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Examining Irish Educators’ Attitudes Regarding the Promotion of Student Social and Emotional Wellbeing: Preliminary Findings

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EXAMINING IRISH EDUCATORS’ ATTITUDES REGARDING THE PROMOTION OF STUDENTS’ SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

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OVERVIEW

- Rationale for research
- Significant findings within literature
- Research questions/methodology
- Thematic Analysis
- Purpose of Thematic Analysis
RATIONALE FOR RESEARCH

Consideration for wellbeing in school gaining international prominence

Recent introduction of NCCA wellbeing guidelines in Ireland

Gap in literature regarding educators’ attitudes and opinions
Sentiment among Irish Educators

- Positivity with regard to the promotion of student wellbeing
- Insufficient training, support and resources
- Increased stress with regard to delivering core curriculum
- Lack of clarity among educators as to how to directly, positively impact upon student wellbeing
- Discomfort with delivering aspects of wellbeing curriculum (e.g., Relationships and Sexuality Education)


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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What are the attitudes and opinions of educators towards the promotion of students’ wellbeing in Irish secondary schools?

What are the attitudes and opinions of second level educators towards the current wellbeing guidelines published by the NCCA?

What issues or barriers do educators believe pertain to the development of students’ wellbeing in Irish secondary schools?

What changes, if any, do educators believe should be made to the second level curriculum to ensure the optimal promotion of students’ wellbeing?
**METHODOLOGY**  
SEQUENTIAL MIXED-METHODS DESIGN

**Phase One**

**Method**
Large-scale survey of Irish educators

**Instrument**
- Attitudes Toward Wellbeing Promotion (ATWP) scale
- Four non-composite “Wellbeing Guidelines” items
- Four open-ended items

**Analysis**
- General Linear Model
- Descriptive Analysis
- Thematic Analysis

**Phase Two**
- Focus groups with Irish educators
- Thematic Analysis
- Informed by Phase One
A total of 47 out of 324 respondents completed at least one (of four) open-ended question.

Thematic Analysis conducted in accordance with Braun & Clarke (2006).

Data were double-coded.

Kappa/inter-rater reliability scores were considered to be unnecessary within Interpretive paradigm.

Fidelity of analysis assessed at thematic level.

When the two coding matrices were synthesised, four themes were interpreted from the data.

PHASES ONE
THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Theme one: Best practice in delivering wellbeing promotion

Theme two: Obstacles in delivering wellbeing promotion

Theme Three: Influence of the wider social context

Theme four: Impact of wellbeing promotion upon educators
THEME ONE: 
BEST PRACTICE IN DELIVERING WELLBEING PROMOTION

Sub-theme: 
Wellbeing promotion should be an active process

Properties

- Leadership and communication
- School culture/whole-school approach
- Be practical in promoting wellbeing
- Regular wellbeing activities and events for students

Example Quotes

“Strong leadership from wellbeing co-coordinator [sic] in conjunction with the guidance counselor [sic] and management.”

“Implementation of 'Wellbeing' across every subject and as a whole school activity.”

“Practical steps such as eat well, get plenty of sleep, exercise, put down the phone, limit social media.”
THEME TWO: OBSTACLES IN DELIVERING WELLBEING PROMOTION

Sub-theme one: Difficulty timetabling wellbeing curriculum

Sub-theme two: Educators require further facilitation to deliver wellbeing promotion

Properties

- Overloaded curriculum/Core curriculum prioritised
- More time required for wellbeing curriculum
- Educator training/support is beneficial, with more required

Example Quotes

“Curriculum too congested.”

“...finding the time to “fit in" the well-being hours.”

“Teachers are not adequately trained and equipped to deal with mental issues.”

“No curriculum developed. Teachers are making it up as they go.”
THEME THREE:
INFLUENCE OF THE WIDER SOCIAL CONTEXT

Properties

• More parental involvement
• Impact of social media
• Improved links with external agents, e.g., primary schools

Example Quotes

“Parents need to step up, schools can not monitor and teach children about every aspect of life. Parents need to be more accountable for sure.”

“...perhaps the issues stem moreso [sic] from the home and social media which we have absolutely no control over.”

“Links with Primary schools as no idea where they are on Wellbeing.”
THEME FOUR:
IMPACT OF WELLBEING PROMOTION UPON EDUCATORS

Properties

• Positive perceptions of wellbeing promotion
• Wellbeing promotion not taken seriously
• Educators’ efforts in wellbeing promotion not fully recognised
• Wellbeing of educators should be considered

Example Quotes

“...we all want the best for our students and their wellbeing is crucial ...”

“When there is a school inspection wellbeing comes to the fore otherwise not mentioned.”

“Teaching is having a huge strain on my mental health when I'm expected to promote student well-being, but receive no care myself.”
SUMMARY OF THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Whole-school approach implemented through practical measures

Difficulty “fitting in” wellbeing promotion
Lack of training and support for educators

Acknowledge external factors
Parents should be more involved and more accountable

Positive sentiment but educators’ experience of delivering wellbeing promotion should be recognised
LIMITATIONS

- Poor response rate
- Potential lack of clarity in survey questions
- Lack of data regarding the wellbeing guidelines
PURPOSE OF PHASE ONE THEMATIC ANALYSIS

**Identify**
- Identify the attitudes of post-primary educators regarding the promotion of student wellbeing

**Highlight**
- Highlight areas for potential further analysis in phase two (focus groups)

**Facilitate**
- Contribute to the facilitation of educators in delivering wellbeing promotion
THANK YOU!