of the Wellbeing policy. For the category indicating a moderate level of involvement no respondents ticked this *category* (see chart 4.3 below)

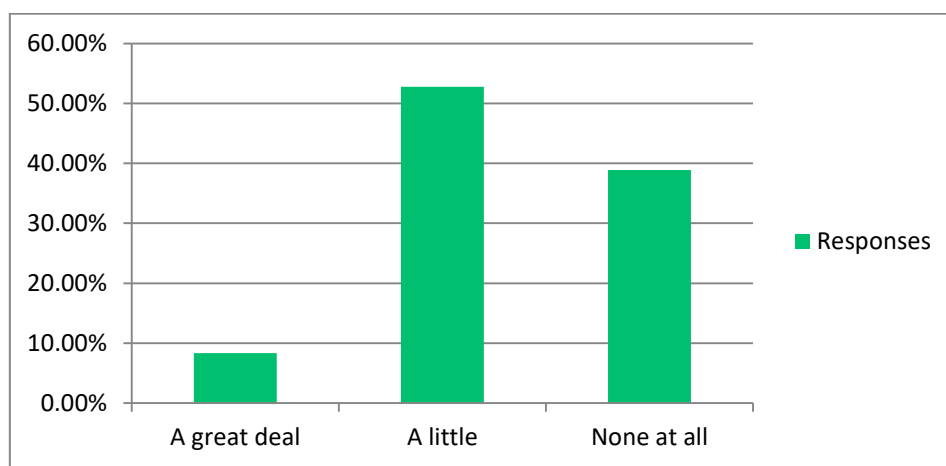


Chart 4.3 Level of involvement in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme.

Question 7 asked if there was a Wellbeing Coordinator in the school. This question had a 100% (n=96) response rate. Overall, 55.5% (n=53) stated there is no Wellbeing Coordinator in the school, whereas 44.4% (n = 43) indicated there is. This finding is concerning as only just over half of the respondents stated that there is a Wellbeing Coordinator in their school.

Question 8 asked how many teaching staff was involved in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme in the school. The responses here varied greatly and answers to this question were very inconsistent and showed no pattern of similarities with responses varying from two teaching staff to 32 teaching staff in some cases.

The varied responses were further reiterated in Question 9 which asked if the respondents felt there was a coherent delivery of the Wellbeing programme in their school (see chart 4.4).

This question was answered by 100% (n=96) of the respondents. The responses were 38% (n=36) indicated there was not a coherent delivery in their school, whilst 27% (n = 26) of the

respondents indicated there was. The option to explain further was chosen by 35% (n=34) of the respondents.

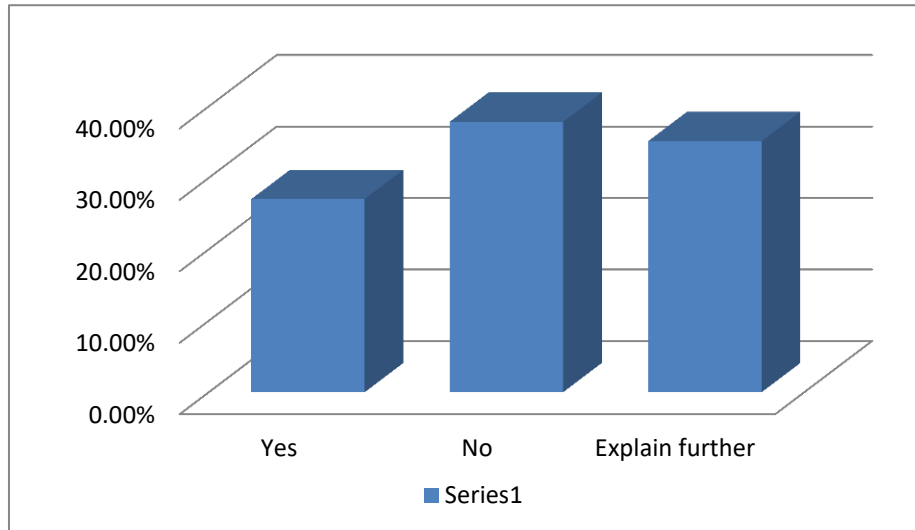


Chart 4.4 Coherent delivery of the wellbeing programme

This question provided the opportunity for the respondents to explain further. This option was chosen by 35% (n=34) of the respondents. Primarily, a key theme identified in the data is the lack of coherent delivery of the Wellbeing programme in the sample schools as perceived by the respondents directly involved. One respondent answered,

“Not really, from my understanding we have no physical document outlining what makes up our wellbeing programme. However, there is ample evidence that wellbeing is a priority within the school as we have had Wellbeing Sessions with class groups, a range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities are happening that support student wellbeing, and they are also in receipt of the prescribed hours of wellbeing - encompassing guidance, PE, SPHE and CSPE.”

Another respondent stated “Management appear to want to tick boxes instead of putting together a coherent programme with input from staff”. Similarly, another stated “I feel it is a box ticking exercise” with another respondent reporting it is “simply slotted in”. According to one respondent “The teachers are not behind it and the coordinator is over loaded with other work. I feel that there isn’t a buy in amongst staff”. Further uncertainty was reiterated by another respondent who answered “Not sure how it is being delivered on a formal basis. Informally I feel everyone delivers it”. A respondent who was also unsure about the delivery of the Wellbeing programme responded

“I am unsure what the aims of the wellbeing programme in my school are. There is a wellbeing class, but I am unsure what topics are addressed and how it is assessed. Wellbeing as PE, CSPE and Religion is coherently delivered. Wellbeing through tutor time is undefined and I am unsure of its delivery”.

Question 10 gathered data on how supportive school management are in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme in their school. The question had a 100% (n=96) response rate. Overall, 59% (n=57) reported their management to be somewhat supportive, 38% (n=36) reported management to be supportive and a small number 3% (n=3) reported management to be unsupportive. (See chart 4.5)

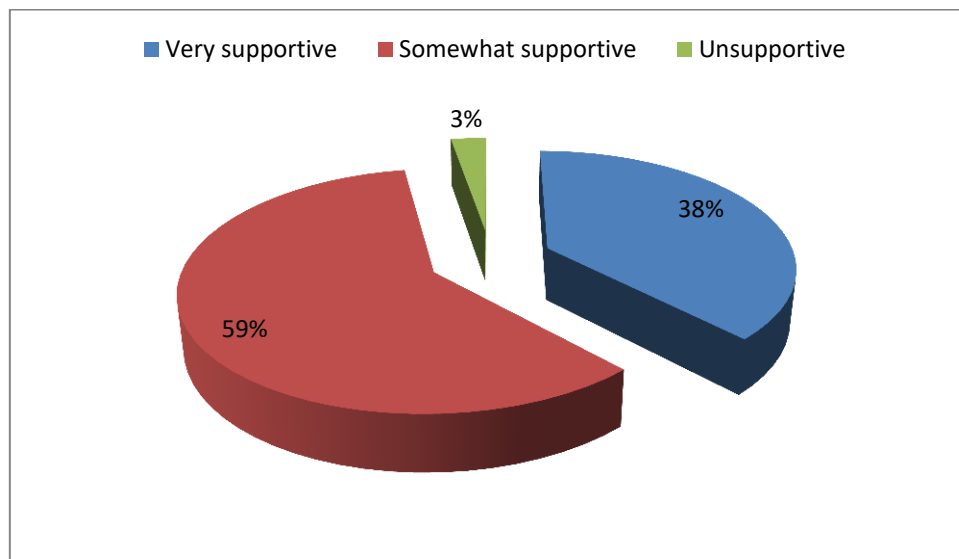


Chart 4.5: Support of management in the delivery of Junior Cycle Wellbeing

Question 11 asked the respondents if they felt there was consultation with teaching staff about the delivery of a whole school approach to the Wellbeing programme. This question was answered by 100% (n=96). The poor level of consultation is a disconcerting finding overall. The majority of respondents 45.83%, (n=44) stated there was little consultation, and 32.3% (n=31) reported there was no consultation at all. Nonetheless, a much smaller number of respondents 11.45% (n=11) reported there was a lot of consultation in their schools. The two categories ‘a great deal’ and a ‘moderate amount’ were not selected by any of the respondents. (See chart 4.6)

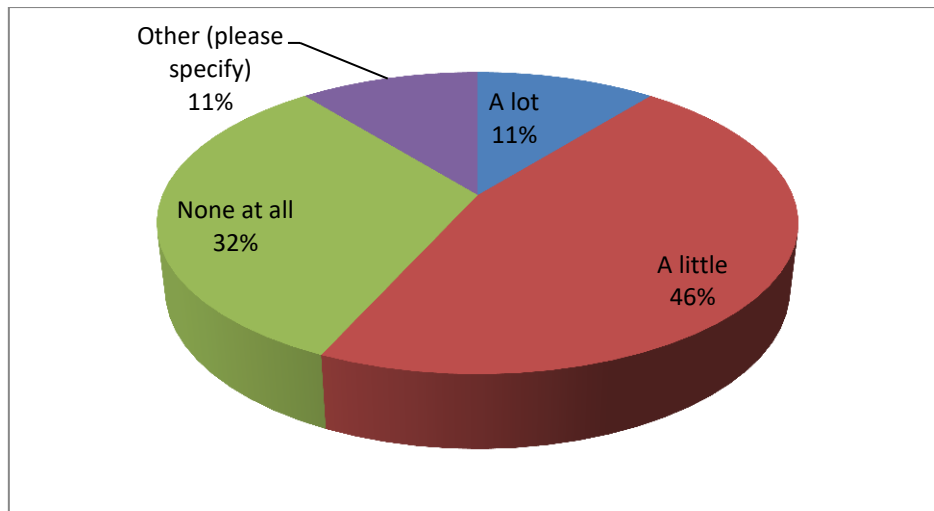


Chart 4.6 Level of consultation with teaching staff in the delivery of the Wellbeing Programme

In addition, in Question 11, respondents provided information in the ‘Other’ option, which was chosen by 10.42% (n=10). The qualitative analysis identified the main theme of lack of consultation among the teaching staff in the delivery of the Wellbeing Programme. One respondent stated “We all have to deliver lessons periodically but this was implemented by management without consultation”. Whilst another stated “It was not a consultation more like - Here, this is what you are going to do guy...”. Similarly, another respondent reported “I am unsure. There was a JCT wellbeing day” and another stated “Not to my knowledge. I am in my second year in the school”.

Question 12 was a closed question which asked the respondents how supportive the school is in the delivery of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme. This question had a response rate of 91.66% (n=88) with eight of the respondents skipping it. Of the respondents who answered this question 64% (n=57) felt the school was very supportive, whilst 36% (n=31) indicated the school was not supportive in the delivery of the programme. (see chart 4.7)

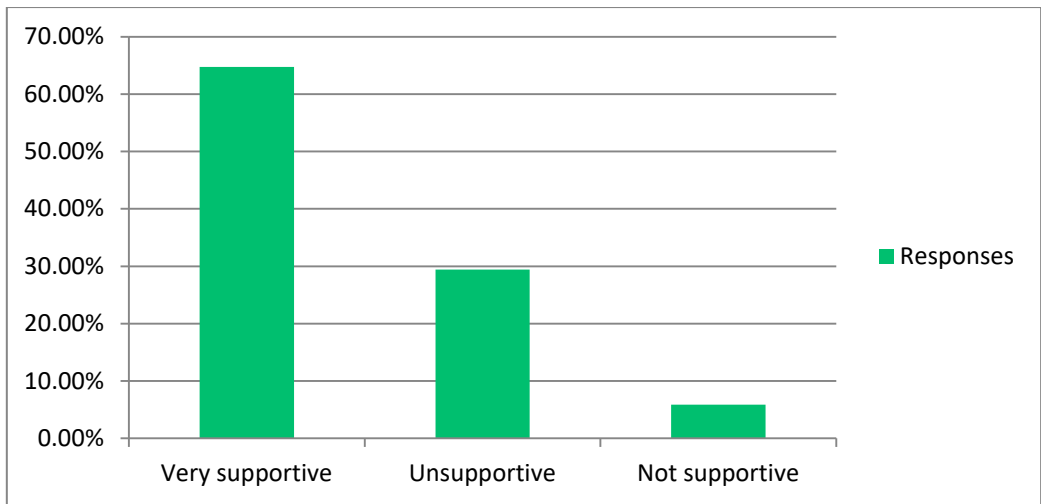


Chart 4.7 Support of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme in the school

Question 13 was another closed question in the form of a Likert scale asking the respondent if there was sufficient time given to planning the school Wellbeing programme and for staff to work collaboratively in this process (see chart 4.8). This question had a 100% (n=96) response rate. The results here are very concerning with 54% (n=53) reporting they had a little amount of time, whilst 38% (n=36) reported there was no time at all. In contrast, only 8% (n=7) reported there is a lot of time being given to its planning. However, no respondents indicated ‘a great deal of time’ or ‘a moderate amount of time’ for planning.

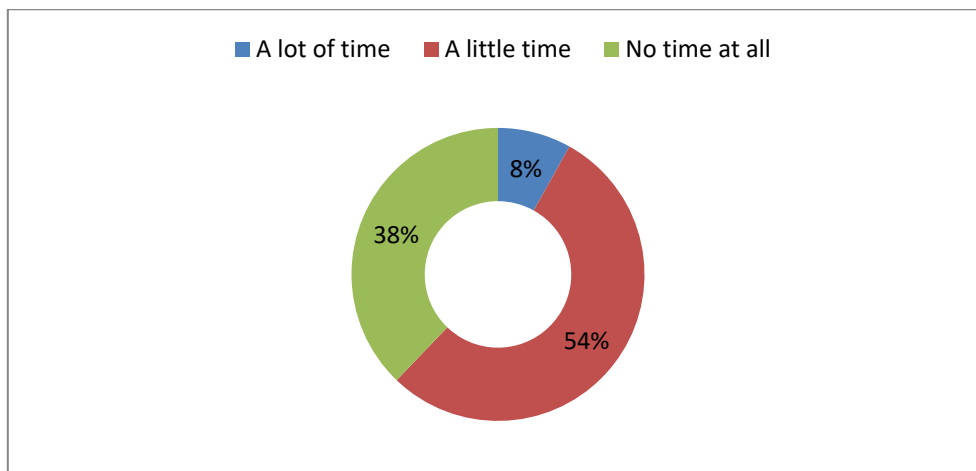


Chart 4.8: Planning time allocated for the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme

The final question in this section was an open ended question (Question 14), which asked about the contribution of the school’s guidance service to the delivery of the Wellbeing programme. It had a response rate of 84% (n=81). One main theme that emerged from this question was the important role played by the guidance counsellor in the delivery of the

Wellbeing programme. Another theme that emerged was the limited time the guidance counsellor had in overseeing these initiatives. One respondent answered that the “Guidance department are very involved in the delivery of Wellbeing”. Another reported similarly, stating that it “Contributed a great deal - made presentations to staff on Wellbeing, what is and our role as teachers”. Other qualitative responses included “Guidance is the members of staff with a lot of input in my school”, and “Prepared wellbeing presentations for students that were presented by other members of staff to students and also presented some themselves”. Another stated the guidance service “Looked for input on a Wellbeing Calendar from staff”, and “Form an integral part of our Care Team within the school”. This was echoed by another respondent who stated they had an “Excellent Guidance Department”. However, one pointed out that they “are doing as much as possible with limited time”. In contrast, one respondent reported that the guidance service is a “part of the care team but do not have time to implement any wellbeing initiatives”.

4.2.3 Section 3: Involvement in the Wellbeing Programme at Junior Cycle

Section 3 of the online survey looked at the involvement of the respondents in the Wellbeing programme. This section will discuss the findings from questions 15 to 22. Question 15 asked the respondents how long they have been involved in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme. This question had a response rate of 91.6% (n=88). The respondents reported here that they had been involved in the programme in the range of 1 to 3 years.

Question 16 asked the respondents what area of Wellbeing they are currently delivering. It had a response rate of 86% (n=83) with 14% (n=13) of the respondents skipping this question (*see Chart 4.9*). The findings were that at the time of completion of the survey 18.75% (n=16) were teaching SPHE, 12.5% (n=10) were teaching CSPE, 9.3 % (n=8) were teaching PE, 9.38% (n=8) were teaching a Wellbeing class, 9.38% (n=8) were delivering guidance. In addition, 40.63% (n=33) specified ‘Other’ to this question. The broad areas stated by the respondents were Daily class, Tutor, Care Team, Health Schools, Friend for Life, Check & Connect. Wellbeing through Art, Resource classes, Home Economics, Programme Co-ordination so through JCSP celebrations and LCA / TY programmes.

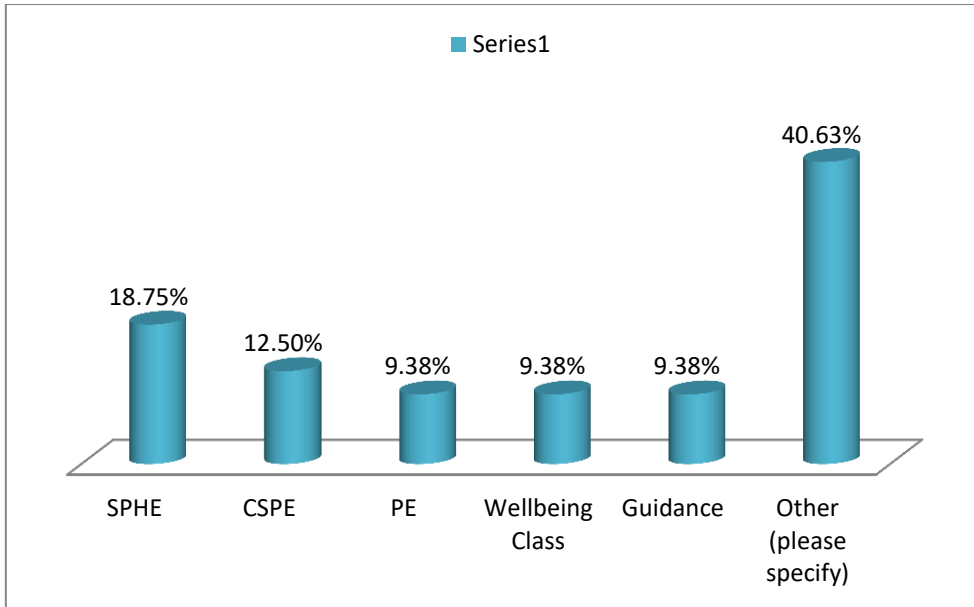


Chart 4.9 Area of Wellbeing

Question 17 was a closed question and asked the respondents in the form of a Likert scale question how familiar they were with the Wellbeing indicators (NCCA, 2017). The response rate for this question was 96.8% (n=93) with three respondents skipping this question. This findings were that 44.4% (n=42) were somewhat familiar and 33.33% (n=31) were very familiar with the Wellbeing indicators. Conversely, 16.67% (n=15) responded that they were not so familiar and 5.56% (n=5) were not at all familiar with them. (see chart 4.11)

Worryingly, no respondents answered that they were ‘extremely familiar’ with the Wellbeing indicators. Furthermore, another disconcerting finding was that only a third of the respondents appear to be familiar with the Wellbeing indicators.

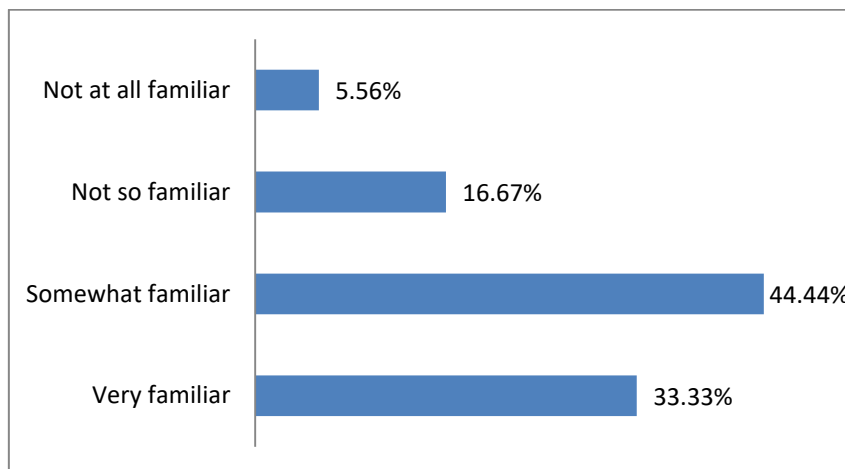


Chart 4.11: Familiarity with the Wellbeing Indicators (NCCA, 2017) at Junior Cycle

Question 18 asked the respondents if they have received adequate CPD to deliver the Wellbeing programme in their school (*see chart 4.12*). This question had a similar response rate to the previous question of 96% (n=93). Of those who responded, 41.95% (n=39) felt they had not received adequate CPD, and 38.7% (n=36) reported they had received adequate CPD.

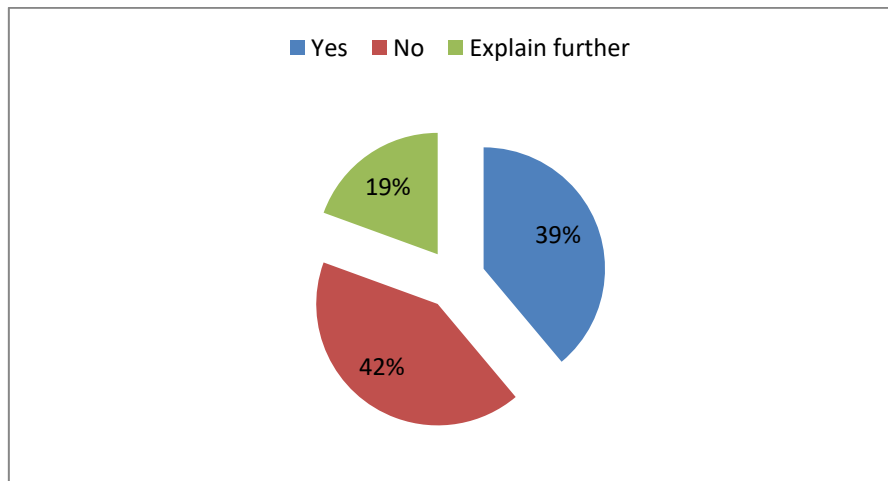


Chart 4.12: Level of CPD received to deliver the Wellbeing programme

This question also offered the option to explain further, which was chosen by 19.35% (n=18) of the respondents. The main theme that emerged from these findings was that the respondents felt there was a lack of adequate training to deliver the Wellbeing programme. One respondent stated, “I have done a lot of CPD on wellbeing. However, I feel a lot of it was related to defining what wellbeing is rather than giving concrete resources, or explains why wellbeing is necessary in schools.” Another stated “we’ve had two sessions”. This was further echoed by another respondent who had “received one cpd workshop”. Another respondent said, “I wasn’t in the school for the whole school CPD which was delivered last year... there was no follow up”. For another “It was pretty waffly to be honest.” Another respondent felt they “did not take away much from the Wellbeing JCT day. But I feel that I am doing an adequate job as a class tutor”. A different respondent clarified

“As Programme Co-ordinator I have not been approached about this at all. I am taking an interest in the pastoral care needs of the students on the programmes but this is not reflected in my role so I have done no CPD in Wellbeing”.

Question 19 then asked the respondents about their level of satisfaction with regards to the Wellbeing programme benefitting students' wellbeing. This generated a response rate of 96% (n=93). Surprisingly, 73% (n=67) of the respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 13.3% (n=13) were satisfied with the programme (*see chart 4.14*). However, 13.3% (n=13) of the respondents were very dissatisfied.

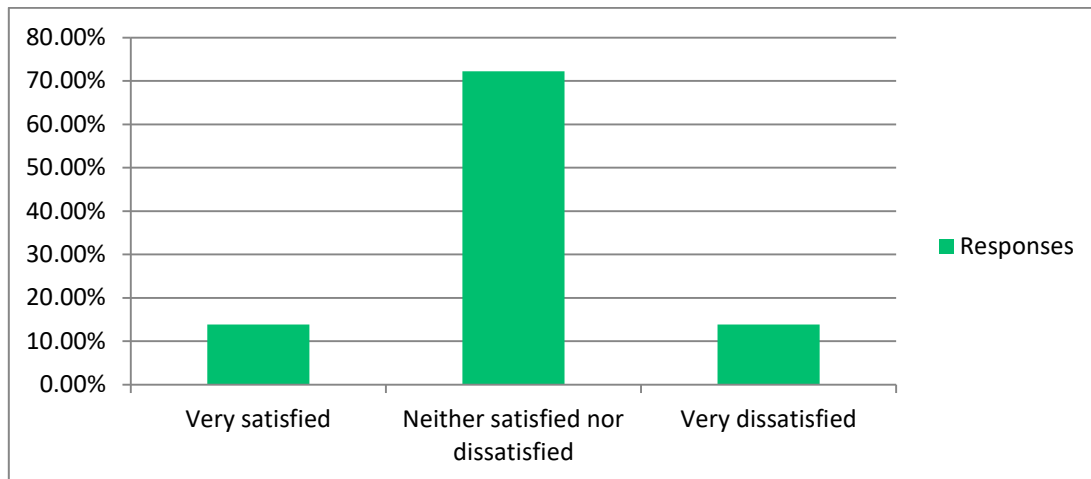


Chart 4.14: Level of satisfaction with the Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme

Question 20 asked the respondents about the methods of assessment being used to assess the Wellbeing programme. This question had a low response rate of 10% (n=9). An emerging theme here was that of uncertainty when it comes to the assessment of students in the area of Wellbeing. This was an open question and some of the responses included “I am unaware of the methodologies”, another said there was “None that I know of.” A different respondent said they were – “Unsure - surveys and feedback?”

Interestingly, on the same issue as Question 20, Question 21 asked whether the respondents had received adequate guidelines on the assessment of Wellbeing at Junior Cycle (*see chart 4.12 below*). This question had a response rate of 93.7% (n=90). From the respondents who answered this question, 74.29% (n=68) answered NO, and only 17% (n=15) responded YES. This is a very disconcerting finding with the majority of the respondents indicating they had not received adequate guidelines on assessment of Wellbeing at Junior Cycle. This question also allowed the respondents to explain further and was chosen by 7.78% (n=7). The key issue that emerged again was one of uncertainty with some of the responses being “I don't know” and “I'm unsure” were the most common responses in this section.

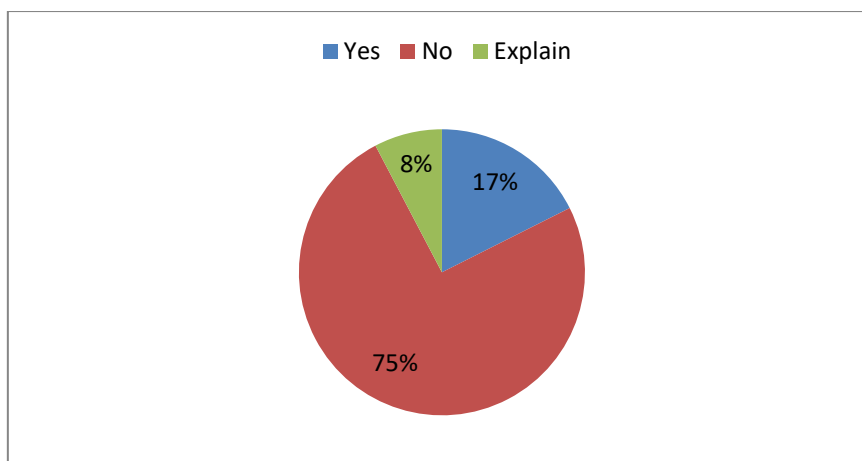


Chart 4.13: Adequate guidelines on assessment methods

The final question (Q.22) was open ended and requested the respondents to provide further information regarding the delivery of the Wellbeing programme in their school. This question had a response rate of 40% (n= 39). Two core themes emerged which are related to the training of staff and the nature of the delivery of the Wellbeing programme in the curriculum. With regards to the first issue, one respondent said there was a "Lack of training" whilst another responded that "Whole school wellbeing training was brutal. Much more support needed." This was further echoed by another respondent who said "Subject is very difficult to plan for. No guidelines. Very challenging when you already have two other subject plans and classes to plan for." Another response in relation to the training delivered on the delivery of wellbeing was:

I found the whole school day on wellbeing that we did earlier in the year an insult and most of it was irrelevant. Also, we are told continuously that we are covering wellbeing through sports days, amber events, guest speakers but it turns out we aren't and school management took the decision to extend our tutor time with no conscience. Another issue or theme that arose from these responses was the issue of lack of time for the delivery of the Wellbeing programme.

Concerning the second theme on the nature of the delivery of the Wellbeing programme in the school system there were diverse views. One respondent claimed it:

has been perceived as another box ticking exercise with little thought about the actual outcomes. There are so many new initiatives that this is often just eye rolled at in the same breath as CBA and SLAR by teachers who genuinely are overloaded and unclear and not getting comprehensive answers to questions from one source. Every agency gives a little often differing opinion on how to implement this puzzle.

Whereas another respondent argued there is a "Ridiculous amount of time spent on Wellbeing. As a parent and a teacher I'd prefer if students had more time per exam

subject.”.Another responded that they “Need clarification around the role of the class tutor”. Two of the respondents gave information on how the Wellbeing programme is being delivered through the curriculum in their schools. One respondent said, “Wellbeing is delivered through PE, SPHE, CSPE, short courses - coding, philosophy and artistic performance”. Another offered, “We are providing the short courses in SPHE and CSPE but not PE. We are currently meeting the 300hr requirement for Wellbeing but have yet to plan for the 400”. In terms of the planning and assessment of the Wellbeing programme one respondent said “Most of our planning and assessment is centred on Wellbeing initiatives school wide. This is part of the DEIS planning process.” Finally, another respondent asked about the Wellbeing of the teachers “What about pedagogical we’ll being. Surely teachers need training themselves on their own wellbeing before delivering a program for students”?

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter presented the primary findings from the online survey. A positive finding showing the wide range of teaching staff in terms of their curricular subject shows an interesting range of diversity in the staff involved in the delivery of the Wellbeing Programme. The main issues that have emerged from the findings are the low level of consultation in the development and delivery of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme. Respondents reported not having received adequate CPD or guidelines on the assessment of Wellbeing at Junior Cycle. Another issue that emerged was the lack of time to plan and implement the Wellbeing programme in the school. These findings will be discussed in the context of the literature in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a critical analysis of the primary research findings within the context of the literature that was presented and identified in the literature review. The primary question was *‘How is the new Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme being delivered within the ETB sector in the context of a whole school approach and guidance counselling delivery.* In addition to the primary research question, the secondary questions were used to further guide the development of the study. The secondary questions were:

1. *What level of involvement do teaching and guidance staff has in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme in ETB schools?*
2. *What are the current guidelines for curricular assessment of Wellbeing in ETB schools?*
3. *What are the challenges in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme in ETB schools*

To explore these questions the researcher examined the views of teaching staff in nine ETB schools through the use of an online survey on their perceptions of the delivery of the Wellbeing Programme at Junior Cycle. Two overarching themes emerged in this study. The first theme will address the first two research questions and discuss the whole school approach and the delivery of Junior Cycle Wellbeing in ETB schools. The second theme will focus on the final two questions and the challenges and implications associated with the delivery of the Wellbeing programme.

5.1 Whole School Approach and the Delivery of Junior Cycle Wellbeing in ETB Schools

This section will discuss the delivery of the Wellbeing programme at Junior Cycle through the use of a whole school approach. The literature illustrates that the concept of wellbeing can be difficult to define. The World Health Organisation (2001) asserts that wellbeing exists when a person is capable of dealing with the normal stresses in life, reaches their potential, looks after their physical wellbeing and has a sense of connection to the community. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment defines wellbeing within the school context as children “being confident, happy and healthy” (NCCA, 2009, pg.1). Furthermore, student

well-being is viewed as students' "overall development and quality of life", (PISA, 2017 pg.61).

The importance of the wellbeing of a young person is also highlighted in the literature. The developmental stage of students during this time in their lives can be challenging and complex for the young person (Weare and Nind, 2011). Kilmstra (2012) describes it as the stage when profound personality changes occur. Freud asserts adolescence is a time when the young person can develop strong defence mechanisms like denial, regression and projection. These defence mechanisms are often used to cope with difficult situations (Boyd and Bee, 2014). Erikson (1968) proposes that the formation of an identity is a crucial part of adolescent development (Boyd and Bee, 2017). Erikson (1968) described identity formation as a stage where the adolescent leaves behind the beliefs they had as a child, and replaces them with their own set of values thus forming their own identity. Bronfenbrenner examined the development of individuals in terms of their relationships and their wider environment (ecology). He did not focus on a specific area of development but examined the context of the person's life and the interrelationships of the different processes (Boyd and Bee, 2017). It is in this context that the introduction of the Wellbeing programme in Irish schools has taken place in the last three years. In particular, Bronfenbrenner's developmental ecological model offers systems based understanding of wellbeing, which recognises the individual and his or her immediate relationships and then moves outwards to show the importance of the wider community and the context of the young person's lives (NCCA, 2017).

In recent years, a number of policy and curriculum reforms have been instigated to ensure the wellbeing of students is addressed. The Department of Child and Youth Affairs (2014) proposes that Ireland will become one of the:

best small countries in the world in which to grow up and raise a family, and where the rights of all children and young people are respected, protected and fulfilled; where their voices are heard and where they are supported to realise their maximum potential now and in the future.

(Department of Child and Youth Affairs, 2014)

It is argued by the DES that the wellbeing of young people is critical to their success in education and life (DES, 2018). Schools can create a sense of belonging, security and connectedness to school by creating a positive school climate and allowing for active participation of our children in schools (DES, 2018). Peterson (2006) has argued that schools need to extend their focus beyond academic learning and include the promotion of student wellbeing in the school. Furthermore, Seligman (2009) asserts that the teaching of wellbeing

in schools could potential improve the life satisfaction of students. Schools have a critical role in creating an atmosphere of positive mental health and providing adolescents with resources to help them manage stressful situations whilst at the same time creating an atmosphere that they feel safe in (Weare and Nind, 2011). Schools can make a significant difference by optimising opportunities to learn about wellbeing and by being aware of the protective factors that the whole school community can provide to enhance a young person's sense of wellbeing (NCCA, 2017).

According to policy everybody in the school has a role and a responsibility in supporting students' wellbeing (NCCA, 2017). In the current study, 96 teaching staff responded to the survey. They were asked to complete the online survey if they were directly involved in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme in their school. The large response rate might suggest that schools are aware of the important role Wellbeing has on the students in the nine schools. Conversely it could be because they are mandated to deliver the Wellbeing Programme in the schools. The findings of this study showed a lot of diversity amongst the teaching staff in terms of their curricular subjects suggests a wide range of staff involved in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme Furthermore, the current findings suggest that in some schools teachers may have more informal than formalised roles in delivering the Wellbeing programme. Another interesting finding was the gender of the respondents involved in the survey was unbalanced with 75% of female respondents to the survey. An implication of this finding might suggest that Wellbeing delivery may be a feminised concept. As Hargreaves et al (1996) claim a culture of care is found in second level schooling partly due to the structural characteristics, but also due to the gender composition of the teaching cohort (predominantly female).

In 2011, the NCCA began a process of “re- balancing Junior Certificate subjects syllabuses and create more space for active learning and student engagement” (NCCA, 2011, pg. 5). From this process emerged the Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) with a specific area of learning called Wellbeing. The principles of Wellbeing are to be incorporated in all aspects of the new Junior Cycle Curriculum. The main four areas are culture and environment, curriculum, teaching and learning, policy and planning, relationships and partnerships (NCCA, 2017). In the new Junior Cycle, Wellbeing is comprised of two distinct yet intertwined components. The first component is the whole school approach (creating a school culture that fosters students' wellbeing and brings the wellbeing indicators to life), and the second is the curricular component (CSPE, SPHE, PE, Guidance and other wellbeing

related learning) (NCCA, 2017). The DES (2014) recommends that a whole school approach to Wellbeing is best practice. This method has been put forward as a model of best practice in Irish post primary schools for guidance counselling already (Hearne and Galvin, 2014). However, In order for the successful implementation of the whole school approach a review of the structures, experiences and resources in the school needs to be carried out in order to enhance the young person's sense of wellbeing (NCCA, 2017). A whole school approach involves all members of the school community engaging in a collaborative process of change to improve specific areas of school life that impact on wellbeing (DES, 2018). Furthermore, Clarke and Barry (2010) assert that programmes which adopt a whole school approach are particularly likely to lead to positive mental health social and emotional outcomes.

The Wellbeing programme was introduced in all school in September 2017 and has been running in schools for approximately two years. The current research study was carried out at the end of the school year in 2019. The findings indicate that there is a wide range of teaching staff involved in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme in the nine ETB schools involved in the study. This would give the impression that attempts are being made to deliver a whole school - Wellbeing programme. But it is important to acknowledge that schools are still in the early stages of development of the Wellbeing programme. In 2018, the DES developed a Wellbeing Policy and Statement Framework for practice. The aim of this document is to address the challenges and opportunities in the delivery of Wellbeing in post primary schools (DES, 2018). The DES (2018) has set a target that all schools will Wellbeing delivery included in the School Self-Evaluation Process by 2023.

The second component of the delivery of the Wellbeing programme is curricular, i.e. the subjects of CSPE, SPHE, PE, Guidance and other wellbeing related learning (NCCA, 2017). The NCCA guidelines aim to support schools in planning and developing a coherent wellbeing programme and states that student wellbeing can be “enhanced when important aspects of wellbeing are the subject of teaching and learning in specific curricular areas” (2017, pg. 17). Whilst the current findings identified the diversity of teaching staff involved in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme, 38% of the respondents did not feel there was a coherent delivery of the Wellbeing programme in their schools. The impression given by some of the respondents was that the delivery of the Wellbeing programme was a tick box exercise to fulfil the hours required, as opposed to working collaboratively to provide a coherent programme. Worryingly there was a level of uncertainty about the delivery of the

Wellbeing programme highlighted by a number of the respondents. The findings showed the majority of the respondents are unfamiliar with the Wellbeing Programme. These indicators underpin the delivery of Wellbeing at Junior Cycle. The impression from the findings is that the development of the Wellbeing programme in schools is still in gestation and its implementation is an ongoing process. Better outcomes Brighter Futures set out a vision in which all government department and agencies will work towards to enhance children's wellbeing (Department of Child and Youth Affairs, 2014). Schools play a vital role in fostering wellbeing of students (Weare 2010).

5.2 Challenges and Implications associated with Delivery of Junior Cycle Wellbeing

The previous thematic section provided an illustration of the delivery of Junior Cycle wellbeing in the context of the Whole School Approach and focused on the primary research question and the first of the secondary research questions. This specific section will explore the challenges and the implications for schools and the guidance service in the delivery of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme and will concentrate on the second and third secondary research questions.

School policies provide the compass by which the school navigates its way (NCCA, 2017). The development of a Junior Cycle Wellbeing policy should be an inclusive, collaborative and democratic process (NCCA, 2017) for the successful delivery of the Wellbeing programme the policy and planning needs to be coherent and transparent for all stakeholders (NCCA, 2017). The current findings highlighted that for 60% of the respondents stated that the school they were teaching in had a Wellbeing policy. It is promising in terms of policy development that only 10% responded that the school had no Wellbeing policy in place. Conversely, 30% of the respondents stated they were unsure if they had any Wellbeing policy in the school. This would give the impression that the development of the Wellbeing policy may not have been an inclusive and collaborative process in some of the schools surveyed. Following on from this, the current findings also illustrate only 8.6% of the respondents have been involved in the development of a Wellbeing policy in their schools. The majority of the respondents (90%) stated they had little or no involvement in the development of a Wellbeing policy. However, just over half of the respondents stated that there is a Wellbeing coordinator in their school. These findings highlight the difficulty in developing a whole school approach to Wellbeing if there limited

involvement in some schools from the teaching staff in the development of the policy in the school.

The DES (2018) states that all teaching staff in a school, regardless of the level and frequency of contact they have with young people, shares the responsibility for creating a positive ethos and climate of respect and care. Byrne, Rietdijk and Pickett (2018) argue that support from senior leaders is essential to create an ethos in schools to support health and wellbeing. Furthermore, school leaders play a critical role in the implementation of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme including the review and development of school structures to support that implementation (DES, 2018). However, each school has the autonomy to design its own Wellbeing programme drawing on a combination of curriculum components (DES, 2015). The components must provide engaging, challenging and enjoyable learning experiences for the students, in order to support their wellbeing experience (DES, 2015).

However, the current findings show that the issue of individual and collective responsibility is a concern and a particular challenge for staff in schools. The respondents highlighted the lack of consultation from management with staff as a challenge in the delivery of a coherent programme. There is an impression that there may be inadequate levels of 'buy-in' in some schools in the implementation of the Wellbeing programme. A concern highlighted by a number of the respondents is the impression that management are just ticking a box to ensure the hour's criteria are met and there is no real thought process involved or transparent delivery of the Wellbeing programme. It was suggested in the findings that a more structured timetabled approach would allow all staff to be aware of how Wellbeing is being incorporated into the school timetable.

In order for the successful implementation of the whole school approach a review of the structures, experiences and resources in the school needs to be carried out in order to enhance the young person's sense of wellbeing (NCCA, 2017). A whole school approach involves all members of the school community engaging in a collaborative process of change to improve specific areas of school life that impact on wellbeing (DES, 2018).

The role of the teacher is paramount to children and young people's wellbeing (OECD, 2017). The My World Survey highlighted the most powerful predictor of good mental health

was the 'presence of at least one good adult' with a large number of the students recognising the teacher as this significant adult in their lives (Dooley and Fitzgerald, 2011). A significant factor in the quality of relationships between teachers and students is developing the young person's sense of wellbeing including a sense of belonging and academic achievement (Smyth 2015). Teachers of CSPE, SPHE, PE involved in a new curricular area will be sharing responsibility for student wellbeing. Whilst it was highlighted earlier that a broad range of teaching staff were involved in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme there is a concern about the level of involvement and collaboration among the respondents when it comes to the delivery of the programme. The findings indicated that approximately 80% of the respondents in the current study stated there was little or no consultation with them when it came to the delivery of the Wellbeing programme. The findings gave the impression that the teachers are not behind the Wellbeing programme with very little 'buy-in' from staff given the already packed curriculum for the teachers. Some respondents indicated that the programme was just slotted into the timetable with very little consultation among staff. The findings would indicate there was no formal structured approach to allow for consultation and collaboration among the teaching staff.

Wellbeing is being brought into the initial teacher education training in the universities to prepare future teaching staff as to the how to deliver this programme when they graduate as teachers and are working in schools. This was not recorded by any of the respondents. Overwhelmingly a core challenge identified from the findings was the lack of training received by the staff. However, the NCCA (2017) highlights the importance for planning and promoting CPD for Wellbeing amongst staff to ensure shared vision. Teachers will require professional development to ensure that they have a deep conceptual understanding of wellbeing and are confident in using the pedagogical approaches that are known to support and build students wellbeing (NCCA, 2017). In relation to this study, the findings are there is a great deal of frustration amongst teaching staff about the lack of relevant CPD in this area. The respondents reported that the level of the training and CPD in the delivery of Wellbeing has been inadequate so far. Almost half of the respondents felt they had not received satisfactory CPD on Wellbeing. Furthermore, in the whole school training provided to the respondents it was noted that whilst the DES had given staff an overview of the rationale for the implementation of Wellbeing in schools, there was a need for further CPD on the implementation of Wellbeing into their everyday teaching. The impression from the findings that the respondents were not satisfied with the level of CPD received. The findings

would appear to suggest that the teaching staff would like follow up from their CPD in the form of advice and support about the delivery of the programme. The lack of teaching resources offered in the CPD was highlighted as a concern.

Another challenge identified in the findings is the concern over the lack of time to successfully plan and implement the Wellbeing programme at Junior Cycle. The NCCA (2017) asserts that schools need to set aside time for planning of the Wellbeing programme. This need to involve the whole school community and a once off planning meeting is inadequate to support the implementation of the Wellbeing programme. (NCCA, 2017). The findings in the current study are very concerning and diverge with the policy literature as 54% of respondents reported they had a little amount of time and 38% had no time at all for planning. The findings would indicate that the lack of time for planning the Wellbeing programme is a significant challenge given the complexity in the design of the Wellbeing programme and the inclusion of the programme along with classroom content of the specific subject curriculum of the Wellbeing Programme. An implication for the lack of time to plan collaboratively means the delivery of the whole school approach of the Wellbeing Programme is extremely difficult for the surveyed schools.

The assessment guidelines of the Wellbeing programme are another challenge that emerged in the current findings. By 2023, schools will be required to use the school self-evaluation process to initiate a Wellbeing promotion review and development cycles (DES, 2018). There are six indicators of Wellbeing (NCCA, 2017), which make explicit what is important for students and teachers and should be central to the implementation of Wellbeing (DES, 2018). The Wellbeing indicators will be used to inform assessment of the programme. However, the current findings were that over 20% of the respondents were unfamiliar with these six indicators. This finding is very concerning and could potentially have serious implications when it comes to evaluating the effectiveness of the Wellbeing programme in the nine schools.

Student wellbeing is not something that can be definitively achieved and tested. It can vary over time and is often dependent on the context of the person's life (DES, 2018). At present, there are no formal guidelines to identify and measure the successful implementation of the Wellbeing programme in schools. But the DES is committed to establishing a clearer method in the coming years (NCCA, 2017). The NCCA guidelines propose that most of the

assessment activities in the area of Wellbeing will be classroom based and formative in nature (NCCA, 2017). The findings highlighted a level of uncertainty when it comes to the assessment of students in the area of Wellbeing. This is very concerning as over 70% of the respondents had not received adequate guidelines on student assessment. This finding was illuminated by some of the respondents who were unaware of the methods used for the assessment of Wellbeing these finding converges with the literature. The NCCA (2017) illuminate the fact that no formal guidelines have been given to staff yet as to how to assess the Junior Cycle. Furthermore the DES (2018) developed the Wellbeing Statement Policy and Framework for Policy 2018 – 2023 with the aim to give further guidance about the implementation of the Wellbeing Programme and methods to evaluate its success.

The role of the school guidance service in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme was a particular implication identified in the current study. The Education Act 1998 states that guidance in a post primary school is a legal requirement and each school under its development plan is required to devise and use a whole school guidance plan (DES, 2005). The NCGE (2007) defines guidance provision as three interlinked tasks involving personal/special, educational and career counselling. Guidance counsellors have a professional role to play in each of the areas of personal, social, career, and educational guidance and counselling (DES, 2005). Student wellbeing support is a core element of the role of the guidance counsellor (Hearne and Galvin, 2014). Guidance provision may be included in the hours available for Wellbeing; in recognition of the unique contribution that guidance can make to the promotion of the students wellbeing (DES, 2015). The guidance counsellor plays a fundamental role in providing input into the whole school approach to Wellbeing, but it cannot be just the guidance counsellor working solely on this (NCCA, 2017). Furthermore guidance-related learning is identified in the *Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines* as one of the main pillars of a school's Wellbeing programme (NCCA, 2017).

The current findings did correlate with the DES proposition of the significant role the Guidance Counsellor has in the wellbeing of the young person. The respondents in the study highlighting the significant role the guidance counsellor plays in the delivery of wellbeing in schools. In the study, many of the respondents highlighted the significant role the guidance department have in the implementation of the Wellbeing Programme. The guidance counsellor offers support to teaching staff providing information about the role of the teacher in the delivery of the Wellbeing Programme. The limited amount of time the guidance

counsellor has to carry out a large range of duties was highlighted as a challenge by some of the respondents. However the guidance counsellor needs to have clear guidelines set out in the Wellbeing Policy outlining the specific roles and responsibilities of the guidance counsellor is involved in so that they foster a positive and supportive ethos in the school (DES, 2005).

5.3 Conclusion

The research highlighted the significant role played by the teacher in the promotion of positive relationships and hence the improvement of wellbeing of the students in a school. The NCCA (2017) guidelines emphasise the critical importance of collaboration, planning and the implementation of a whole school approach in the delivery of Wellbeing in post primary schools. However the findings showed that there is still a significant amount of work to be carried out in the development of the whole school approach. The factors identified such as lack of collaboration within wellbeing, lack of CPD for the teaching staff in the delivery of the programme and the need for assessment guidelines to be addressed in order for teachers to be able to evaluate the success of the programme in the schools. However in identifying and illuminating these areas, changes can be implemented within schools in order to reduce the negative impact these factors could potential have on the opportunity for enhancing student wellbeing.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a conclusion within the context of the aim and objectives of the study. It presents the strengths and limitations of the study, and highlights the recommendations for future policy and practice based on the primary research findings and the literature review. . The researcher's reflexivity and personal learning were also discussed in this chapter.

6.1 Overview of Findings

The overall aim of this research was to examine the provision of a whole school approach to Wellbeing in the Junior Cycle curriculum within the ETB post primary sector with specific reference to a whole school approach and guidance counselling delivery. Furthermore, a number of objectives were identified to address the overall aim. The specific objectives were to review the literature in relation to policy and practice of the new Wellbeing Programme, to examine the current delivery of the Wellbeing programme in ETB schools, to identify the current practice for curricular assessment of Wellbeing and to make recommendation that may inform future practice and policy. The findings illuminated the current practices in the delivery of the Wellbeing Programme in the ETB sector and also illuminated a number of key challenges and implications that have been identified by the teaching staff directly involved in the delivery of the Wellbeing Programme.

The design of this study was underpinned by the positivist paradigm. Thomas, (2017) describes the positivist approach (quantitative) as having the ability to be measured and is quantitative. According to Braun and Clarke (2013), positivism is based on the assumption that reality does exist in the study a fixed design was used in the form of an online survey method. This method allowed the researcher to gather standardised data from a large number of participants. The survey extrapolated the views of perceptions of teaching staff about the delivery of the Wellbeing Programme in their schools. Following the collection of data from the online survey and analysis of the overall findings was carried out and two overarching themes emerged in the study. These themes were:

1. Whole School Approach and the delivery of Junior Cycle Wellbeing in ETB schools
2. Challenges and Implications associated with the delivery of Junior Cycle Wellbeing

The literature highlights the importance of the delivery of a holistic education experience. Smyth and McCoy (2011) assert that a quality education is delivered in a school that provides an environment which caters for all aspects of the individual student. The whole school approach has been put forward as a model of best practice in Irish post primary schools (Hearne and Galvin, 2014). By developing a whole school approach, students develop a greater sense of self (DES, 2009). The findings from this study show that attempts are being made at the development of a whole school approach in the delivery of the Wellbeing Programme. This was evident from the wide range of diversity of teaching staff. However the findings did show that the range of respondents was predominantly made up of female staff. However the findings also identified that a large amount of the respondents did not feel there was a coherent delivery of the Wellbeing programme with many of the respondents claiming it was just a tick the box exercise to fulfil the hours requirement set out by the department as opposed to the delivery of a coherent programme. The impression from the findings is that the Wellbeing programme is still in the early stages of development and its implementation is an ongoing process. The issue of measuring its efficacy for student Wellbeing still has to be addressed.

The findings highlight a number of issues in the delivery of the whole school approach to the Wellbeing programme. The DES (2018) asserts that for the successful implementation of the Wellbeing programme the policy in the school must be coherent and transparent to all stakeholders. Conversely, the current findings highlight that almost half of the respondents were unsure if their school had a Wellbeing policy and the majority of them had little or no involvement in the development of the Wellbeing policy. Even more concerning a large number of respondents was not aware of their school had a Wellbeing policy in their school.

Another key finding relates to the level of collaboration amongst the staff in the delivery and planning of the Wellbeing programme. The NCCA (2017) highlights the significance of collaboration to create a shared vision and coherent approach in the delivery of the Wellbeing Programme. The findings identified that the respondents indicated that there was low levels of collaboration with the ETB schools. The majority of respondents stated there was little or no consultation in the delivery of the programme among the teaching staff with a number of the respondents claiming Wellbeing was just slotted in by management to fulfil the hour's requirement set out by the Department.

In this study it was also found that the respondents felt they had not received adequate CPD to deliver the Wellbeing programme. The CPD they had received was more about defining Wellbeing, as opposed to giving concrete guidelines on its delivery in schools. The impression given by the respondents was a lack of confidence in the delivery of the Wellbeing Programme.

The role of the guidance counsellor is critical in the development of the Wellbeing programme in the school (DES, 2015). Subsequently, the NCCA (2017) states that guidance related learning plays an integral role and Wellbeing hours are to form part of the curriculum in guidance provision under the new framework for Junior Cycle. The findings illustrate that the respondent's perceptions were that the guidance counsellor had a positive and important role in the delivery of Wellbeing in the schools. Concerns were also highlighted in relation to the vast role of the guidance counsellor with limited time. This finding could have implications in the delivery of the Guidance Service in the school and the Guidance service would need to ensure clear roles and responsibilities are assigned to all staff involved in the delivery of the Wellbeing Programme.

6.2 Strengths and Limitations of the Study

A key strength of the study is that teachers involvement in Wellbeing is an under-researched area which this study sets out to address. Another strength of this study was that data was collected from nine schools within one ETB. Cohen et al (2011) describe surveys as useful instruments for data collection. The online survey provided reliable and comparable quantitative data (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006) concerning the research topic from participants in the nine schools on the delivery of wellbeing at Junior Cycle. The large number of respondents allowed the researcher to ensure objectivity as much as possible. Another key strength identified in this study was the use of the positivist paradigm and the online survey through the platform Survey Monkey. This allowed the researcher to collect a large amount of quantitative and qualitative data in a short period of time. The use of this method also allowed the researcher to gather data free from personal bias. Finally, the third strength of this study is the utilization of information to inform further research, policy and practice in the delivery of a whole school approach to Wellbeing at Junior Cycle. It identifies the perceptions of the teaching staff in nine schools and can contribute to future development and

guidelines in the implementation of the Wellbeing programme. The study also provided an insight into guidance provision, which is now included in the Wellbeing programme.

One of the limitations of this study is that it did not investigate non-ETB schools which might have provided a broader view of Wellbeing in different types of schools. Secondly the use of a quantitative approach could be seen as a limitation. The use of a mixed method approach could have produced a more in depth study through the use of interviews and focus groups to give a greater insight into the topic but there was a time limit to undertaking the study.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study a number of recommendations for national policy, practice and further research can be made, as follows:

1. If a collaborative approach to Wellbeing is recommended as best practice as stated by the NCCA (2017) for effective implementation the programme time must be allocated to the planning of the programme through regular meetings with all the teaching staff involved in the delivery of the programme. The school ethos and the attitudes of management to the role of Wellbeing in the school are also critical in developing a collaborative approach to the delivery of Wellbeing at Junior Cycle.
2. Guidelines on how the Wellbeing programme is to be evaluated and assessed need to be developed. This will develop confidence in the teaching staff involved in the delivery of the Wellbeing Programme
3. Teaching staff need to feel they are adequately trained in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme. To ensure 'buy in' from staff, ongoing CPD should be provided to staff in this area on a regular. This will ensure that staff are confident and will be able to contribute positively to the delivery of the Wellbeing programme.
4. The role of the guidance counsellor in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme needs to be clarified to ensure the Guidance Counsellor does not become overloaded in terms of the work. This will ensure the development of a whole school approach and also allow the guidance counsellor to develop boundaries around the role.

6.4 Reflexivity and Personal Learning

Researchers are encouraged to speak about their experiences whilst carrying out research (Hearne, 2013). For the purpose of this study a reflexive approach was employed to gain a great understanding of the phenomenon keeping in mind the personal, social and cultural context of the researcher (Etherington, 2004). The researcher kept a research diary and used self-questioning and note taking throughout the study.

The researcher began this study with assumptions based on the experience as a teacher and trainee guidance counsellor. The researcher had to be aware of these assumptions. One of these assumptions was the teacher's lack of willingness to collaborate in the delivery of the Wellbeing programme. However, the findings reported that the teaching staff appears to be keen to collaborate and the issue is the lack of ring-fenced planning time set aside by management to allow for this collaboration. In engaging in this study the researcher has learned aspects that will help in future practice. This will include the promotion of a whole school approach to Wellbeing through consultation with management and staff to ensure sufficient time is set aside to allow for a coherent collaborative Wellbeing Programme at Junior Cycle.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter concludes the research on the provision of a whole school approach to Wellbeing in the Junior Cycle curriculum within the ETB post primary schools with specific reference to a whole school approach and guidance counselling delivery in nine ETB schools. It provided a summary of the findings pertinent to the aim and objectives set out at the beginning of the study. Furthermore, the strengths and limitations of the study were identified. This chapter also provided recommendations based on the research findings. The researcher's reflexivity and personal learning were also discussed in this chapter.

References

Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCS), Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI), Joint Managerial Body (JMB) and National Association for Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD) (2017) *Framework for considering the provision of guidance in post primary schools*, Available at: https://www.jmb.ie/images/pdf/Framework-re-Provision-of-Guidance-in-Post-Primary-Schools_FINAL_Aug-2017_1.pdf [accessed 04 Sept 2018].

Babbie, E. (2013) *The practice of Social Research*, 13th ed., Belmont, CA: Wadsworth

Bassit, T.A. (2010) *Conducting Research in Educational Contexts*, Bloomsbury: London

Bassot, B. (2013). *The reflective journal*, 1st ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Bell, J. (2010). *Doing your research project*, 5th ed. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Berger, R. (2015) 'Now I see it, now I don't: Researchers position and reflexivity in qualitative research' *Qualitative Research* 15(2) 219-234, DOI: 10.1177/1468794112468475

Berk, L. (2014). *Exploring lifespan development*. 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River N.J: Pearson Education LTD.

Best, R. (1990). 'Pastoral Care in Schools: Some Implications for Teacher Training'. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 15(1), pp.14-23.

Boyd, D. and Bee, H. (2017). *Lifespan development*. 7th ed. Essex: Pearson Education Ltd., pp.45-70.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Thematic Analysis' in Coopers, H. (Ed) *APA handbook of Research Methods in Psychology, Research Designs*: Vol. 2 57-71; [online], available: doi: 10.1037/13620-004 [accessed 10th May, 2019]

Bryman, A. (2012) *Social Research Methods*, 4th ed., New York: Oxford University Press

Byrne, J., Rietdijk, W. and Pickett, K. (2018) 'Teachers as health promoters: Factors that influence early career teachers to engage with health and wellbeing education'. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 69, pp.289-299.

Clarke, A. and Barry, M. (2010). *An evaluation of Zippy's Friends Emotional Well Being Programme for Primary Schools*. [online] Aran.library.nuigalway.ie. Available at https://aran.library.nuigalway.ie/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10379/2624/Thesis_Aleisha%20Clarke.pdf?sequence=1 [Accessed 17 Sept. 2018]

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (eds.) (2011) *Research Methods in Education*, 7th ed., New York: Routledge.

Cohen, L., and Crabtree, B. (2006) *Qualitative Research Guidelines Project*, Princeton: Rober Wood Johnson Foundation.

Cooper, M.P. (2000)'Usability Evaluation of Computer Assisted Survey Instruments', *Social Science Computer Review*, 18(4), 384-396.

Darling, N. (2007). 'Ecological Systems Theory: The person in the Center of the Circles', *i*, 4(3-4), pp.203-217.

Department of Child and Youth Affairs (2014) *National Youth Strategy 2015-2020*, Dublin: Government Publication. [online], Available at: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/775847-better-outcomes-brighter-futures/?referrer=/documents/cypp_framework/betteroutcomesbetterfuturereport.pdf/ [Accessed 20th April 2019].

Department of Education and Department of Health. (2000) *The National Children's Strategy: Our children, their lives*, Dublin: Department of Health

Department of Education and Science (2005) *Guidelines for second level schools on the implications of Section 9(c) of the Education Act 1998, relating to students access to appropriate guidance*, Dublin: The Stationary Office.

Department of Education and Skills (2009) *Looking at Guidance; Teaching and Learning in post primary school*. [online], Available at: https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Inspection-Reports-Publications/Evaluation-Reports-Guidelines/insp_looking_at_guidance_pdf.pdf [Accessed 23rd March 2019].

Department of Education and Skill (2012) *Staffing arrangements in post-primary schools for the 2012/2013 school year* (Circular 0009/2012). [online], Available at: http://www.ncge.ie/uploads/cl0009_2012.pdf

Department of Education and Skills (2015). *A Framework for Junior Cycle*. [online], Available at: www.education.ie/en/Schols-Colleges/Information/Curriculum-and-Syllabus/a [accessed 23rd March 2019].

Department of Education and Skills (2016) '*Programme Recognition Framework: Guidance Counselling. Criteria and Guidelines for programme providers*', [online], available: <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/Programme-Recognition-Framework-Guidance-Counselling.pdf>, [accessed: 15th March, 2019]

Department of Education and Skills (2016) Action Plan for Education 2016-2019, [online], Available at: <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Corporate-Reports/Strategy-Statement/action-plan-for-education-2018.pdf> [accessed 9th September 2019]

Department of Education and Skill (2017a). Circular Letter 0015/2017 *Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle with particular reference to school years 2017/18 and 2018/19*. [Online] Available at: https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0029_2017.pdf [Accessed 17 Sep. 2018].

Department of Education and Skills (2017b). Circular Letter 0010/2017. *Approved Allocation of Teaching Post 2017/2018 School Year*. [Online] Available at: https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Archived-Circulars/cl0010_2017.pdf [accessed 12th March, 2019].

Department of Education and Skills, (2018) Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023, [online], Available at: <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy->

[Reports/wellbeing-policy-statement-and-framework-for-practice-2018%E2%80%932023.pdf](#)

[accessed 9th September 2019].

Department of Health (2013). *Healthy Ireland: A framework for improved health and Wellbeing. 2013-2025*, Dublin: Department of Health

Dooley, B. and Fitzgerald, A. (2012). *My World Survey: National Study of Youth Mental Health*. The National Centre for Youth Mental Health, UCD School of Psychology, Dublin. [online] Available:

www.headstrong.ie/sites/default/files/My%20World%20Survey%202012%20Online.pdf

[accessed 10th April 2010]

Ecclestone, K. (2010). *Transitions and learning through life course*. London: Routledge.

Etherington, K. (2004) *Becoming a Reflexive Researcher: Using ourselves in Research*, (3rd edn.), London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Erikson, E. (1968). *Identity, youth and crisis*. London: Faber & Faber.

Fink, A (2009) *How to conduct Surveys: A step by step guide*, 4th ed., London: SAGE publications ltd.

Flick, U. (2015). *Introducing research methodology*. London: Sage

Gargiulo, R. and Stokes, M. (2009). 'Subjective Well-Being as an Indicator for Clinical Depression'. *Social Indicators Research*, 92(3), pp.517-527.

Gray, D.E. (2014) *Doing Research in the Real World*, London: Sage.

Government of Ireland (1998) *Education Act*, Dublin: Department of Education and Science, available: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1998/act/51/enacted/en/html> [accessed 09 Sept 2018].

Hansen, J. M. and Childs, J. (1998) 'Creating a school where people like to be', *Educational Leadership*, 56(1), pp. 14–17.

Hearne, L. (2013) *Ethical Research in Guidance Counselling* [online], available <https://www.ncge.ie/school-guidance-handbook/ethical-research-guidance-counselling> [accessed 14th May 2019]

Hearne, L., and Galvin, J. (2014) The Role of the Regular Teacher in a Whole School Approach (WSA) to Guidance Counselling in Ireland, *The British Journal of Guidance and Counselling* 43(2), 229-240.

Hearne, L., King, P., Kenny, N. and Geary, T. (2016) *A case study analysis of a whole school approach to guidance counselling in a voluntary school in the Irish post primary sector*, Limerick: University of Limerick available: <https://ulir.ul.ie/handle/10344/6452> [accessed 04 Sept 2018].

Hogan, P., A. Brosnan, B. deRoisre, A. MacAlister, A. Malone, N. Quirekebolt, and G. Smith (2009) *Learning a new, Final Report of the Research and Development Project, Teaching and Learning for the 21st Century*. Maynooth: National University of Ireland.

Hui, E.K.P (2002) *A whole school approach to guidance; Hong Kong teachers' perceptions*. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*. 30(1), 63-80.

Institute of Guidance Counsellors (2012) *Code of Ethics*, Dublin: Institute of Guidance Counsellors, [online], available: <http://www.igc.ie/about-us/our-constitution/code-of-ethics> [accessed 09 Sept 2018].

Institute of Guidance Counsellors (2017) *Guidance Counselling Core Competencies & Professional Practice*, [online], available: <http://www.igc.ie/download/1/2017/Guidance%20Counselling%20Core%20Competencies%20&%20Professional%20Practice.pdf> [Accessed 09 Sept 2018].

Kern, M., Waters, L., Adler, A. and White, M. (2014). 'A multidimensional approach to measuring well-being in students: Application of the PERMA framework'. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 10(3), pp.262-271.

Klimstra, T. (2012). 'Adolescent Personality Development and Identity Formation'. *Child Development Perspectives*, 7(2), pp.80-84.

McFayden, J., and Rankin, J. (2006) 'The Role of Gatekeepers in research: learning from reflexivity and reflection', *GSTF Journal of Nursing and Healthcare (JHNC)* [online], 4(1) available: <http://dl6.globalstf.org/index.php/jnhc/article/view/1745> [accessed 24th May 2019]

McLeod, J. (2010) *Case Study Research in Counselling and Psychotherapy*, London, England: Sage.

Masten, A. (2014). Invited Commentary: Resilience and Positive Youth Development Frameworks in Developmental Science. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 43(6), pp.1018-1024.

Masten, A. and Tellegen, A. (2012). Resilience in developmental psychopathology: Contributions of the Project Competence Longitudinal Study. *Development and Psychopathology*, 24(02), pp.345-361.

Mooney, B. (2017). *Education Matters*. Dublin: Veritas.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2009), *Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* [online] available at: <https://www.ncca.ie/en/early-childhood/aistear> [Accessed 20 August 2019]

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2010) *Innovation and Identity: Ideas for a new Junior Cycle* [online] available at: http://www.sdpi.ie/NCCA_Materials/Innovation_and_Identity_Ideas_for_a_new_junior_cycle1.pdf [Accessed 16 August 2019].

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2011) *Towards a Framework for Junior Cycle: Innovation and Identity*, [online] available at: https://www.ncca.ie/media/2466/towards_aframework_juniorecycle.pdf [Accessed 20 August 2019].

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2017). *Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines*. [Online] Available at: https://www.ncca.ie/media/2487/wellbeingguidelines_forjunior_cycle.pdf [Accessed 16 Sep. 2018].

National Council for Guidance Education (NCGE) (2004). *Counselling competencies for guidance counselling education programmes*, Dublin: NCGE, available: https://www.ncge.ie/sites/default/files/ncge/uploads/Counselling_Competences_Statement.pdf [accessed 09 Sept 2018].

National Centre for Guidance in Education (2008) *Research Code of Ethics*, Dublin: Ireland: NCGE

National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) (2017), 'A whole school guidance Framework', [online], available: <https://www.ncge.ie/school-guidance-handbook/ncge-whole-school-guidance-framework> , [accessed: 5th March, 2019]

National Educational Psychological Service, Department of Education and Skills (2010) *A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Teachers*. [online], Available: www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/Educational-Psychologist-NEPS-/neps [accessed 28 February 2019].

O'Higgins-Norman, J. (2014). *Education matters*. Dublin: Veritas.

O'Connor, M., Sanson, A., Hawkins, M., Letcher, P., Toumbourou, J., Smart, D., Vassallo, S. and Olsson, C. (2010). 'Predictors of Positive Development in Emerging Adulthood'. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 40(7), pp.860-874.

O'Connor, M., Sanson, A., Toumbourou, J., Norrish, J. and Olsson, C. (2016). Does Positive Mental Health in Adolescence Longitudinally Predict Healthy Transitions in Young Adulthood?. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 18(1), pp.177-198.

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2004) *Career Guidance and Public Policy – Bridging the Gap*, Paris: OECD

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2015) Programme for International Student Assessment: Student's Wellbeing, [online], available: <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/PISA-2015-Results-Students-Well-being-Volume-III-Overview.pdf> [accessed 22 February 2019].

Park, N. (2004). The Role of Subjective Well-Being in Positive Youth Development. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 591(1), pp.25-39.

Patton, W. and McMahon, M. (2006) '*Career Counselling: Constructivist Approaches*', London: Routerledge.

Peterson, C. (2006). *A primer in positive psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Punch, K. (2005) *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches* 2nd Edition, Sage: London

Schoon, I. (2006). *Risk and resilience*. Cambridge, Angleterre: Cambridge University Press.

Seligman, M., Ernst, R., Gillham, J., Reivich, K. and Linkins, M. (2009). Positive education: positive psychology and classroom interventions. *Oxford Review of Education*, 35(3), pp.293-311. York: Springer.

Seligman, M. (2011). *Flourish*. London: Nicholas Brealey.

Sharf, R. (2010). *Applying career development theory to counselling*. 5th ed. Pacific Grove, Calif.: Brooks/Cole

Simovska, V. and McNamara, P. (2015). *Schools for health and sustainability*. Dordrecht: Springer.

Smyth, E., and McCoy, S. (2011) *Improving Second Level Education: Using Evidence for Policy Development*, Dublin: ESRI.

Smyth, E. (2017). *Off to a good start? Primary school experiences and the transition to second-level education*. [Online] Growingup.ie. Available at: <https://www.growingup.ie/pubs/Off-to-a-Good-Start-Report.pdf> [Accessed 23 Mar. 2019].

Smyth, E. (2015). *Wellbeing and School experiences among 9 and 112 year olds: Insights from the Growing up in Ireland Study*. Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute.

Smyth, E. (1999). *Do Schools Differ? Academic and Personal Development among Pupils in the Second-Level Sector / ESRI*. [Online] Esri.ie. Available at: <https://www.esri.ie/publications/do-schools-differ-academic-and-personal-development-among-pupils-in-the-second-level-sector> [Accessed 23 Mar. 2019].

Smyth, E., Banks, J. and Calvert, E. (2011). *From Leaving Certificate to Leaving School A Longitudinal Study of Sixth Year Students*. [Online] Esri.ie. Available at: <https://www.esri.ie/system/files?file=media/file-uploads/2015-07/BKMNEXT195.pdf> [Accessed 23 Mar. 2019].

Sugarman, L. (2001). *Counselling and the life course*. London: SAGE Publications.

Symonds, E. (2011) 'A Practical Application of Survey Monkey as a Remote Usability-Testing tool', *Library High Tech*, 29(3), 436-445

Thomas, G. (2017) *How to do your research project*, London: SAGE.

Ungar, M. (2013). Resilience, Trauma, Context, and Culture. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 14(3), pp.255-266.

Weare, K., (2010) mental health and social and emotional learning: Evidence, principles tensions, balances, *Advances in School Mental Health Promotion*, Vol 3(1), pp. 5-17.

Weare, K. and Nind, M. (2011). Mental health promotion and problem prevention in schools: what does the evidence say? *Health Promotion International*, 26(suppl 1), pp.i29-i69.

World Health Organisation (2001) *Mental Health: New Understanding, New Hope*. World Health Organisation. Geneva, Switzerland.

Appendix A: Subject Information Letter (Gatekeeper)



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Subject Information Letter (Principal)

Date:

EHSRecNo: 2019_03_24_EHS

Research Title: *An exploration of Wellbeing provision in the Junior Cycle within the Education and Training Board (ETB) Sector in the context of a whole school approach and Guidance Counselling delivery.*

Dear Principal,

I am currently a student on the Masters in Guidance Counselling and Lifespan Development course with the School of Education at the University of Limerick under the supervision of Dr. Lucy Hearne. As part of my MA it is a requirement to complete a research project on a topic related to guidance counselling.

In my research I aim to examine the provision of a whole school approach to Wellbeing in Junior Cycle within a number of ETB post primary schools. I wish to gather data through an online questionnaire on the viewpoints of teaching staff who are directly involved in the delivery Wellbeing at Junior Cycle in their school. Therefore, I am seeking your permission to gather data from the relevant teaching staff in your school through the dissemination of an online questionnaire to them. The questionnaire will be distributed via the Survey Monkey platform and will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

The information gathered from the online questionnaire will be kept confidential and stored on the researcher's computer with a protection password. The data collected will be anonymised and kept for a period of seven years, after which it will be destroyed according to UL guidelines. The school's name and the name of the individual participants will not be identifiable to anyone other than those directly involved in the research.

Participation in this study is voluntary and participants may choose not to consent or to withdraw consent and discontinue participation in this study at any time prior to submission of the questionnaire.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Yours sincerely,

Christine Lawlor

If you have any queries or require further information on the research study, please contact me or my supervisor:

Researcher Details

Christine Lawlor

UL email: 0022047@studentmail.ul.ie

Telephone Number: 0863262439

Supervisor Details

Dr. Lucy Hearne

Email: lucy.hearne@ul.ie

Telephone Number: 061-202931

This research study has received Ethics approval from the Education and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee (**2019_03_24_EHS**). If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent you may contact:

Chairman Education and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee

EHS Faculty Office

University of Limerick

Tel (061) 234101

ehsresearchethics@ul.ie

Appendix B: Consent Form (Gatekeeper)



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Consent Form (Principal)

EHSRecNo: 2019_03_24_EHS

Research Title:

An exploration of Wellbeing provision in the Junior Cycle within the Education and Training Board (ETB) Sector in the context of a whole school approach and Guidance Counselling delivery.

I have read the project Information sheet and understand in detail the particulars of the research project. The conditions involved in the research which are designed to protect the privacy of participants and respect their contribution are:

1. I understand that the identity of the participants and the school will not be identifiable in the reporting of this research study
2. Participation is entirely voluntary.
3. The questionnaires will be kept strictly confidential and will be available only to the researcher and the supervisor.

After considering the above statements, I consent to this study being carried out in this school.

Name: (please print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Investigator's Signature _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Subject information Email (Volunteer Participant)



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Volunteer Information Email re Online Questionnaire

EHSRecNo: 2019_03_24_EHS

Research Title: An exploration of Wellbeing provision in the Junior Cycle within the Education and Training Board (ETB) Sector in the context of a Whole School Approach and Guidance Counselling delivery.

Dear Teacher,

If you are directly involved in the delivery of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme, I would like you to invite you to take part in my MA research study through an online questionnaire (Survey Monkey). I am a student of the MA in Guidance and Lifespan Development in University of Limerick under the supervision of Dr. Lucy Hearne.

My study is gathering information on the views and experiences of teaching staff directly involved in the delivery of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme in their school. One of the objectives is to provide recommendations for the development of a whole school approach to Wellbeing in Junior Cycle within the ETB sector arising from the study findings.

The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes of your time and needs to be completed by Please click (*web link for questionnaire*) to continue.

All information gathered in the questionnaire data will be held in the strictest of confidence. Participation in this study is voluntary and participants can withdraw from the research at any time prior to the data analysis phase. The results from this research study will be reported in my thesis and may be disseminated through professional publications. The collected data will be stored in a secure location approved by the University of Limerick.

If you have any queries or require further information on the research study, please contact me or my supervisor:

Researcher Details

Christine Lawlor

UL email: 0022047@studentmail.ul.ie

Supervisor Details

Dr. Lucy Hearne

Email: lucy.hearne@ul.ie

Tel Number: 061-202931

This research study has received Ethics approval from the Education and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee (2019_03_24_EHS). If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent you may contact:

Chairman Education and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee
EHS Faculty Office
University of Limerick
Tel (061) 234101
ehsresearchethics@ul.ie

Appendix D: Online Survey



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK

OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

EHSRECN0:

An exploration of Wellbeing provision in the Junior Cycle within the ETB Sector in the context of a Whole School Approach and Guidance Counselling delivery.

Please ensure that you complete all questions

Please tick to give your consent to you taking part in this survey:

Section 1: Background Information

1. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Other (please specify)

2. What is your age?

- 20 to 30
- 31 to 40
- 41 to 50
- 51 to 60
- 61 to 70

3. What is your nationality

4. What are your core teaching subjects?

Section 2: Delivery of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme

5. Have you a Junior Cycle Wellbeing policy in your school?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

6. What level of involvement do you have in the development of the Wellbeing policy in your school?

- A great deal
- A moderate amount
- A little
- None at all

7. Is there a Wellbeing Coordinator in your school?

- Yes
- No

8. How many teachers are directly involved in the delivery of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme in your school?

Number of teachers
involved in Wellbeing

0 40

9. In your view, is there coherent delivery of the wellbeing programme in your school

- Yes
- No
- Explain further

10. In your view, how supportive are management in the delivery of of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme?

- Very supportive
- Somewhat supportive
- Unsupportive

11. Was there consultation with the teaching staff about the delivery of a whole school approach to wellbeing?

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- None at all
- Other (please specify)

12. In your view, /how supportive of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme in your school

- Very supportive
- Unsupportive
- Not supportive

13. Is there sufficient planning time allocated for the Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme for teaching staff to work collaboratively in the planning of the delivery of the programme in your school?

- A great deal of time
- A lot of time
- A moderate amount of time
- A little time
- No time at all

14. Describe the contribution made by the school Guidance Service to the delivery of Wellbeing in your school

19. To what extent are you satisfied that the Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme in your school is benefitting the overall wellbeing of your students?

- Very satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

20. What methods are being used to assess Junior Cycle Wellbeing in your school:

21. Have staff in your school received adequate guidelines on assessment methods for Junior Cycle Wellbeing

- Yes
- No
- Explain

22. Is there anything you would like to state that has not been asked in the survey regarding the delivery of Wellbeing in your school?

Thank you for your time in completing this survey. If it has raised any concerns for you, you may wish to consider discussing them further through the appropriate channels (e.g. Employee Assistance Programme)