'Teachers' are at breaking point. It's time to push wellbeing up the agenda' (Stanley, 2018).

An exploration of how teacher wellbeing is conceptualised and supported by the main stakeholders in post-primary schools in Ireland

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Declaration

I have read and understood the Departmental policy on plagiarism.

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or another institution of tertiary education.

Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text, and a list of references is given.

Signature: Annemarie Doran

Date: 17th November 2021

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List of abbreviations

ASTI	Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland
CAP	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit
CPD	continuous professional development
CSL	Centre for School Leadership
CWEP	Community Wellbeing Evidence Programme
DOE	Department of Education
DOH	Department of Health
DP	dialectal pluralism
EAS	Employee Assistance Service
ETB	Education and Training Board
GGS	Geelong Grammar School project
HSE	Health Service Executive
IPPN	Irish Primary Principals' Network
JCT	Junior Cycle for Teachers
MHC	mental health continuum
NAPD	National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
NPC	National Parents Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDST	Professional Development Service for Teachers
PP	Positive Psychology
PWB	Psychological Wellbeing
SSE	school self-evaluation
SWB	subjective wellbeing
TES	teacher education sector
TUI	Teachers Union of Ireland
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
WSA	whole-school approach
WTL	wellbeing for teachers and learners

Abstract

This study focused on the gap in research on teacher wellbeing and how it is conceptualised and supported by the 'three voices' i.e., the managerial agencies, principals/deputy principals, and teachers in post-primary schools in Ireland. Through the lens of dialectical pluralism, Phase one used an online survey to investigate if there were differences in opinion in how teachers and school leaders viewed wellbeing in relation to, policy, management caring about them, wellbeing being on meetings' agendas, support strategies in place, and wellbeing related continuous professional development. It also examined how much of the variance in wellbeing scores could be explained by the same variables, after controlling for age. The T-Test for opinion showed statistically significant differences with principals/deputy principals scoring higher overall wellbeing than teachers. The Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF) was used, with results showing that having a wellbeing policy and/or reinforcing it did not make a difference to teachers' personal wellbeing. The difference in participants' wellbeing scores was due to support strategies for teachers and the attitude of school management to teachers. Six interviews and a focus group (7 participants) were used in Phase two to gather further data with thematic analysis utilised to determine the key themes including accountability, visibility, and perceptions. Analysis showed that an emphasis on student wellbeing adversely affected the wellbeing of teachers as they feel left behind. The results indicated that while there has been extensive circulars and guidelines issued, there is evidence of inadequate provision for teacher wellbeing in the Wellbeing Framework. While the focus on wellbeing has created more awareness of wellbeing among teachers, the evidence of supports for them is lacking. The researcher concludes that there is more work required at policy level for this to be effective.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the context of teacher wellbeing in post-primary schools in Ireland. It begins with a discussion of why teacher wellbeing is so important, highlighting the lack of research in this area. Then it presents the rationale and personal context for this research as well as the research aims underpinning the study. The chapter concludes with an overview of how the thesis is structured and presented.

1.2 Why teacher wellbeing?

Teachers in Ireland are at breaking point. It is time to push wellbeing up the agenda (Stanley, 2018). Therefore teacher wellbeing is critically important. Understanding and endeavouring to improve people's health and overall wellbeing at work has been an important focus for psychologists for some time (Arnold, 2017), and teachers are among the professions that report the highest level of work-related stress (Billehoj, 2007). Teacher wellbeing has emerged as particularly significant in recent times as teacher attrition continues to be an issue in educational contexts. The cost of this turnover is significant, ranging from "disruptive continuity of the instructional program, to a constant need to mentor and assist new teachers" (Lambert, et al., 2009, p.973).

Traditionally, the teaching role has been one of developing and nurturing student potential (McCallum, 2017). However, in an ever-changing society, the workload now entails a wide and complex variety of factors other than just teaching (Roffey, 2012). With these new, demanding roles, there is ever-increasing concern about teacher wellbeing. Work as a teacher is multi-faceted, as teachers not only undertake teaching but also attend to other matters, including new curriculums, students, parents, and ever-increasing new initiatives

and the associated paperwork. As early as 1999, Smyth wrote: “These are tough times to be a teacher” (p. 59). Teacher wellbeing is critical for school wellbeing and stability, because promoting teacher wellbeing enhances the capacity of schools to meet the needs of diverse populations (Roffey, 2012).

There is significant literature both nationally and internationally emphasising the link between teacher wellbeing, quality of teaching, and pupil outcomes (Arens & Morin, 2016; Briner & Dewberry, 2007; Collie & Martin, 2017; Klusmann et al., 2008a; Rae et al., 2017). However, with much of the current research and policies concentrating on student wellbeing, the importance and relevance of teacher wellbeing is somewhat hidden. Research by Michie and Cockcroft (1996) has also shown that prolonged exposure to work-related stress can affect brain functioning, potentially affecting a teacher’s ability to provide high-quality teaching and the associated learning opportunities and appropriate differentiation for their pupils (Roffey, 2012; Sharrocks, 2014). This, in turn can adversely affect pupils’ academic outcomes. Therefore, teacher wellbeing should be viewed on the same level of priority as student wellbeing.

The link between teacher wellbeing and student academic outcomes is further supported by Briner and Dewberry (2007), who illustrated in their research that after eliminating all other confounding variables, 8% of the variance in students’ Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) and General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) results was attributed to teacher wellbeing. These findings have been corroborated more recently by researchers such as Collie and Martin (2017), who examined the association between teachers’ adaptability and students’ numeracy achievement in secondary school. The results revealed that teacher wellbeing was directly and positively associated with students’

numeracy achievement, with students obtaining high attainment levels in classes where teachers reported having better wellbeing (Collie & Martin, 2017).

A recent survey by the Education Support Partnership (2019) of teacher wellbeing has highlighted that poor teacher wellbeing can also have negative implications for others working in the education sector. A third of teachers reported that poor teacher wellbeing had a significant negative impact on team morale and relationships with their colleagues (Education Support Partnership, 2019), thus underscoring the importance of teacher wellbeing. This is a relatively under-researched area. Worryingly, the same research revealed that 60% of teachers surveyed would not feel comfortable disclosing their feelings of poor wellbeing in their workplace, fearing that they would be perceived differently by their colleagues. Teachers also felt that their wellbeing was not viewed as being important by their school management, strengthening the argument for how teacher wellbeing is conceptualised, perceived, and supported to be high on the agenda for key stakeholders of schools. Now is the time for teacher wellbeing to become a priority.

1.3 Teacher wellbeing in Ireland

While wellbeing in education has seen an increasing amount of research globally in recent years (CASEL, 2015; Hargreaves et al., 2018; OECD, 2017b; Shonkoff et al., 2015; Thorburn, 2018), it has also begun to gain traction in an Irish context – increasingly so with the formal introduction of the Wellbeing Framework in Post-Primary Schools (Burke & Minton, 2019; DES, 2018; McHugh & McGowan, 2019; NCCA, 2017). It has emerged as an area of importance for all, particularly during the current Covid-19 pandemic (Burke & Dempsey, 2020; DES, 2020; Duffield & O'Hare, 2020; WHO, 2020), including wellbeing being created as a Post of Responsibility in many schools (DES, 2018b). However, there is limited research on wellbeing in an Irish context, with a gap evident in how teacher wellbeing is approached, supported, measured, and evaluated.

What is noted from the research is the importance of enhancing teachers' wellbeing by providing high-quality training and support in the school environment (McCallum et al., 2017).

When considering the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (2018), there is no evidence of the impact on teacher wellbeing and its effectiveness or how teachers' wellbeing can be measured or evaluated. This is supported by Thorburn (2018), who described an over-reliance on one-off events to support wellbeing, with little chance for follow-up. His research also reported that post-primary teachers have not received guidelines on how to deal with wellbeing themselves, emphasising the disconnection between policy and teachers' ability to deliver these aims. They are working under increasingly performative cultures that take little account of their wellbeing. If we are to achieve the goal of wellbeing embedded in every school ethos across Ireland by 2025, as outlined by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) (2018a), then every effort is needed to ensure that the teacher is not left behind. While the introduction of the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice is a positive step in recognising the importance of teacher wellbeing, it is not without its criticism, due to an obvious and stark absence of equal student–teacher emphasis.

1.4 Rationale for study

Enhancing the wellbeing of students in Ireland has been a priority of the DES, evident in the supports and hours allocated by the Department to this concept. However, the same cannot be said of teacher wellbeing, evident in the lack of research in this area. While there are currently some wellbeing practices and interventions in schools, their effectiveness is unknown. While there are many ways to measure effectiveness; this research has chosen the psychological perspective of wellbeing. These various perspectives will be discussed in Chapter 2. This research study tries to identify the impact

of certain factors that have been relevant to teacher personal wellbeing including policy, management caring about them, wellbeing being on meeting agendas, support strategies being in place and wellbeing-related CPD.

The Department of Education acknowledges that promoting wellbeing for all is central to its mission to enable individuals to achieve their full potential and contribute to Ireland's development (DES, 2018). The foregrounding of wellbeing is a key component of educational policy and discourse with an increasing focus on wellbeing in education obvious, including the recent changes to the Junior Cycle programme. These changes include wellbeing as a subject area, which in 2017 had 300 hours of timetabled engagement and 400 hours in 2020. On 20 July 2018, the then Minister for Education and Skills, Richard Bruton, TD, launched the Department's *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018–2023.* In his statement Minister Bruton explained how this policy would "inject momentum into supporting schools to nurture resilience in our students" (p. 1). The framework is designed to provide an overarching structure in wellbeing "encompassing existing, ongoing and developing work in this area" (p. 8) with schools required to undertake a process of self-evaluation to implement the policy. By 2023, all schools and centres for education are required to initiate a wellbeing promotion review and development cycle (Department of Education and Skills, 2018). However, a recent update in DES Circular 0032/2021 extends the timeframe for implementation of the wellbeing policy statement to 2025. While the policy emphasises the importance of students' wellbeing needs and best interests, there is little reference or acknowledgement of teachers' wellbeing

The wellbeing of students is undoubtedly important, and in the current climate needs to be addressed and supported, but the same can be said for that of teachers, who seem to

have been left behind. While considering the national policy initiatives such as the wellbeing framework and policy documents relating to wellbeing in Ireland, it might be assumed that teacher wellbeing is a well-developed and supported concept in Irish post-primary schools. However, this is not the case. Therefore, the focus for this research study is to examine how teacher wellbeing is conceptualised and supported by the concept of the 'three voices' consisting of the main management and governing bodies of post-primary schools in Ireland, principals/deputy principals and teachers.

While the main stakeholders in Irish education consist of the department of education, patron bodies, teaching unions, community representatives, boards of management, principals teachers, students and parents, they are not stand alone and often have interlinking relationships. The research did not include all the main stakeholders in Irish Post Primary Education, as the ones chosen were deemed suitable for this particular study and its research questions. It is noted that in future research non participating stakeholders would be considered.

Dialectical pluralism was the chosen lens with which to view this research as it is a metaparadigm. This allows the researcher to operate within multiple paradigms while also considering various conceptual and theoretical perspectives including the Mental Health Continuum Model (Keyes, 2008) and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological systems theory. The Mental Health Continuum Model allows the research to view teacher wellbeing through an emotional, social and psychological perspective adding to the strength and depth to this study. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological systems theory (1979) allows the research to view teacher wellbeing as a complex system of relationships which are affected by multiple levels of the surrounding environment (Guy-Evans, 2020), in this context the school surroundings.

1.5 Personal context

As a practising post-primary teacher for 20 years and assistant principal for 15 years, I have a personal interest in this research study. Having a dual role gives me an understanding of how both management and teachers perceive teacher wellbeing and the practices and policies currently in place in schools to support their wellbeing. It gives me a basic understanding of the concept, and a personal and professional desire to identify the weakness in the system in terms of policy and implementation of support strategies for teacher wellbeing. It also gives me a clear understanding of some of the problems in relation to teacher wellbeing and a desire to investigate the gap in the literature relating to this. Problems such as initiative overload, lack of acknowledgement and support from management, a seemingly box-ticking approach to cover aspects and circulars from the department, and the issue of responsibility, all contribute to teacher wellbeing. As a teacher, I see an emphasis on the students' wellbeing, with supports and initiatives continuously being developed, implemented and under review. In contrast to this, it is obvious to me as a practicing teacher that the same effort, supports and acknowledgement are just not there for teachers.

As the holder of a senior management position in my school, I can also see the issues pertaining to teacher wellbeing from a management point of view. There is little to no guidance from the Department of Education in terms of how teacher wellbeing should be supported and acknowledged. There is also no official role or job specification to supporting teacher wellbeing, with this position usually undertaken on an informal basis, with little guidance from the department. While acknowledging the importance of supporting teacher wellbeing, it is also important to acknowledge management wellbeing. Who is responsible for their wellbeing? How is their wellbeing supported and acknowledged? The lack of clarity and guidance from the department from a management

perspective can create a conflicting approach when it comes to supporting teacher wellbeing. Management are trying to support their staff, but with no official guidance or policy it can become an ad-hoc process, further emphasising the gap in the research that this research study aims to address.

1.6 Research aims

In seeking to address the research gap on teacher wellbeing, this research comprises of two phases. Phase one aims to investigate if there are differences in opinion on how teachers and school leaders view wellbeing in relation to the variables: policy, management caring about them, wellbeing (for whole school), being on meeting agendas, support strategies being in place, and wellbeing related continuous professional development (CPD). These variables were chosen following an extensive review of both past and current literature pertaining to teachers' wellbeing which highlighted these particular variables in light of this specific study. For example, when considering management caring about them, this relates to how management might show feeling or concern to staff or processes to generate a culture of caring in schools. It might include management enacting their educational vision and personal values in a caring manner and displaying this to staff. Support strategies might be defined as management promoting a sense of safety for teachers while promoting a sense of calm and connectedness between management and staff.

It also aims to assess the impact of practices on teachers' personal wellbeing and how much of the variance in wellbeing scores can be explained by those systemic variables after controlling for age. Following this, and to further investigate some of the findings, phase two aims to identify the similarities and differences in the perception of wellbeing across the "three voices" of managerial agencies, principals and deputy principals, and teachers. It also aims to investigate the supports that can be put in place to enhance teachers' wellbeing.

Phase one: Research questions

1. Are there differences in opinions in how teachers and school leaders view wellbeing in relation to policy, management caring about them, wellbeing being on meeting agenda, support strategies in place and wellbeing related CPD?

2. What is the impact of practices on teacher wellbeing and how much of the variance in wellbeing scores can be explained by systemic variables (i.e., policy, management caring about them, wellbeing being on meetings' agendas, support strategies in place, wellbeing related CPD), after controlling for age?

Phase two: Research questions

3. What are the similarities and differences in the perception of wellbeing across the three voices (managerial agencies, principals/deputy principals, teachers)?

4. What are the supports that can be put in place to enhance teacher's wellbeing?

1.7 Chapter summary

The literature makes evident a decrease in teachers' wellbeing due to a range of factors. While there is much research nationally and internationally on the consequences of poor student wellbeing, the same cannot be said for that of the teacher. As a practising teacher, assistant principal and a researcher, this is disappointing. We have a responsibility to teachers to identify ways that their wellbeing can be supported on the same level of that as students, measured, and evaluated effectively.

1.8 Conclusion

This introductory chapter has described the rationale and research aims of this study. Chapter 2, the literature review, explores the relevant literature on teacher wellbeing and how it is conceptualised and supported. First, it explores how teacher wellbeing is defined and the various approaches and models of wellbeing that exist. The chapter then discusses

wellbeing in the educational context and in the community, while also examining how policy can affect wellbeing. It examines the theoretical framework for this research, introduces dialectical pluralism and its relevance to this research, and finally examines students' and teachers' wellbeing and how they differ in supports and ownership. Chapter 3 describes the methodological approach to this study. The study comprises two studies, consisting of an online survey which subsequently informed Phase two, which used semi-structured interviews and a focus group. Chapter 4 reports on the findings of the study, and Chapter 5 discusses the findings in the light of recent and past research. This is followed by a conclusion of the study in Chapter 6.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Research indicates that teachers are struggling, and this is because of day-to-day stress of the required tasks of the role or institutional factors (Curry & O'Brien, 2012). Further research by the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) (2007), indicate that teachers are among the professions reporting the highest level of work-related stress. Their ability to cope with the increasing social and emotional demands directly impacts on their wellbeing (Parker et al., 2012). While there is considerable research that promotes the wellbeing of students, research on teacher wellbeing needs to be addressed as well (Roffey, 2012). Wellbeing is a concept at the core of many educational practices and policy agendas but is mentioned with an increasing emphasis on the student. While understanding and endeavouring to improve the health and overall wellbeing of individuals at work has been an important focus for psychologists for some time (Arnold, 2017), the wellbeing of teachers has emerged as particularly significant in more recent times. Teachers exhibit higher levels of stress than any other profession (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008) but the research surrounding teacher wellbeing is a relatively new field (Parker et al., 2012).

Policies and guidelines from the Department of Education (2021) suggest that the workload now entails a complex mix of various roles other than just teaching and nurturing. The added pressure and change that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought, created a new challenges and stress for teachers, as 7 out of 10 teachers are more stressed now than a year earlier (before the Covid-19 pandemic) when their wellbeing was measured (Dempsey & Burke, 2021b).

Teachers play a valuable role in helping children grow (Evers et al., 2004), but to do this, they must remain physically and mentally well. According to Smith & Bourke (1992), there is an apparent dissonance between the perceived capacities and the expectations of their role. This may have implications not only for their physical and mental wellbeing but also their professional competence as a teacher. However, if teachers are to teach "well", they must also be and feel "well". A sense of positive professional identity and wellbeing is vital (Day et al., 2006).

In an era where adapting to the changing nature of a teacher's work plays a big part in their job satisfaction, promoting teacher wellbeing is critical for school welfare and stability. It increases their professional longevity and productivity (McCallum & Price, 2010). Teacher wellbeing is crucial for school wellbeing and stability, as it improves schools' ability to address the demands of a varied student population (Roffey, 2012). While it is clear that there is growing need for teachers' wellbeing to be supported, the gap in the literature is glaring. Therefore this research aims to narrow this gap, with a focus on the teacher. Teacher wellbeing in Ireland has never been more important.

In Chapter one, the rationale for examining how teacher wellbeing is conceptualised and supported in post-primary school in Ireland by the 'three voices', i.e. managerial agencies, principals/deputy principals and teachers was presented. Chapter Two will explore the literature that informed the theoretical framework for this study; dialectical pluralism, as outlined by Johnson (2017), is inspired by, and integrates multiple theories and recommends purposeful construction of teams (the 'three voices') that include different values and perspectives of stakeholders. The chapter is further informed by the pertinent literature relating to teacher wellbeing. It begins with an exploration of how wellbeing is

defined, followed by discussion of the different perspectives and models of wellbeing. Models of wellbeing to measure teacher wellbeing are discussed, with special attention to Keyes (2002) Mental Health Continuum (MHC), which is employed in this study. Subsequently, wellbeing in Irish schools and its focus on the teacher, and how it is related to policy and ownership of this concept are examined. Finally, supporting wellbeing is examined with discussion on wellbeing at community level with concluding comments.

2.2 What is wellbeing?

Evident in the literature is the lack of consensus as to what wellbeing is and how it should be defined (Burke, 2020). There are many different definitions and approaches to wellbeing. For some, it is defined as the absence of anxiety, discomfort, and other psychiatric diseases (Espinoza, 2015; Goldberg & Blackwell, 1970). Others take a developmental approach, understanding it as a state of wellbeing as well as a process of becoming well in numerous facets of life, including social context, philosophical meaning-making, and individual satisfaction (O'Brien & O'Shea, 2017). However, defining wellbeing remains largely unresolved which in turn has resulted in blurred and very broad definitions of wellbeing (Forgeard et al., 2011).

Wellbeing is not a new concept, but it has become more important in recent times in the educational context as evident by its inclusion on the agendas of international organisations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). In particular, the term "wellbeing" is now more widely evident in Irish educational circulars. These written statements that provide information and guidelines on laws and procedures relating to education, issued by the Department of Education, often create difficulty as teachers and management struggle to grasp the concept of wellbeing (Fitzgerald et al.,

2020). As there is no consensus on what constitutes wellbeing in the educational environment, implementing a wellbeing strategy and framework is inherently problematic. It is also incompatible with the Department's circulars, resulting in differing interpretations that have an impact on implementation (Camfield et al., 2009). Therefore, it is vital that the main educational stakeholders collaborate to agree what wellbeing means in the educational environment, thus allowing for further development of an effective wellbeing strategy for teachers in schools. This research aims to support this concept of collaboration amongst these stakeholders by facilitating discussion on how wellbeing is currently conceptualised and supported at post-primary level in Ireland.

2.3 Defining Wellbeing in Education

With wellbeing as a term commonly used in education, Fraillon (2014) emphasised that there remains a lack of specificity around notions of wellbeing with a lack consensus on what it actually is. There has been an increase in discussions of wellbeing the World Health Organisation (1946) defined health as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (p. 1). However, there is little consensus of what it means, with differences within and across fields, scholars, practitioners, laypeople, and more, or even whether it should be "well-being" or "wellbeing" (Kern et al., 2020).

Various attempts have been made to define and clarify terms (e.g., Bricheno, Brown, & Lubansky, 2009; Day & Qing, 2009; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Gillett-Swan & Sargeant, 2015; Ragnarsdottir & Asgeir Johannesson, 2014). McCallum et al's (2017) analysis of the literature revealed that few definitions of wellbeing are specific to teachers, school leaders, or employees. Dodge, Daly, Huyton, and Sanders (2012) conceptualised wellbeing as a scale in which there is balance "between an individual's resource pool and the challenges faced", such that wellbeing occurs when: individuals have the

psychological, social and physical resources they need to meet a particular psychological, social and/or physical challenge. When individuals have more challenges than resources, the see-saw dips, along with their wellbeing, and vice versa. (p. 230) Acton and Glasgow (2015) defined teacher wellbeing as "an individual sense of personal professional fulfilment, satisfaction, purposefulness and happiness, constructed in a collaborative process with colleagues and students" (p. 101), while McCallum and Price (2016), defined wellbeing as a 'diverse and fluid respecting individual, family and community beliefs, values, experiences, culture, opportunities and contexts across time and change. It is something we all aim for, underpinned by positive notions, yet is unique to each of us and provides us with a sense of who we are which needs to be respected' (p. 17).

The Wellbeing guidelines for Junior Cycle (2017) defines student wellbeing being present when 'students realise their abilities, take care of their physical wellbeing, can cope with the normal stresses of life, and have a sense of purpose and belonging to a wider community' (p.17). The Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (2018–2025) also defined wellbeing as being comprised of many interrelated aspects including being active, responsible, connected, resilient, appreciated, respected and aware (DES & NCCA, 2017).

In summary, there is no single agreed-upon definition of wellbeing for teachers. Numerous factors impact upon understandings of and experiences of wellbeing. However, despite these inconsistencies and lack of coherence, it is clear that teacher wellbeing is vitally important in the school environment.

2.4 Different approaches and models of wellbeing

There are various models of wellbeing (e.g., McCallum & Price, 2016; Seligman, 2011a) with two conceptual approaches dominating this field. The predominant

framework for understanding wellbeing from a philosophical and psychological perspective is viewing it as hedonic or eudaemonic wellbeing (Disabato et al., 2016). From a philosophical perspective, wellbeing is viewed as hedonic and eudaemonic with hedonic wellbeing encompassing happiness and living a life full of pleasure (Burke, 2017). In contrast to this, eudaemonic wellbeing incorporates life of purpose, mortality and meaning, and a deeper level of wellbeing. Psychological wellbeing is concerned with attitudes and behaviours (Burke, 2018), which subsequently created two main models in wellbeing: 1. Subjective wellbeing which focuses on overall life evaluations comprising of two main components, affect and life satisfaction (Diener, 1999). As people and perceptions are at the core of subjective wellbeing, this approach, in the educational context can be used in describing and facilitating staff and students' social and emotional wellbeing (Watson et al., 2012). 2. Psychological wellbeing is a deeper level of wellbeing (eudemonic wellbeing) (Ryff, 1998). Understanding the difference between both philosophy and psychology shows that philosophers developed two overarching concepts in contrast to how psychologists disassembled them to create components in which they attempted to measure wellbeing (Burke, 2020). This is what we now have in the school context as the wellbeing models.

When examining both the subjective wellbeing (SWB) and psychological wellbeing (PWB) models it is evident that SWB is in line with the paradigm of hedonic wellbeing and consists of three components: (1) higher levels of positive emotions, (2) lower level of negative emotions, and (3) life satisfaction (Diener, 1984). This model emerged from exploratory research that aimed to identify what makes people happy (Diener et al., 1999) as "happiness is not reducible to physical hedonism, for it can be derived from attainment of goals or valued outcomes in varied realms" (Ryan & Deci, 2001b, p. 141). However, the psychological wellbeing (PWB) model follows the eudaemonic paradigm and consists

of six components: (1) positive relations with others, (2) environmental mastery, (3) autonomy, (4) a feeling of life purpose, (5) self-acceptance and (6) personal growth (Ryff, 1998)). This model has a strong theoretical basis, generated by drawing from almost a century of psychological literature on wellbeing, such as the theories created by Abraham Maslow, Carl Jung or Carl Rogers (Ryff, 1989). The Eudemonic perspective of wellbeing is based on Aristotle's view that true happiness comes from doing what is worth doing (Burke 2020). It focuses on meaning and self-realisation and defines wellbeing largely in terms of ways of thought and behaviours that provide fulfilment" Gale et al. (2013, p. 687). As these two philosophical models combined, they became known as the models of flourishing and represent the highest level of wellbeing that includes both hedonic and eudaemonic perspectives (Burke, 2020). What is evident in both models is the concept that the creators of both these models included what they deemed vital for the model in question. However, all the current models of wellbeing consist of research-based components. The components selected for each model are based on researchers' opinion as to what may potentially constitute wellbeing, rather than some universal truth (Burke, 2020). Therefore it is important to consider that they come with limitations in particular for the school context. Further research is needed to examine the components suitable for the school context.

2.5 Positive psychology

According to Gable & Haidt (2005), positive psychology is a scientific study of optimal human functioning and its conditions. It suggests that wellbeing is distinct from ill-being (Huppert and Whittington 2003), implying that people who have high levels of wellbeing have developed high levels of wellbeing symptoms, which vary depending on the wellbeing theory (Diener, 2009a, 2009b; Huppert & So, 2013; Keyes, 2002; Seligman, 2011b). Individuals can perceive both facets at the same time (Huppert & Whittington,

2003), therefore one does not negate the other. At the same time, it has been suggested that feeling higher levels of wellbeing while coping with the symptoms of ill-health aids individuals in building resilience and so allows them to 'bounce back' faster from adversity (Fredrickson, 2001; Joseph & McGregor, 2019).

Often known as the study of happiness, positive psychology is concerned with what makes people and communities thrive (White & Waters, 2015). Rather than looking at what *isn't* working, it focuses on what *is* by asking, "What does teacher wellbeing look and sound like?" This allows teachers to discuss proactive and positive tactics that they may use daily to encourage and enable their students' wellbeing. Positive psychology may be traced back to Abraham Maslow's 1954 book, Motivation and Personality (Maslow, 1970). This vision involved reorienting psychology toward the qualities that make life worthwhile, such as courage, kindness, creativity, joy, and thankfulness (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 2011). Traditional psychology had become largely weakness-oriented, according to the creators of positive psychology, an approach that had succeeded in easing many forms of human suffering but had failed to capture the entire human image (Lopez & Pedrotti, 2011; Snyder et al., 2011). As a result, this research study aims to develop the concept of utilising positive psychology in the school environment particularly on behalf of the teacher, as it is concerned with making people - in this case teachers and the school community - thrive. This then could increase the growth of wellbeing supports and strategies for teachers in schools.

Positive psychology not only focuses on positive thinking and positive emotions; it focuses specifically on what makes individuals and communities flourish rather than languish (Heffernon & Boniwell, 2011). When both school communities and individuals (teachers) flourish, they are enabled to develop, prosper, and perform well. This

discipline necessitates a paradigm change in that it aims to research and highlight optimal functioning, as well as the methodical, scientific assessment of positive human functioning and wellbeing. (Tuckwiller & Dardick, 2015). Positive psychology has historically challenged other methodologies and linked its findings to a variety of disciplines, including education (Heffernon & Boniwell, 2011). The use of positive psychology in the classroom has gained traction, particularly when using a scientific method. However, as this is a relatively new field, there may be certain concerns because of a lack of comprehensive study. While the scope of the research is clear and significant (Rusk & Waters, 2013), there is a conflict between the depth of the research and application in the school context. However, while some encouraging findings have emerged, additional research is needed to replicate them over a wide range of demographics and educational contexts: who do interventions work for and under what conditions (Hone et al., 2015).

2.6 Positive psychology in education

The application of positive psychology to education has gained recognition from many, including researchers, policy makers and practitioners, including a growing number of schools who have adopted a scientific approach to wellbeing (McCallum & Price, 2010, 2012, 2015, 2017; Rusk & Waters, 2013, 2015; Seligman, 2011a; Seligman et al., 2009; Slemp et al., 2017; Waters, 2011; White & Murray, 2015; White et al., 2017). However, there has been some criticism of this growth (e.g., Ciarrochi et al., 2016; Kristjánsson, 2012; Suissa, 2008; White, 2016); while schools are suffering from 'initiative overload', this concept can perhaps be seen as another programme for leaders and management to implement. Furthermore, McDonald and O'Callaghan (2008) have been critical of positive psychology as they applied Foucault's concepts of power/knowledge, discipline, and governmentality. They describe how positive psychology can devalue, and discredit

humanistic psychology as prescriptive and constraining ideology. Such a position allows for a meta-perspective and reflexivity that could allow for a more flexible approach to addressing crucial concerns such as human pleasure and wellbeing, as well as a more fruitful, rather than hostile, discussion with humanistic psychology.

Seligman et al. (2009) defined positive education as "education for both traditional skills and happiness" (p. 293), with a focus on adopting scientific methodologies (Ambler et al., 2017; Kristjánsson, 2013; White et al., 2017). However, if scientific methods of positive education are to be successfully integrated into the school environment, total data integration with decision-making and professional practice is required (Hattie, 2016). The Geelong Grammar School project (GGS), for example, reports evidence of study into positive psychology interventions in schools. This Australian study aims to enhance flourishing at both the individual and institutional levels of the school system (Norrish et al., 2013). Similarly, the CARE programme in Pennsylvania, United States, examined the impact of a year-long mindfulness intervention for teachers to improve their overall wellbeing (Jennings et al., 2013; Jennings et al., 2017). However, little empirical study has asked teachers to define or measure what factors contribute to their overall job happiness. As a result, when addressing positive psychology in educational settings such as schools, a scientific approach is required, as suggested by this research.

2.7 Wellbeing in policy

Policy can be referred to a plan of what to do that has been agreed to officially, by either a group of people, an organisation, or a government, to achieve a set of goals (Birkland, 2016) and is established to standardise processes. Policy making has expanded into a global "epidemic" over the past two decades (Levin, 1998). In the UK, particularly in England, the function of the individual school and that of the local education authority,

has been heavily influenced by, and subjected to, these national policy imperatives (Fullan, 2003). As a result, the government has become more directive in terms of schools' and teachers' roles and responsibilities (Day & Sachs, 2004; Maguire & Dillon, 2007). A multitude of policy statements, documents, and regulations (Ball, 2008) define what is expected of schools and their role in national economic competitiveness and cultural cohesion; or as Moss (2007) describes, a series of "quick policies" that aim to improve standards and reform schools. As a result, schools and teachers must be familiar with, and capable of, executing a wide range of rules and guidelines devised by others, while also being held accountable for doing so. However, individual policies and policy makers rarely consider the complexities of policy enactment environments or the need for schools to respond to several policy demands and expectations at the same time (Ball, 1997). Most policy research is focused on specific policies (e.g., Venkat & Brown 2009). Wallace and Bau (1991) published an exploratory study that linked policy texts, institutional interpretations and classroom practices at the school level.

By considering policy as an attempt to solve a problem or issue while expecting it to show itself in the form of legislative policy texts or other nationally driven activities that are then implemented, the meaning of policy is frequently taken for granted. In this perspective, policy is seen as a "closed preserve of the formal government apparatus of policymaking" (Ozga, 2000, p. 42). Policy, on the other hand, is a process that is frequently questioned or interpreted within organisations and classrooms (see also Ball 1994, 1997, 2008). Lingard and Ozga (2007) define education policy as "all texts, other than curricula, that seek to form, establish, and influence educational practices" (p. 2). While considering national policy and teachers wellbeing, what is evident once again is the gap in terms of legislation particularly for teachers, which is what this research aims to address.

2.7.1 Existing policy in Ireland

Currently, the Department of Education is focusing on active student wellbeing promotion in primary and post-primary schools. The DES's commitment to development in this area has been highlighted by publications such as Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures (DCYA, 2014) and the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines (NCCA, 2017a). These publications aim to emphasise the importance of student wellbeing in terms of their physical, social, and emotional health, as well as their learning and development. However, when focusing on the promotion of student wellbeing, teacher wellbeing must also be considered, from an ecological systems approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) where understanding student wellbeing in school contexts necessitates a consideration of the teacher. The publication of the Cosán Framework for Teachers' Learning (The Teaching Council, 2016) and the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023 (DES, 2018b), has highlighted the importance of promoting teacher self-care and wellbeing along with students, are recent developments relating to teacher wellbeing. In particular, the Cosán Framework (The Teaching Council, 2016) for teachers' learning includes wellbeing among its key pillars. The document acknowledges the many dimensions and perspectives, highlighting the very subjective nature of wellbeing. The guidelines for mental health promotion and Wellbeing in Primary Schools; Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention (DES, HSE, & DOH, 2015b) and Wellbeing in Post-primary Schools (DES, HSE, & DOH, 2013) were in place prior to the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023, and they emphasised the importance of teacher self-care and the need for effective supports for teacher wellbeing.

Other documents on wellbeing in the school include Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (NCCA 2009); Síolta: the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education (CECDE, 2006; DES, 2017); Wellbeing in Post-Primary Schools (DES 2013); Wellbeing in Primary Schools (DES 2015); Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines (NCCA 2017); Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (DES 2018). However, most of these documents fail to acknowledge or just briefly refer to teacher wellbeing. However, the Droichead induction framework for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) (The Teaching Council, 2017) does acknowledge the specific needs of NQTs, and the importance of supporting and mentoring from colleagues and the professional learning community (PLC).

There is greater recognition of the importance of the integration and collaboration of different departments and organisations in the promotion of wellbeing and policy development. In 2009, Finland merged the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health to form the National Institute for Health and Welfare (National Institute for Health and Welfare, 2009). They also created an initiative to expand the focus of health policy beyond health care policy. The Finnish initiatives focuses on the health impact of policies formulated in sectors other than health, which is known as "health in all policies". This shows how national bodies and educational bodies can collaborate and create initiatives to promote wellbeing, something which could be achieved by the 'three voices' in an Irish context.

The Department of Education in Ireland acknowledges that the promotion of wellbeing for all is central to its mission to enable individuals to achieve their full potential and contribute to Ireland's development (DES, 2018). The DES states that the fore grounding of wellbeing is a key component of educational policy and discourse. There are policies

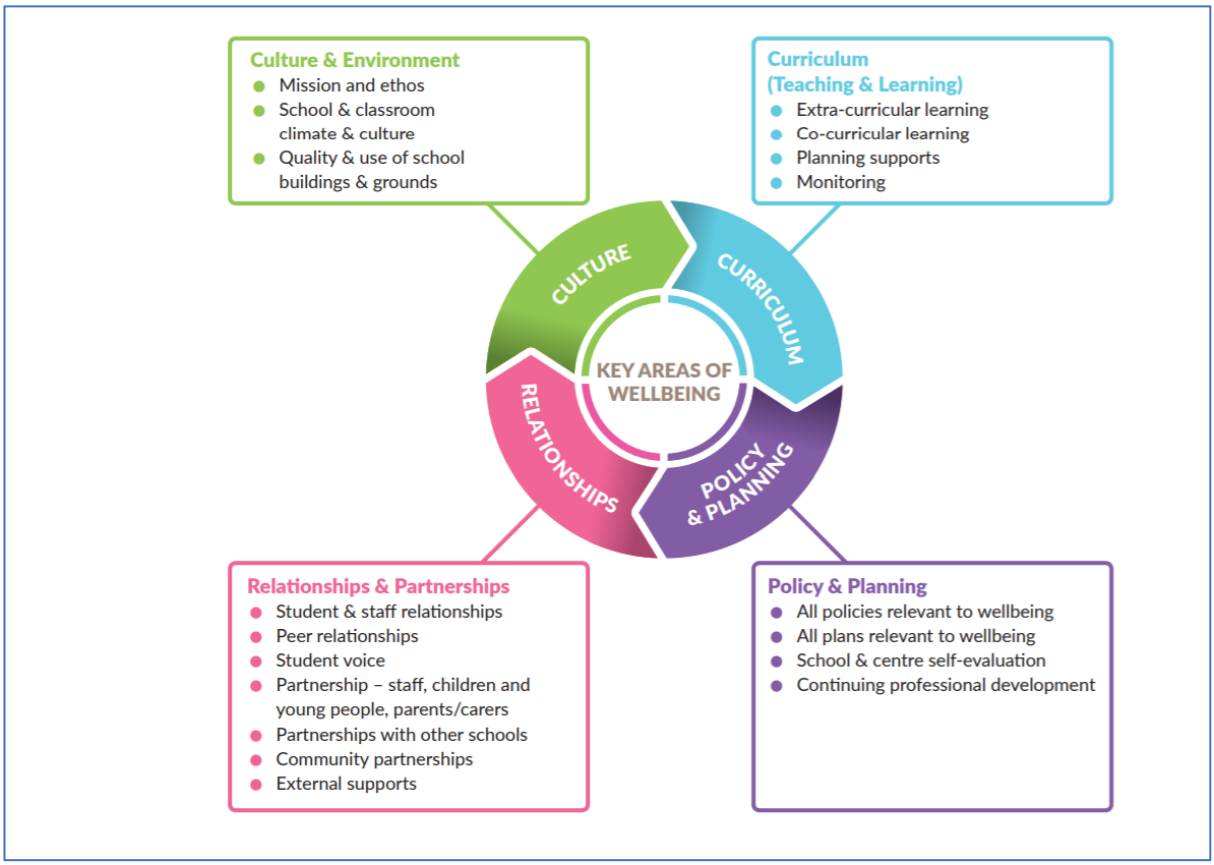
outlined in the various circulars issued by the Department of Education (2018), which include teacher absences, sick leave scheme for registered teachers, assaults on teachers/school employees. However, with increasing focus on wellbeing across the educational spectrum, including the recent changes to the Junior Cycle programme (DES, 2018), an emphasis on teachers' wellbeing is not included in the framework. This *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023* was launched by the then Minister of Education & Skills, Mr. Richard Bruton, T.D. on 20 July 2018. In his statement, Minister Bruton explained how this policy will "inject momentum into supporting schools to nurture resilience in our students". The policy emphasises the importance of the wellbeing needs and the best interests of the students, with limited reference to the policy of teachers' wellbeing. The Department states in the framework (p. 5) that their vision and ambition in relation to wellbeing promotion is to ensure that by 2023 it includes:

1. The promotion of wellbeing will be at the core of the ethos of every school and center for education.
2. All schools and centers for education will provide evidence-informed approaches and support, appropriate to need, to promote the wellbeing of all their children and young people.
3. Ireland will be recognised as a leader in this area.

The key areas of wellbeing as outlined in the framework are outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Whole-School Approach: Four Key Areas of Wellbeing Promotion



From *Wellbeing Policy Statement And Framework for Practice 2018-23* by Department of Education and Skills, 2018.

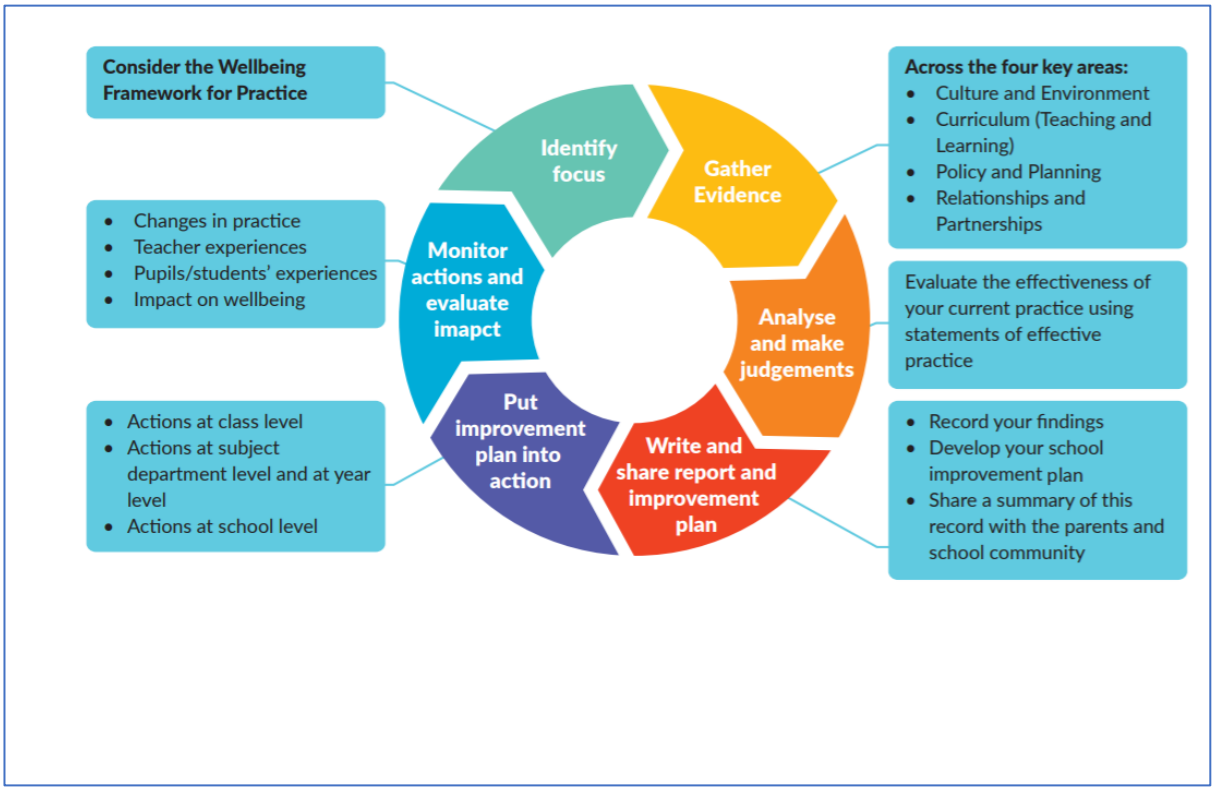
However, evident again is the lack of emphasis on the teachers' wellbeing in the Department's vision. The Department of Education have also requested that for the successful implementation of this policy, all schools and centres for education will be required by 2025 to use the School Self-Evaluation (SSE) process to initiate a wellbeing promotion review and development cycle, with schools and centres supported in this process through online wellbeing resources, the framework and the Department of Education Support Services. While there is some support evident in the school environment on SSE, there is limited specific support available for teachers' wellbeing and its assessment. While the policy developed is guided by five key principles including 1. Child/Young person-centered: where the wellbeing needs of this group are a central

focus of the policy 2. Equitable, fair, and inclusive: where opportunities to develop wellbeing are fair and inclusive to all children and young people 3. Evidence-informed: where the use of evidence informed practice brings together the best available evidence from research 4. Outcomes focused: where continuous improvement practice is promoted 5. Partnership/Collaboration: where the importance of collaboration with key agencies and departments is vital to ensure the successful implementation of the policy. However, there is little evidence of how this collaboration including teachers took place. The Wellbeing Steering Committee developed by the Department of Education has responsibility for the oversight of the implementation, coordination and review of the policy.

The steering committee is comprised of representatives from The Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAP), Teacher Education Sector (TES), The Inspectorate and The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). A Wellbeing Implementation Working Group will lead this work and will focus on the high-level actions and sub-actions set out in the policy which are designed to address the opportunities and challenges identified in the policy. While the Department has stated that each school and centre for education is required to implement this policy by 2025, using the six-step School Self-Evaluation process (SSE) (Figure 2) within the Wellbeing in Education Framework for Practice, there is a lack evidence in terms of responsibility of monitoring this process.

Figure 2

Using the SSE Process with the Wellbeing Framework for Practice



From *School Self Evaluation Guidelines 2016–2020 Post-Primary* by Department of Education and Skills. 2016. The Inspectorate, Department of Education and Skills.

The area of ownership and responsibility of teacher wellbeing is somewhat a grey area with little evidence of a commitment from government bodies or directives issued as to where the responsibility lies. This creates difficulty in terms of responsibility and to where in lies, in turn affecting its implementation and effectiveness. Article 8.1 of the 2005 Safety, Health, and Welfare Act states that employees have a legal duty to their staff to "ensure so far as it is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of his or her employees". This means that the employer must exercise all due care in the discharge of their duties by identifying foreseeable hazards, assessing the associated risks and putting in place the necessary protective measures. However, defining the employer

in a school setting can also be difficult as it ranges from Boards of management to ETB's to private institutions. Reasonable practice can be understood to mean that which a reasonable person would do given the set of circumstances (Article 2.6, Safety, Health and Welfare Act, 2005). While the HSE (2013) states that organisations have an ethical, legal and economic responsibility for addressing work-related stress, school leaders therefore have a duty of care to staff to monitor factors that pose as a potential threat to their wellbeing. Employers have an obligation to ensure that there is in place a system of work that will protect employees from hazards that could potentially lead to mental or physical ill health. A statement of intent to do so is not sufficient to fulfil school managements' statutory obligation. According to the HSE (2013), it is expected of an employer to implement a process of continuous risk assessment and to implement control measures to eliminate or reduce workplace hazards, however monitoring and evaluating this is unclear.

While the wellbeing of the student is undoubtedly important, and in the current climate needs to be addressed and supported, the same can be said for that of the teacher, who seem to have been left behind. There is currently no specific policy about teacher wellbeing on a national level. Given that wellbeing can be difficult to define and complex to measure closer attention needs to be paid to whether and how the current wellbeing policy environment provides conceptual clarity and intelligible implementation pathways (Powell & Graham, 2017). In their research, Powell & Graham (2017), suggest that approaches to supporting wellbeing are constrained by an ad hoc policy environment and a consequential lack of clarity regarding how wellbeing is understood and best facilitated within the context of schools. Considering a collaborative approach between key stakeholders to a teacher wellbeing policy or framework would help develop an inclusive wellbeing policy suitable for an educational context. This policy could

impact on activities and supports in the school environment and subsequently teachers' personal wellbeing which is why in the study policy was assessed.

While it is evident there has been much consideration given to wellbeing in schools from a policy perspective, it is also evident that this emphasis is on the student, with a brief acknowledgement of the teacher. This research aims to address this policy issue, while identifying the gap in national polices and other guidance documents relating to teachers wellbeing specifically.

2.8 Social capital

Social capital is an important factor when considering teachers' wellbeing and has been defined as "networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation within or among groups" (OECD, 2001, p. 41). It allows goals to be achieved that otherwise would be unattainable, and as Coleman (1994) describes, individuals are more likely to share information and be caring towards each other in communities where there are high levels of social trust. Teachers are involved in interpersonal contacts every day and depending on the quality of these contacts, they can either contribute to a "toxic work environment" or improve and sustain the teachers' sense of wellbeing (Holmes, 2005, cited in Roffey, 2012, p. 10). Teachers will attain a level of social capital that promotes their wellbeing and allows them to achieve their goals when they feel they have quality connections within the school environment while also feeling favourably engaged to those around them (Roffey, 2012). There is research that supports the notion that social capital impacts significantly not only on student wellbeing, but also on the wellbeing of teachers (Plagens, 2011). Therefore social capital is important in the context of this research, strengthening the argument for the inclusion of teachers when considering wellbeing along with the student.

2.8.1 Social capital and wellbeing

There is much research between the relationship of social capital and wellbeing. Yip et al. (2007) examined the relationship between social capital, general and psychological health, and subjective wellbeing. Structured social capital was measured using organisational membership, while cognitive social capital was measured using trust, reciprocity, and mutual aid. Trust was found to be favourably linked with all outcome measures. Engström et al. (2008), examined the relationship between social capital and subjective health discovering when geographic regions in Sweden were examined, it was discovered that locations with lower contextual social capital had poorer health after controlling for background variables including age, gender, and socioeconomic position. Social capital has also shown to have a favourable impact on health by boosting self-esteem, providing social support, increasing access to resources, and potentially reducing stress (Ziersch et al., 2005), however longitudinal research on the relationship between social capital and wellbeing is required while considering the diverse characteristics of social capital. Research by Veronese et al. (2018), examined Palestinian teachers in conflict-affected areas and discovered positive connections between social capital and personal wellbeing. Similarly in the United states, research by Edinger & Edinger (2018) discovered that teachers' social capital, as measured by their centrality in their school's trust network and the density of their academic advice ego-network, was found to have a significant positive association with their wellbeing.

Research studies like the ones mentioned above have shown that social capital is important for wellbeing, and that this link should be further researched in relation to teachers' wellbeing, especially as this is a relatively new area of educational research. Therefore this research aims to support the concept that if teachers can rely on management including principals and deputy principals (internal social capital) and a

larger community of stakeholders including managerial agencies and governing bodies (external social capital), they might be better able to deal with the increasing demands of teaching affecting their wellbeing.

2.9 Models of wellbeing

While there is a lack of consensus in the literature as to defining wellbeing is, the same is true for that of wellbeing models in schools (Burke, 2020). The difficulty for schools is to clearly define what wellbeing is, so to be able to develop a model of that concept before implementing that model into a wellbeing programme in schools (Burke, 2020). This is currently lacking in the Irish educational context at both primary and post-primary level. While the components of the wellbeing models derive from various research findings in psychology and other fields over the years, the individual components of each model are generally evidence-based (Burke, 2020). However, the way evidence is used to design a model differs. All other models have their own justifications; some are founded on solid science, while others may be more practical or appropriate to a certain setting, such as schools (Table 1). In subjective wellbeing theory (SWB: Diener 2000), wellbeing is a mixture of lower negative affect, higher positive affect, and high life satisfaction. Contrary to this, in Psychological Wellbeing Theory (PWB: Ryff and Keyes, 1995) positive affect isn't thought to be necessary for happiness; rather, it is how effectively people acquire self-acceptance, purpose in life, autonomy, positive relationships, and environmental mastery. Recent theories of wellbeing offer a more complex, multi-dimensional view of wellbeing referred to as flourishing (see Burke & Minton, 2016, for reviews) which incorporates both the components of psychological and subjective wellbeing, along with other elements.

Table 1

Models of Wellbeing

Model	Components
Subjective Wellbeing (Diener, 1984)	Reduction of negative emotions Increase of positive emotions Life satisfaction
Psychological Wellbeing (Ryff, 1989)	Autonomy Environmental mastery Personal growth Positive relations with others Purpose in life Self-acceptance
Authentic Happiness (Seligman, 2002)*	Life of pleasure Life of engagement Life of meaning
PERMA (Seligman, 2011)	Positive emotions Engagement Relationships Meaning Accomplishment
Mental Health Continuum (Keyes, 2002)	Emotional wellbeing -Positive affect -Life satisfaction Social wellbeing -Social contribution -Social integration -Social actualisation -Social acceptance -Social coherence PWB -Self acceptance -Environmental mastery -Positive relations with others -Autonomy -Purpose in life

Public health (Huppert and So, 2013)	Positive appraisal -Positive emotion -Life satisfaction Positive characteristics -Emotional stability -Vitality -Optimism -Reliance -Self-esteem Positive Functioning -Engagement -Competence -Meaning
Flourishing **m**odel (Diener, 2010)	Competence Self-acceptance Meaning Relatedness Optimism Giving Engagement

Reprinted from *The Ultimate Guide to Implementing Wellbeing Programmes for Schools* by J. Burke. 2020. Taylor & Francis.

There are four main theories of flourishing (Hone et al., 2014): the Flourishing Scale (Diener et al. 2009); Seligman's PERMA (2011) model; Huppert and So's Flourishing (2013) and the Mental Health Continuum (MHC: Keyes 2002) which this research study employs. While PERMA is the most frequently utilised in schools (Seligman et al., 2009), no study has compared teacher wellbeing, as measured by the Mental Health Continuum (MHC: Keyes, 2002) in post-primary schools in Ireland.

When considering positive psychology and positive education in this context, it can be defined as ' … the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing and optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions' (Gable and Haidt 2005, p. 104). Positive education incorporates some of the models of wellbeing and flourishing into the school curriculum, strengthening the argument for it to be used in an educational context. There is evidence of positive psychology interventions (PPIs) used in schools which showed significant decreases in ill-being including depression and anxiety, and

increases of wellbeing (see Brunwasser et al., 2009; Kelm et al., 2014; Miller et al., 2014; Seligman et al., 2009; Shoshani & Steinmetz, 2014). Other such studies using positive psychology as a whole-school approach (Boniwell & Ryan, 2009; Brunwasser et al., 2009; Noble & McGrath, 2012; Pluess & Boniwell, 2015; Seligman, 2011b, Seligman et al., 2009; White & Murray, 2015; White & Waters, 2015; Williams, 2011) showed similar results. While it is evident that there has been a growth in the number of interventions and programmes to enhance student wellbeing, it is not evident in the supports for teachers. Furthermore, this research aims to identify the supports and strategies currently in place to support teachers wellbeing. This could be linked successfully with positive psychology interventions adapted for teachers in the school setting.

2.10 Assessing and measuring wellbeing

There are numerous approaches and indexes to measure wellbeing (see, for example, Grenville-Cleave & Boniwell, 2012; Van Horn et al., 2004). However, the measurement of teacher wellbeing can be a complex issue partially due to the lack of an agreed definition. While there is much research on the complexities of measuring wellbeing including Drabsch (2012), Forgeard et al. (2011), OECD (2015), Schimmack (2009), King et al. (2014), Tomyn et al. (2013), and Veenhoven (2004), a more holistic approach to this can be found in Price and McCallum's (2015a) article where Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model was applied. Here the five systems of the ecological model were used to explore factors that impact on teachers' wellbeing. Bronfenbrenner's nested structure ecological model provides a lens to identify teacher perceptions of key themes of the environmental interconnectedness with teachers' wellbeing (Price & McCallum, 2015b).

There are many evidence based models to assess and measure wellbeing including Seligman's PERMA model (2011a) which outlines the building blocks of happiness and flourishing, the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (2006) measures mental wellbeing, while Huppert & So's (2013) European Social Study measured and compared the various elements of what it is that makes a healthy nation. Further outlined by Helliwell (2015) is the support of global institutions such the OECD, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations (UN) for developing wellbeing indicators as a means to measure and guide policy. The NCCA (2017) outline in Section 3.2 of the Wellbeing Guidelines that wellbeing in schools "starts with the staff" (2017, p.29) while also emphasising that this is both an individual and community endeavour and will require professional development. The Wellbeing Framework for Practice (DES, 2019) outlines the indicators of success which inform the School-Self Evaluation (SSE) of Wellbeing promotion. This is to take place in all post-primary schools in Ireland by 2023. While the framework outlines the elements of wellbeing relative to teachers and its link with the SSE model, there is no evidence of how teacher wellbeing can be assessed or measured. This is further strengthened by the lack of literature.

2.10.1 Mental health continuum

Stemming from Maslow's theory on motivation to Csikzentmihalyi's theory on flow (Ataramians, 2010; Csikzentmihalyi, 2013), there has been a surge in the interest of positive psychology–related concepts. Research on a person's wellbeing and their mental health have also increased in recent years with Keyes describing the presence of health as "flourishing" and the absence of health as "languishing" (Keyes, 2008. p. 603). Achieving high levels of positive emotion and functioning well psychologically and socially are considered flourishing, thus languishing is considered

"emptiness and stagnation" (Keyes, 2008, p. 607). Keyes acknowledged that those who were languishing were not mentally ill but showed few signs of positive mental health (Ataramian et al., 2010; Keyes, 2008). Grounded in empirical research, Keyes' conceptual framework provides a different way to think about mental health and wellbeing. Given the spectrum of mental health and illness, wellbeing strategies for schools needs to address all groups of students, not only those who are not doing well (Burke, 2020), strengthening the argument that is necessary to design a school's wellbeing strategy that represents the whole-school community's wellbeing and incorporates various components (Burke, 2020). The current research applied the Mental Health Continuum model for assessing wellbeing, as it is the amalgamation of subjective and psychological wellbeing as well as additional social wellbeing (Keyes, 2009). There is evidence of using this model in an educational context in research by Capone and Petrillo (2020), who measured and examined the association between mental health and teacher burnout, depression and job satisfaction based on the classification proposed in the MHC model by Keyes (2002). However, to date, there is no research that measured the impact of leadership actions on teacher's wellbeing.

2.11 Focusing on teacher wellbeing

There has been much research that support the view that teaching is a demanding occupation (Bachkirova, 2005; Bricheno et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2005; Kinman et al., 2011; Kyriacou, 2001; Rose, 2003; Seymour & Grove, 2005; Smith et al., 2000; Travers & Cooper, 1993). While Brincheno et al. (2009) acknowledged that there was no consistent research to suggest teacher's wellbeing was lower than that of other professionals, Grenville-Cleave and Boniwell (2012) indicated that teachers have significantly lower perceived wellbeing compared to other non-teaching professionals such as doctors and solicitors. Wellbeing is fundamental to a teachers' ability to be

effective in meeting students' needs (Day et al., 2006) with schools needing as many talented teachers and school leaders as we can get if a schools' performance is to increase sufficiently (Busteed & Lopez, 2013). This may be difficult as teachers continue to leave the profession at increasing rates, compared to other professions (Pillay & Goddard, 2005).

The importance of wellbeing for the teaching profession is made evident by Coleman (2009) who argues that it is not possible to address the emotional wellbeing of students in the school environment without acknowledging and recognising that of teachers emotional wellbeing. Some research has argued that the most effective way to promote student wellbeing is by enhancing that of the teacher while providing high quality supports and training (Webb et al., 2009). This argument is further strengthened by McCallum and Price (2010), who purport a similar argument by suggesting that teachers need a wellbeing strategy in place to assure their own wellbeing for their effectiveness in the classroom.

While teachers rate their wellbeing significantly lower than that of other professions such as doctors and lawyers (Grenville-Cleave & Boniwell, 2012), it is evident from the research and empirically supported the importance of teacher wellbeing and its link to student achievement (Roffey, 2012; Salter-Jones, 2012; Sisask et al., 2014; Tyson et al., 2009.) Research by Briner and Dewberry (2007) found that 8% of the variation of SAT (Standard Assessment Test) scores in the United Kingdom were accounted for by teacher wellbeing, clearly suggesting that wellbeing is the bridge that supports learning (O'Ruairc, 2015). Further strengthening this argument Bricheno et al. (2009) identified three studies (Caprara et al., 2006; Ostroff, 1992; Pricewaterhouse Coopers, 2007) which examined potential relationships between school effectiveness, achievement and

wellbeing. However, it is important to acknowledge that "because of limitations in the methodology they are not able to assign causality" (p. 55). It was also noted by Bajorek, et al. (2014), that this area requires further research. Similarly, Hawkins (2017) outlined research findings from the Nuffield Health UK Student survey, which noted students responses when asked what impacts on their sense of wellbeing in school, revealing 'how stressed my teacher is today', to be the most common answer. There is evidence from research that further strengthens the importance of this relationship, with Virtanen et al. (2019) suggesting that improving teacher wellbeing has the potential to improve rapport with students and vice versa. Teachers' wellbeing is vital to be effective whilst leading learning and supporting students with this learning (The Teaching Council, 2016).

Some researchers consider career wellbeing as the most influential component of overall wellbeing (Rath & Harter, 2010), meaning that individuals who report high levels of career wellbeing are more than twice as likely to experience overall psychological wellbeing (Burke, 2020). This concept is consistent with longitudinal research which suggests that our life-span development is dwarfed when we don't take the time to advance our career-related skills (Vaillant, 2003). Considering we spend a significant part of our day in school, these findings are not surprising. Not feeling content or happy in our schoolwork place will make it more challenging for us to feel fulfilled in life (Burke, 2020), possibly affecting those in our environment.

Not only is teacher wellbeing important for student achievement, there are also concerns about teacher retention due to poor wellbeing, with the issue of teacher retention becoming a global concern. The literature identifies various reasons for poor teacher retention with a link to teacher wellbeing evident in research by Pillay et al. (2005), who acknowledged that teachers who do not have a sense of wellbeing in their work feel they

lack competence, which may result in not only high attrition rates but contributing to high stress levels. Supporting this view, Day & Qing's (2009) paper acknowledged that "many teachers work in environments that are hostile to their wellbeing''(p. 16), which contributes to the high attrition levels previously mentioned. This notion of the link between teacher wellbeing and teacher attrition is of high importance in particular as highly skilled teachers are leaving the education profession due to their unhappiness and the notion that they feel unfulfilled and miserable (Roffey, 2012). Almost half of those in the UK surveyed sought medical advice, with three quarters of teachers reporting that the job has affected their mental health and wellbeing (O'Kane, 2002), with the same research reporting that eighty-two percent of teachers are dealing with lack of sleep and three quarters reporting their mental health and wellbeing had suffered. It is vital that teachers wellbeing is prioritised, as Weare (2015) noted, wellbeing starts with the staff, strengthening the argument that if it is not dealt with or recognised, it is difficult for teachers to promote the wellbeing of others including students if they felt uncared or themselves. Potentially, this will not only affect teachers as individuals, but also to the students involved (Roffey, 2012).

However some criticism of wellbeing as a responsibility of educators has emerged including research by Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) who expressed concerns about wellbeing as an endeavour in a school environment. They suggest that focusing on wellbeing might detract from levels of engagement with the subject knowledge at hand, while also criticising the hypothesis which suggests that focusing on the emotional wellbeing of learners will lead to more successful practices. Strengthening this criticism of a wellbeing focus in schools, O'Brien (2008) indicates that life will constantly involve certain struggles. However to overcome this requires lessons learnt from difficult experiences while also having had the experience of these struggles, rather than focusing

on the techniques to overcome them. Research from Hawkins (2017) also criticises the abundance of initiatives in education , strengthening the argument of the problem of initiative overload, which he feels brings another added pressure to the system, and as this research suggests, the need to go back to basics and acknowledging what really matters, in this case 'well' teachers.

Wellbeing in schools is currently on the agenda of the main international organisations (e.g., WHO, UNICEF, UN), as well as heavily promoted by the DES with the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (2018). The framework issued to all post-primary schools requires schools to provide students with at least 400 hours of curricular wellbeing programme per school-year (Education.ie 2019). However no specific CPD is given to teachers, resulting in them finding it hard to even conceptualise wellbeing (Fitzgerald, Keenan, and McGil 2020) for both students and themselves. As previously discussed, there is no common definition for teachers wellbeing in this framework. There continues to be a distance between the policy and practice of wellbeing (Powell and Graham 2017) and the absence of a definition creating difficulties for teachers whose wellbeing should also have priority.

2.12 Teacher stress and wellbeing

While it is clear from the research that wellbeing in schools is student focused, with the extensive data on the incidence of teacher stress, it seems only reasonable that teacher wellbeing should also be addressed (Roffey, 2012). Teachers exhibit higher levels of stress than any other profession (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). This could be due to many factors including the stress of required tasks or institutional stress factors; however they are struggling (Curry & O'Brien, 2012). With increasing roles and responsibilities along with initiative overload, teachers are struggling to cope and remain buoyant to the increasing social and emotional demands placed on them in school, which directly

impacts their wellbeing (Parker et al., 2012). School environments are changing as they become places of social and political inclusivity, with unrealistic expectations placed on teachers to meet these needs (McCallum & Price, 2010. Interestingly, while there is extensive research of teacher stress and burnout, research around teacher wellbeing is limited (Parker et al., 2012). However, for teachers to teach wellbeing to students, they themselves must be well (McCallum & Price, 2010).

While the Oxford English dictionary defines stress as "something that causes a state of strain or tension" (Oxford University Press, 2002), it is noted that stress and burnout are two separate issues (Howard & Johnson, 2004). When considering teacher stress, it is described as "unpleasant feelings that may involve anger, tension, frustration or depression and are generally perceived as constituting a threat to self-esteem or wellbeing (Howard & Johnson, 2004, p. 400). While previously discussed, defining wellbeing is difficult, with researchers continues to argue over one single definition. However, when considering this definition, it is also important to consider teachers stress and the impact that this has on their wellbeing while also considering the types of supports required to help reduce this stress. Considering the relationship between social, emotional competencies and burnout and how this too impacts wellbeing (Jones et al., 2013) is necessary. While the causes of teacher stress are very complex and varied, they could be described from an ecological perspective, in particular considering Bronfenbrenner's' Ecological systems theory (1979). Individual factors relative to the teacher (microsystem) can link with school factors including the environment (ecosystem) with theses school factors linking with systemic factors.

2.12.1 Teacher stress in Ireland

When considering teacher stress in an Irish context, Fitzgerald (2008), acknowledged that 11% of all retired post-primary teachers in Ireland retired due to ill-health. However, 50% of disability retirements were attributed to stress, anxiety and depression. Supporting this concept of teacher stress, the Millward Brown Poll, commissioned by secondary teachers stated that they were feeling continuously stressed (Humphreys, 2014). Former Minister for Education, Joe McHugh has spoken about what he feels currently is a sense of "initiative overload" for teachers. This he states, is how teachers are pressurised into implementing a range of policies and reforms. In October 2018 at an Oireachtas education committee meeting and in response to his Department's record on promoting positive mental health in schools, McHugh explained how the present feedback was that many classroom professionals feel under time pressure. He emphasised the importance of now working on a three-year plan for education, including an examination of "what's working" and the " strengths and weaknesses". The Minister also explained how he was also conscious of working to promote the wellbeing of teacher stating… " the promotion of wellbeing is an essential element of the ambition of the Department of Education to achieve the best education and training system in Europe by 2026". He stated an implementation plan for the Department's mental health policy also sets goals to promote the wellbeing of teachers and to address the learning needs of current and future teachers in relation to wellbeing promotion. However, there has been no further update or development of this promise by the then Minister.

Research by Pillay et al. (2005) has shown that stress can reduce a teacher's sense of accomplishment when surveyed across a 12-month period. Therefore this can directly impact on their wellbeing which in turn as previously discussed, affects student interactions. This concept was further argued by Watt and Richardson (2008), who

showed how teachers who feel exhausted and stressed by their work, have lower motivation and self-interest. They noted that when teachers become burned out, their students outcomes are likely to suffer as they themselves struggle to survive.

2.13 Wellbeing in an educational context

When considering how wellbeing might be supported, a recent study carried out in the UK by Westfield Health reported that 79% of their employees indicated that their employers could do more to support them (Hancock Fell, 2018). The research also reported that 63% of employees said they would use wellbeing services if their employers provided them, while 62% believed the government does not do enough to promote wellbeing. Interestingly 74% think it would be a good idea to direct some of their National Insurance payments towards improving wellbeing in the workplace. Similarly, research has indicated in Ireland, 11% of all retired second level teachers in Ireland did so due to ill-health, with stress, anxiety and depression attributing to 50% of disability retirements (Fitzgerald, 2008).

Adding to this, data from the occupational health care service for teachers in Ireland have indicated that mental health/stress accounted for 35% of ill health retirements. This was compared to cancer, which accounted for 20% of ill-health retirement in 2013. A total of 34% of occupational health assessment for teachers' long-term leave was for mental health/stress, compared to 85% for cancer. More support is needed at a school level to both alleviate teacher stress, as well as provide teachers with strategies to help them look after their wellbeing.

Past research indicates that support strategies and interventions for teachers are slowly beginning to appear alongside student wellbeing programmes in

other countries (Jones et al., 2013). A research study in the UK with 300 teachers showed that those who were able to manage their work-life balance and display resilience to maintain their wellbeing, were more effective based on SAT scores (Bajorek et al., 2014). Similarly, a study with 390 teachers carried out at the beginning and the end of a school year found that learning wellbeing interventions enhanced teachers' wellbeing (Duckworth et al., 2009). While many things in the educational context are outside of teachers' control, the school management can take steps to show teachers they care, which may in turn improve their wellbeing. Given that there is no research showing a direct link between management caring and teachers' wellbeing, this is one of the aspects the current study aimed to address.

2.14 Supporting teacher wellbeing

When considering how teacher wellbeing might be supported within the context of education, it is useful to consider the supports and practices available for teachers' wellbeing from an International perspective, while also considering it in the Irish context. This allows for comparison with what is happening in other countries while also allowing for gaps in the Irish context to be identified.

2.14.1 International context

Research by Bricheno et al. (2009) focused on intervention strategies for teachers in schools and categorised interventions to teacher wellbeing as primary, secondary and tertiary. This review found that individual interventions were most effective for mental health, and organisational interventions were best for job-related stress. However the report did find that teachers rarely used health services with exception of one Council, where a wellbeing programme was introduced. There was an 80% uptake by teachers which resulted in reducing stress-related situations (p.46). A

Teacher Support Network launched in the U.K as an independent charity, which is aimed at understanding teacher wellbeing, its causes, consequences and improvements. Following this, the Education Committee, House of Commons, UK (2017) released a report and highlights some key points relative to the important of teacher wellbeing and examined why, in the UK, there are critical trends.

Interestingly and strengthening the argument of focusing on the teacher, Heidmets and Liik (2014) found that transformational principals in Estonia shaped teachers wellbeing and their emotional attachment to the school. They found that good relationships and management were important for teachers to feel good on the workplace. Similarly in Germany, Mattern and Bauer (2014) found that cogitative self-regulation in secondary school maths teachers foster teachers occupational which directly impacts on the quality of their work, satisfaction at work and wellbeing. Gozzoli et al. (2015) examined the complex and challenging school world of rapid reform in Italy and adopted a phenomenological approach to research with fifty high school teachers, exploring their concept of wellbeing while in Norway a study reported work overloads, student behaviour and class sizes as having negative effects on teachers quality of life (Mykletun, 1984, cited in Burns & Machin, 2013, p. 310). This research from other countries emphasis not only the importance of wellbeing in educational context but the importance of effective and worthwhile supportive interventions in schools.

2.14.2 Irish context

Teacher wellbeing is supported in post-primary schools with support available from the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) where schools can apply for in school support. They also offer a range of resources to support wellbeing including an introduction to teacher wellbeing workshop workbook, Teacher wellbeing and Diversity

Manuel and The Wellbeing recipe workbook (www.pdst.ie). Adding to this support is the Wellbeing for teachers and Learners' group (www.teachingcouncil.ie) which was established in 2016 by the Teaching Council in conjunction with the Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN), the Ombudsman for Children's office, the National Parents' Council (NPC) and the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD). These organisations came together to see how it might work better together to ensure that their collective endeavours in the area of wellbeing have a positive impact on the whole-school community; teachers, students, parents/guardians and the wider community. The main objectives of the group include (www.teachingcouncil.ie):

1. To agree a definition of wellbeing for teaching and learning in Irish education so that the wellbeing of teachers and learners is supported.
2. To promote a shared understanding of this definition amongst stakeholders in Irish education.
3. To enhance co-operation between member organisations, and between the group and stakeholders,
4. To support an enhanced and sustainable approach to wellbeing for all learners in our education system; teachers, students, parents/guardians and the whole-school community alike.

In November 2017 the inaugural wellbeing for teachers and learners conference took place (www.teachingcouncil.ie) which showcased how wellbeing was addressed in schools with a discussion between teachers, learners, and parent representatives which was chaired by the Ombudsman for children. The panel discussion looked at how schools place wellbeing at the centre of their ethos. However, how this information was

distributed in the school environment and who was responsible for this passing of information is unclear.

2.14.3 Employee Assistance Service

On 25 July 2006, the Minister for Education and Science commissioned the establishment of the Employee Assistance Service (EAS) for Irish teachers (Department of Education, 2019). This scheme is currently run by Spectrum Life who were awarded the contract from the 26 July 2020 with the service for these employees now known as 'Wellbeing Together: Folláine le Chéile'. This scheme was formally called Care call and Inspire perhaps creating some confusion and some uncertainty amongst teachers with the name changes. The EAS provides advice to employees on a range of issues including wellbeing, legal, financial, bereavement, conflict, mediation etc. They also provide advice and support to managers and delivers short term interventions to help them deal with health and wellbeing issues in the workplace. The programme states that where appropriate, short term counselling is available to employees and their family members, however with recent budgetary changes these sessions are now means tested. Although vital, the service does not deal with the aspect of preventing or reducing stress through organisational change.

2.14.4 Covid-19 support

On 26 July 2020, (updated 4 September 2020), the Department of Education and Skills published their guideline (www.gov.ie) on supporting the wellbeing of school communities as schools reopen. Promoting school staff wellbeing is recognised by the Department as all staff adjust to the new 'normal' with support offered through the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), Centre for School Leadership (CSL) and by the Health Service Executives (HSE), Health Promotion

team. An Occupational Health Strategy is in place to promote the health and wellbeing of employees in the workplace, with a strong focus on prevention (DOE, 2020) . This strategy is in conjunction with the Employee Assistance scheme (EAS), however the issue of how this support is relayed to teachers and its availability is unclear.

2.15 Wellbeing at community level

Contrary to dominant approaches the context of wellbeing is not the individual but the community, a collaborative project to enhance the means through which wellbeing can be supported. This can also be linked to the approach that this research has taken, a dialectical pluralist approach and the importance of all 'three voices' (Managerial agencies, principals/deputy principals and teachers) and all key stakeholders working together as a community in the school context. Community wellbeing has been described in the literature by Wiseman & Brasher (2008) as the combination of social, economic, environmental, cultural and political conditions identified by individuals and their communities as essential for them to flourish fulfil their potential, but community wellbeing will mean different things to different communities. However, since community wellbeing is 'a relatively new idea in social science, it still lacks the theoretical structure for explanatory purposes' (Sung and Phillips, 2016:2).

Schools are a community that have a shared interest and purpose and values, with Roffey (2008) noting that schools that manage to combine all three are more likely to have high levels of social capital as previously discussed. The 'Conceptual Review of Community Wellbeing' from the UK's What Works Wellbeing Centre Community Wellbeing Evidence Programme (CWEP) combines thinking and practice on how to think about and assess community wellbeing while also examining the concept of 'being well together'. However, there have been many reviews of how the concept of wellbeing has gained

renewed prominence while also examining how the use of the concept has changed and the range of different modes of theorising the concept (see for example, Fleuret & Atkinson, 2007; Gough & McGregor, 2007; Kahnemann et al., 1999; Scott, 2012; Sointu, 2005).

The literature presents much evidence of the benefits of a collaborative and community approach to wellbeing, noted by Hearne et al (2018) that this approach allows schools to maximise resources, but the awareness of school management can influence the success of this model and positively influence the school culture and norms. When examining the concept of a school community it alludes to those schools that are both strong and inclusive, with a shared vision and purpose. These concepts are embedded in social structures as to how people perceive and relate to each other (e.g. Murray-Harvey, 2010; Noble & McGrath, 2012b), while emphasising the term social capital where schools network together with "shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation with or among groups" (OECD, 2001, p. 41). This network and environment can promote positive feelings including a sense of belonging and facilitate an environment where flourishing and learning exist (Roffey, 2013). As relationships and interactions are ongoing in the school community, the quality of these interactions are vital to build trust and reciprocity which is central to social capital (Roffey, 2013).

It is evident that schools are key stakeholders in promoting both student and teacher wellbeing, regardless of the various wellbeing definitions and approaches and models. However, it can be argued that given the link between teacher wellbeing and academic achievement, while inconclusive, and policy and curriculum development, there is increasing pressure on schools to make wellbeing a core value for the schools (McCallum and Price, 2016). This is also evident in the whole-school guidance plan as Circular

0009/2012 states a school guidance plan should support the needs of its students, including their wellbeing (DES, 2012). The importance of coherent policy and planning at a whole-school level for the successful delivery of a wellbeing programme is also noted by the DES (2018a), while the NCCA (2017) outlines four areas of wellbeing in schools including curriculum, policy and planning, relationships, and culture. This strengthens the argument of the importance of a collaborative, whole-school approach with all key stakeholders including teachers involved in the process. This in turn has led to a more holistic approach to education in schools suggesting that wellbeing in education is not just for the individual but for the whole community (McCallum and Price, 2016) strengthening the argument that wellbeing education is an essential provider to both academic learning and achievement (McCallum & Price, 2016). This undoubtedly creates a challenge for school, leaders as they grapple to provide a supportive environment that promotes the holistic wellbeing of both student and teachers in the school community (Scoffham & Barnes, 2011).

2.16 Conclusion

The literature review has considered many perspectives such as emotional, psychological, sociological and educational, highlighting the multiple perspectives with which we can consider wellbeing. In this study, wellbeing is examined from a psychological perspective with an interest in teachers' personal wellbeing using Keyes (2002) Mental Health Continuum, while also identifying some of the practices necessary to put in place to enhance their wellbeing. While there is evidence of some health interventions in schools including vaccinations programmes and the promotion of healthy eating, there is little evidence of wellbeing interventions, particularly at a whole school level. These wellbeing interventions are sometimes referred to as a positive psychology intervention (Burke, 2020) with their aim to enhance individuals' positive emotions, positive thoughts or

increase their positive behaviours (Sin and Lyubomirsky, 2009). The main focus of these interventions is to build positive elements of wellbeing (Parks and Biswas-Diener, 2013), including self-esteem, life satisfaction or happiness. When considering wellbeing interventions for the school environment, it would be beneficial to consider evidence-based or evidence informed interventions as these have been rigorously tested and assessed. This research aims to show and argue the importance of such interventions for teachers in schools, and the effectiveness of such supports. The following chapter outlines the methodological design employed in this study, including the research design, methods for data collection and analysis and limitations of the study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explicates the philosophical assumptions of dialectical pluralism underpinning the study along with the research design for this study. The methodological approach including both quantitative and qualitative methods to the research is discussed in detail with reference to sampling procedures, data collection methods, and ethical issues pertaining to the study. Subsequently, the rationale for the data analysis method is explained and analysis procedures are explored in detail.

This research is comprised of two phases, with Phase one employing the use of an online survey and informing Phase two, where semi-structured interviews and a focus group were utilised (Table 2). It was informed by a dialectical pluralism paradigm, to explore the practice and policies currently in place to support teacher wellbeing in post-primary schools. Dialectal pluralism is a process in which all stakeholders can come together to carefully and systematically listen, understand, appreciate, and learn from multiple paradigms, disciplines, values, methodologies, and perspectives to collaborate on research or projects about which the collective cares about (Johnson, 2017).

In this instance, there was a collaboration of management bodies, principals/deputy principals and teachers in post-primary schools. The collaborative and participatory process of dialectical pluralism allows the possibility of inclusion of qualitative (semi-structured interviews and focus group) and quantitative (online survey) perspectives, as undertaken in this study along with equal status/equal power dialogue, and constant reflexivity and reflection (Johnson, 2017), which were also aspects of this research study. Pluralism means diversity, giving this research study the scope to view teacher wellbeing and how it is perceived through a diverse lens of beliefs, practices, views or opinions of

teacher wellbeing. It allows research to be completed though the mixing of theories, paradigms and data and/or analysis techniques to promote engagement with diversity (Frost, 2011). This paradigm aligns with the researcher's belief that both the researcher (me) and practitioners (managerial agencies, principals/deputy principals and teachers) need to collaborate to ensure issues are addressed and resolved from all perspectives.

3.2 Mixed method research design

This research involved two parts: Phase one consisted of the gathering of quantitative data using an online survey. Following this, and to further explore findings from the online survey, Phase two used semi-structured interviews and a focus group to gather the qualitative data from the 'three voices', i.e. managerial agencies, principals/deputy principals, and teachers (Figure 4).

Table 2

Methods Of Data Collection

Phase one (Quantitative data)	**Phase two (Qualitative data)**
Online survey (administered to all post-primary schools in Ireland with a mix of respondents incorporating principals, middle managements and teachers).	Semi-structured interviews (Managerial agencies, principals/deputy principals). Focus group (Teachers)

3.3 Philosophical assumptions underpinning this study

While ontology deals with assumptions which are "concerned with the very nature or essence of the social phenomena under investigation" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 6), researchers can vary in their view of the social world. Some believe it follows patterns and outcomes that are predictable, while others argue that human interactions are constantly contributing to the construction of the social world (HesseBiber & Leavy,

2011). This research adopted a relativist position, which acknowledges that reality is subjective according to the perceptions of people (Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007). Using multiple data sources including the online survey, semi-structured interviews and focus group and through the data analysis adopted through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), the use of quotes from different individuals can present different perspectives, meanings and interpretations (Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007) as was evident in this study. A relativistic perspective seeks explanations and understandings of the case rather than a concern for generalisable findings (Cohen et al., 2011) and so this approach was relevant to this research study.

Epistemological assumptions are concerned with "…the very bases of knowledge – its nature and forms, how it can be acquired, and how communicated to human beings" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 6). My epistemological assumptions, relate to constructionism which acknowledges that meaning does not exist on its own but is constructed through the interactions between human beings and the interpretations that they make (Robson, 2011). Research methods such as interviews and focus groups are congruous with constructionism as they allow the researcher to record multiple perspectives and to co-construct the 'reality' with the research participants (Robson, 2011). This approach is also flexible as there is no fixed or prescribed method of research or data collection and allows the researcher to change course in response to needs that may arise during the data collection process (Robson, 2011). This was evident in this research study as following the distribution and analysis of the online survey, further exploration was required which resulted in the qualitative data (interviews and focus group) being collected.

As this research is underpinned by dialectical pluralism which enables the researcher to consider multiple paradigms and perspectives, the research can also be viewed from an

interpretivist perspective where according to Burke and Dempsey (2021a), the researcher's ontological stance is on a spectrum between that of relativism where truth is relative to some broader context, and subjectivism where truth is individualistic. People create realities, and there are as many realities as there are individuals (Scotland, 2012). From an epistemological standpoint, this paradigm asserts that knowledge is culturally derived and historically placed, and that it is always subject to interpretation at some level. From an interpretivist perspective, numerous aspects influence how the researcher interprets knowledge. Your interactions in and with the world help to shape it. In this paradigm, the researcher is trying to understand what's going on from the perspective of one individual, while also considering the relationships between individuals, as well as the cultural and historical backdrop (Creswell, 2009).

In this study the researcher is looking at the interactions between the 'three voices', while trying to interpret and understand the interactions through the data gathered. The interpretivist paradigm, as defined by Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), emphasises that we cannot understand the social reality without interpreting it, while simultaneously accepting that realities are numerous and socially produced. Within this paradigm, it is accepted that there will be some contact between the researcher and the research subjects. There is a view that knowledge is formed through discoveries, and that knowledge is likely to be value-laden, and that the values must be stated explicitly. The methodologies positioned in the interpretive paradigm are qualitative, such as mixed methods, case study, phenomenology, hermeneutics, or ethnography (Burke & Dempsey, 2021a) with this study employing a mixed methods approach. When considering methods in this paradigm it is important to consider which method will allow you gather data to make thick description and make meaning of the phenomena being researched (Lukenchuk & Kolich, 2013; Scotland 2012), such as open-ended interviews, focus groups,

questionnaires, observations, autoethnography, narrative, content, text or discourse analysis, visual, arts-based methods such as think aloud and role playing. This research study employed the use of an online survey along with semi-structured interviews and focus group. Triangulation is an important aspect of this paradigm which was achieved in this research by both the online survey and interviews and by having multiple voices in the research.

3.4 Theoretical underpinning

This research study employs a Dialectical Pluralism approach, which according to Johnson (2017) is a pluralist posture that relies on a dialectical (and dialogical and hermeneutical) approach. He describes the idea of dialectical pluralism for research as (a) listen to different paradigms, disciplines, theories, stakeholder and citizen perspectives dialectically, carefully and thoughtfully; (b) combine important ideas from competing paradigms and values into a new workable whole for each research study or program evaluation; and (c) explicitly state the approach with each research study or program evaluation. (d) conduct the research in an ethical manner; (e) enable the distribution and use of research findings (both locally and globally); and (f) evaluate and improve the research-and-use outcomes on a continuous, formative basis.

Dialectical Pluralism is a process philosophy and meta-paradigm for dialoguing with multiple perspectives. It is needed because there are many important philosophical and methodological paradigms and worldviews that deserve a great deal of respect (Johnson, 2011). It emphasises that we must dialectically examine and value multiple data and perspectives while also considering multiple, conflicting or divergent perspectives. As dialectical pluralism is a metaparadigm, it allows researchers “Dialectically listen” to divergent perspectives while guiding the research (Johnson, 2017). It also advocates a holistic and collaborative approach to research that includes key stakeholders and

representatives for all important standpoints. In this research the 'three voices' are representative of the key stakeholders as the research tries to conceptualise teacher wellbeing while establishing effective supports for teachers and their wellbeing in post primary schools; this being a common goal for all 'three voices'. This is where collaboration between the 'voices' can take place though the use of mixed methods research which DP lends itself to. As there is a common goal amongst them, the DP allows for dialoguing with qualitative and quantitative perspectives. Specific strategies to support the collaborative process in this research and DP as outlined by Johnson (217) include (a) encouraging and reinforcing open-mindedness of members; (b) working toward shared development and understanding of team/group goals for a research study; (c) obtaining agreement on process; (d) making the process transparent and fair; (e) encouraging all members to listen actively and participate, including engaging in constructive cognitive conflict; (f) making sure everyone expresses her or his views and reasons for those views; (g) examining alternatives; and (h) ensuring that the group articulates clear rationales for positions and decisions. The research allowed for a space where multiplicity can be engaged and shared, meanings negotiated and learning from difference honoured (Johnson, 2017).

When considering theories of wellbeing through the lens of dialectical pluralism, the research considered Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development (1979) which is further discussed below (see Figure 3). This model provides a systems-based view of wellbeing, recognising the value of the individual as well as the interactions that exist in their larger community, in this case how teachers react in their school environment and the impact that their surroundings in that environment have on their development and wellbeing. This is an important feature of this particular study as the research considers not only the teachers' individual wellbeing but also the interactions and opinions of other stakeholders including principals/deputy principals and managerial agencies (the 'three

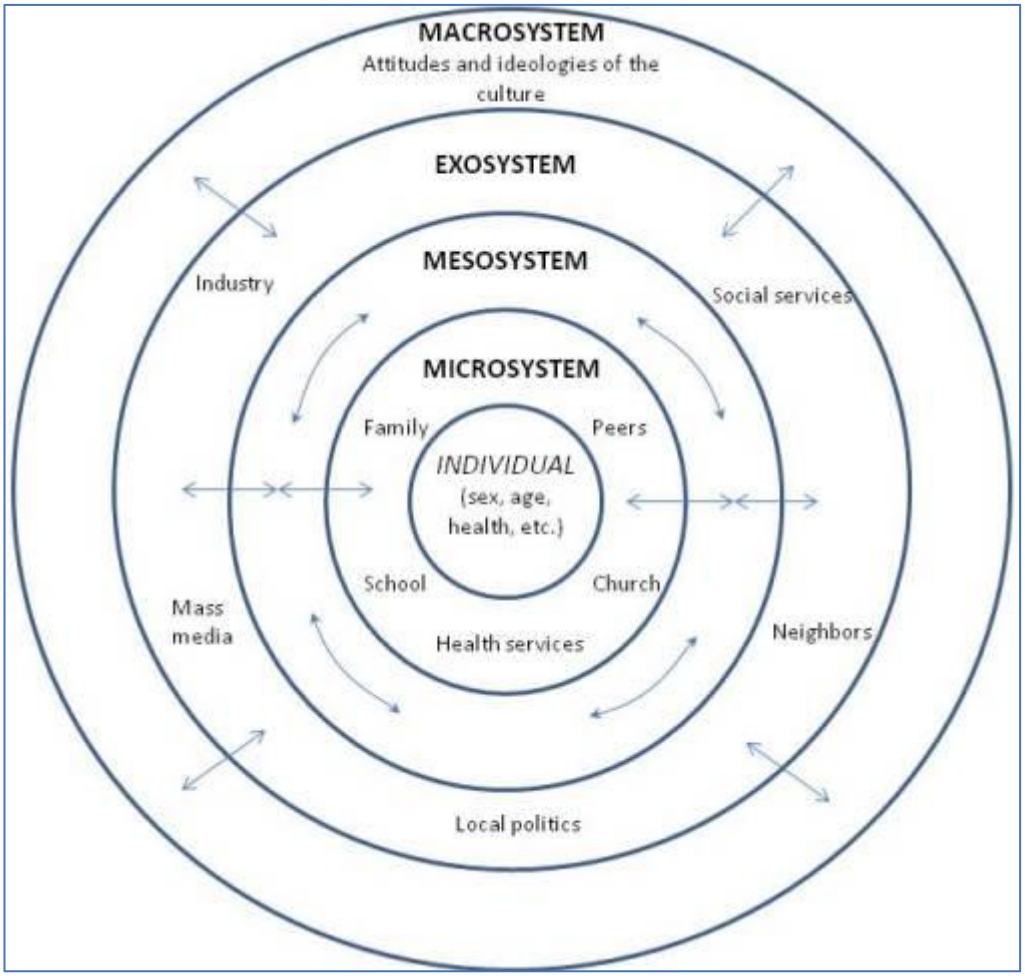
voices'). It exemplifies the relational side of human nature and importantly supports the notion that happiness is a shared endeavour, which is necessary for wellbeing in an educational context.

3.4.1 Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development (1979)

Bronfenbrenner (1979) developed classifications for various levels and degrees of intervening impact on a person's development, referring to these systems as a "series of layers (Figure 3) with each layer located inside the other, comparable to Russian nesting dolls" within this theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 22). These layers include the Microsystem which contains the immediate environment of the individual, including everyone that they interact with on a regular basis; the Mesosystem which includes the interaction between members/components of the microsystem, the Exosystem which contains the broader environment that directly affects the immediate environment of the individual, and the Macros which is the broader environment that directly affects the immediate environment of the individual.

Figure 3

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Development Model



Adapted from *The Ecology Of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design* by U. Bronfenbrenner. 1979. Harvard University Press.

Bowes and Hayes (1999) have added numerous components to Bronfenbrenner's original Ecological Systems Theory. Individual qualities, such as temperament and gender, were first introduced, followed by historical influences on current behaviours, attitudes, and practices, with the understanding that these alter with time. While the Ecological Systems Theory Model provides a potential framework for analysing wellbeing in an ecological and contextual context within an educational context and community, Armitage et al. (2012) argue that using only one framework or approach in the analysis of wellbeing

should be avoided. Instead, Armitage et al. (2012) advocate, that in an educational context, “the creation of hybrid approaches and creative combinations of social and ecological theory in order to provide signposts and analytical tools to understand complexity and change” (p.12), which is why this research viewed wellbeing from multiple perspectives.

When considering Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory in the context of this research, it emphasise the importance of considering the teachers in its immediate surroundings and environmental context. In the school environment, the teacher as an individual is impacted by their relationships and interactions daily with their colleagues and peers while also the school management (microsystem). They are also impacted by decisions made by managerial agencies and governing bodies (Mesosystem) and further impacted by the Department of Education (silent contributor in this research) (Exosystem). As each layer links to the next layer it strengthens the argument for a whole-school approach to teachers. This is an important feature of this research, as the ‘three voices’ interact and impact on each other.

3.5 Positionality

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected in this research, through an online survey, semi-structured interviews and a focus group. This allowed me as the researcher to make a detailed analysis of the phenomenon under study. I was also a research instrument in both the semi-structured interviews and focus group. This pertains to researchers acknowledging and disclosing “their own selves in the research, seeking to understand their part in, or influence on, the research” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 225). It was important to explore my positionality in relation to this research to acknowledge reflexivity as “all writing is ‘positioned’ and within a stance (Creswell & Tashakkori,

2007, p. 179). As a post-primary teacher with a middle management position, I was acutely aware of various issues relating to wellbeing in schools and the policies and practices in place. De Laine (2000) acknowledged that the researcher adopts diverse roles in qualitative research, and it is usually not possible to plan these roles in advance. This can result in ethical challenges for the researcher that require constant negotiation therefore it was important that I did not impose my own thoughts and feelings in my role as the researcher while also revealing my researcher's biases 'Marginality' is a challenge that is common in fieldwork where the researcher is in the organisation, in this case a post-primary school setting, but is not part of it and must balance his or her role between 'familiarity' and 'strangeness' (Atkinson & Hammersly, 1983, pp. 97-99). While initially aware of how teacher wellbeing is conceptualised and supported through personal school experience, the review of literature on teacher wellbeing increased my awareness of the impact that management has and potentially can have on teachers' wellbeing. While I experienced professional conflict, in that I was a teacher with a managerial position, I aimed to employ reflexivity, ensuring my own personal views were not made known to the participants in the interviews or focus group.

As a practising post-primary teacher, I am fully aware of the demands on teachers and the effect this potentially can have on their wellbeing. I am also aware of the importance of appropriate supports and strategies to support teachers' wellbeing. As a researcher, it allowed me to closely monitor reactions that might impact the research which is key to maintaining trustworthiness (Cohen et al., 2011; Hammersley, 2007). Because I had a managerial role, the participants may have viewed me as an 'insider' (Mercer, 2007) of school management with perhaps a specific agenda. Although, as noted by Mercer (2007), the participant view of the researcher as an insider can appear along a continuum and that for some topics or interviews, I may have been considered an insider, but not for others.

This could have potentially resulted in informant bias where the participants, consciously or unconsciously, make statements that they perceive to be what the researcher wants to hear. To maintain reflexivity, I was committed to creating a comprehensive and thorough account of the research area through analysis of participants' views, behaviours, and engagement, to understand how teacher wellbeing is currently supported at post-primary level and the supports, practices and polices currently in place. I was aware of reciprocity during the interviews and in particular the focus group, in which all participants were teachers, and the need to avoid sharing my own experiences lest this influenced the participants to make contributions aimed to please the researcher (Creswell, 2008).

3.6 Research design

This study employed the mixed method design which combines the collection of qualitative (online survey) and quantitative (interviews and focus group) data (Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007). This method was used to obtain a clearer picture of the findings emerging from the quantitative data. This would allow the researcher to use the qualitative data to provide better understanding and explanation of the quantitative data already gathered. To attain the study aims and answer the research questions, researchers are increasingly combining qualitative and quantitative approaches (Bryman, 2006), and a mixed method design can provide extensive and comprehensive data. There are four types of mixed method study designs, according to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2009): 1) triangulation, 2) embedded, 3) explanatory, and 4) exploratory are the four types of triangulation. The explanatory model was used in this study, in which quantitative data was collected first, followed by qualitative data to further explore the quantitative data gathered. The explanatory design is a two-stage mixed method design, according to Creswell and Clark (2007). The gathering and analysis of quantitative data is done first, followed by the acquisition and analysis of qualitative data. This allows the researcher to

pinpoint specific quantitative facts that need to be explained and investigated further. The explanatory design is widely regarded as the most straightforward and simple of the mixed approach designs (Creswell & Clark, 2017) where they outlined the advantages of the explanatory research design: 1. Because the researcher uses two methodologies in separate stages and only collects one sort of data at a time, the two-stage structure makes it simple to implement. 2. The final report can be broken down into two parts, making it simple for the reader to understand the findings. Mixed methods research is a method of gaining knowledge that tries to consider numerous points of view, perspectives, and stances (Almalki, S. 2016). The researcher was able to collect both types of data using the same variables, constructions, and concepts by employing mixed methods (Creswell & Clark, 2017).

3.7 Phase one: Quantitative data participants and procedure

The use of quantitative data enabled the researcher to reach a large population of teachers, through the distribution of an online survey to all post-primary teachers in Ireland and to conduct meaningful statistical tests. The survey included several closed questions and wellbeing scales, which also yielded quantitative data. The online survey (Appendix A) collected structured, numerical data, without the presence of the researcher (Cohen et al., 2011) and is a productive way of collecting data with many respondents in many different locations (Denscombe, 2009). The survey was distributed by the NAPD on behalf of the researcher to reach a large audience of both principals/deputy principals, assistant principals and teachers. Surveys are not without their limitations, as they can yield a low response rate and it can be difficult to ascertain if the respondents have answered truthfully (Robson, 2011). In some cases, the researcher has also decided on the answers to choose from (Gillham, 2000a), and so it was important that the researcher offered the

participants a wide variety of question types, including a wellbeing scale, open-ended questions and closed answers to offset this limitation (Appendix A).

There were 293 respondents to the survey. The majority of whom were female (69.5%), and held a role of teachers (50%), deputy principals (22.7%), and principals (14.9%). Most of them were aged 18-60+ and worked in a variety of secondary schools located across all four provinces in Ireland (both rural and urban areas). A strategic sampling method was applied in recruiting schools through the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD). This was to ensure that participating schools were representative of all types of post-primary school in the Republic of Ireland (voluntary secondary 26.2%, community 34.8%, comprehensive 19.1% and private 5.0%). It also ensured that schools were from across each of the four provinces, Connaught (9,9%), Leinster (58.2%), Munster (19.9%) and Ulster (12.1%). This type of strategic sampling attention was also given to the representation of schools of the various denominational affiliations (Roman Catholic, Church of Ireland, multi- and non-denominational), language use (English and Irish), and student gender (girls-only, boys-only and co-educational schools).

3.7.1 Measures

Two measures were selected for the current analysis, the Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF: Keyes, 2009) which consisted of three subscales, emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing, and survey.

The first measure used in the current study was the MHC-SF (Keyes 2009), a 14-item measure, on a 6-point Likert scale from *never* to *every day* which assessed personal wellbeing (emotional, social and psychological) by the frequency with which participants

experience each symptom of positive mental health. The measure was used to distinguish three levels of wellbeing among participants: flourishing, moderate and languishing. Of the 14 items, there were 3 items for emotional (hedonic) wellbeing, 5 for social wellbeing, and 6 items for psychological wellbeing Examples of statements included, Emotional wellbeing: *"During the past month, how often do you feel satisfied with life?";* Social wellbeing: *"During the past month, how often do you feel that you had something important to contribute to society"*; Psychological wellbeing: *"During the past month, how often do you feel that you had experiences that challenged you to grow and become a better person?".*

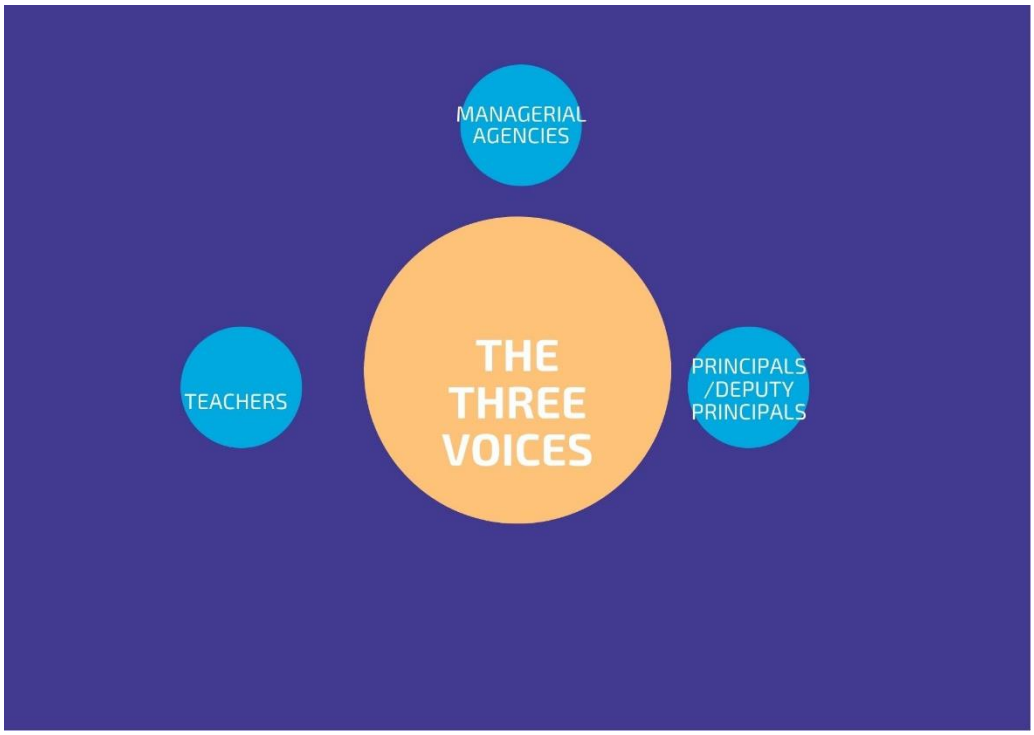
The second measure was a survey which consisted of general questions relating to age, gender, position held in school and length of service. A Likert scale was used with participants asked to rate their level of agreement with various statements on a scale moving from strongly disagree to strongly agree. These statements included: my management cares about teachers' wellbeing, teacher wellbeing is on staff meeting agendas, there are support strategies and supports available on my school for teachers' wellbeing and there is specific wellbeing related CPD in place in my school. These statements were specifically chosen relative to the specific research question. Four open-ended questions (Appendix D) were also included relating to both formal and informal wellbeing initiatives in their school and suggestions as to how both the Department of Education and school leaders might enhance teacher wellbeing.

3.8 Phase two: Semi-structured interviews and focus group

This phase is based on the perceptions of the 'three voices' as illustrated in Figure 4. These 'voices' consist of management bodies ,principals/deputy principals, and teachers.

Figure 4

The Three Voices



Semi-structured interviews (management bodies and principals/deputy principals) and a focus group (teachers) were the methods used to collect qualitative data. Interviews can be time consuming and challenging to conduct, but they have the potential to provide rich and highly illuminating data (Robson, 2011). A focus group was chosen for teachers as it allowed for practicing teachers to exchange viewpoints and discuss disagreements while also ensuring equal status. This dynamic will not be captured in an interview. While the interview and focus group was initially intended to be conducted face to face, following the completion of one interview, the Covid-19 pandemic forced all remaining interviews and focus group online through the Microsoft Team's forum.

3.8.1 Sampling framework

Sampling has implications for the internal and external validity of research and how representative it might be in wider contexts (Keiding & Clayton, 2014; Mason, 2010; Palys & Atchinson, 2008; Suen et al., 2014). It is usually categorised as being based on probability or non-probability sampling. The non-probability sampling framework utilised in this study was part purposive, part snowball and part self-selecting. Purposive sampling is widely associated with qualitative research where the intention of the research is to explore groups in society who fit a certain criterion rather than to conduct research across a population (Palys, 2008; Palys & Atchison, 2008). This was relevant in this research study as specific agencies that govern the education system at post-primary level in Ireland was required. The research chose specific school stakeholders due to availability and their relevance to the specific research questions. Senior management, i.e., principals and/or deputy principals and teachers specifically in post-primary schools were also required. "Researchers who use this technique carefully select subjects based on study purpose with the expectation that each participant will provide unique and rich information of value to the study" (Suen et al., 2014, p. 105).

Purposive sampling ensures that the profile of those involved is congruent with the characteristics of the chosen research study. This sampling framework aimed to reduce the likelihood of the samples producing biased results not indicative of the wider population (Keiding and Clayton, 2014; Mokhtarian & Cao, 2008). Sampling began in February 2020 where an online survey was distributed by the National Principals and Deputy Principals Association (NAPD) to all post-primary schools in Ireland. Managerial agencies were identified and contacted by email (Appendix B) with an outline of the research topic requesting an interview, while also including the researchers' details. While the overall response was good, two managerial agencies did not reply. A further email

was sent to those who did not respond requesting participation, with no response. Following discussion with my supervisors, it was decided not to pursue these organisations any further, adhering to the ethical consideration of informed consent and voluntarism, in that participants freely chose to take part in the research (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 78).

In total, six managerial agencies semi-structured interviews took place between February 2020 and April 2020 (Table 3). One of these interviews was face to face with the remaining on line through Microsoft Teams due to Covid-19. Prior to the interview, participants received an email outling the research topic in question along with an information sheet, consent form and interview schedule. Participants agreed to an online recoreded semi-structured interview, with consent also given before the interview began.

Table 3

Participant Characteristics Managerial Agencies/Union: Interviews

Participant	Organisation
1	ETBI
2	TUI
3	ASTI
4	Teaching Council
5	NAPD
6	JMB

3.8.2 Selection bias

Self-selection bias is a considered to be a problem in research which utilises non-probability sampling and may undermine the robustness of the research (Keiding & Clayton, 2014; Mokhtarian & Cao, 2008). Self-selection may make the determination of

causality difficult to establish. Additionally, it may undermine how representative the sample is and whether the findings in the study population are generalisable and valid in other populations (Keiding & Clayton, 2014).

Self-selection bias arises in any situation in which individuals select themselves for inclusion in a study (Mokhtarian & Cao, 2008). This can lead to a biased sample that is a situation where the characteristics or demographics of the people who select themselves lead to an over-representation of a particular group in the study (Gail & Benichou, 2000). Non-response bias may also occur, i.e. a situation where a particular demographic fails to select themselves for inclusion (Gail & Benichou, 2000). Efforts were made by the researcher to recruit participants particularly principal/deputy principals and focus group participants from all four provinces of Ireland.

Selection bias on the part of the researcher is also a recognised problem (Fadem, 2009; Gail & Benichou, 2000). Therefore, efforts were made to eliminate bias from the research study where there may be a purposeful or subconscious intent on the part of the researcher to select people in agreement with the research aims and objectives. Participants were unknown to the researcher, ensuring selection bias was avoided while also ensuring that no prior knowledge relating to any on the participants was required before selection. In much the same way as with self-selection bias, this has implications for the generalisability and validity of study findings (Fadem, 2009; Gail & Benichou, 2000). There was no purposeful intent on the part of the researcher to select participants congruent with the research aims and objectives.

3.8.3 Sample size

There are several factors which may influence the potential size of a sample in qualitative research. These include budgetary and resource considerations; time constraints; heterogeneity of the population; the selection criteria; the inclusion of special interest groups; need to obtain multiple samples within one study; and types of data collection methods used (Charmaz, 2006; Guest et al., 2006; Mason, 2010; Ritchie et al., 2003). Mason's (2010) review of qualitative research suggested that fifteen was the smallest acceptable sample size. Charmez (2006), however, suggested a sample size up to twenty-five people could be considered fit for purpose in qualitative research.

The growing utilisation of qualitative research has led to calls for a greater focus on the need for qualitative researchers to generate robust research (Fadem, 2009; Guest et al., 2006; Jacobs, 2009; Keiding & Clayton, 2014; Mason, 2010). Mason (2010) suggested that few researchers identify why they have chosen their sample size. This lack of clarity and little practical guidance for estimating sample sizes has been critiqued for undermining efforts to establish qualitative research as robust (Guest et al., 2006; Mason, 2010; Morse, 2000).

Mason (2010) argued that most researchers avoid or shy away from discussing what constitutes a sufficient sample size. "The point of saturation is, as noted here, a rather difficult point to identify and of course a rather elastic notion. Efforts to establish practical guidance for estimating sample sizes in qualitative research led Mason (2010) to propose that the concept of saturation should be the guiding principle for sample size in qualitative research. In this research study, the sample size was dictated by the number and availability of managerial agencies and governing bodies currently in the Irish education

system at post-primary level, while both the semi-structured interviews and Focus group were dependant on willing participants.

3.8.4 Semi-structured interviews

In Phase 2, semi-structured interviews were employed for both managerial bodies and principals/deputy principals, in which an open-ended schedule of questions was prepared (Cohen et al., 2011). Interviews are a valuable source of data collection in qualitative research as they "enable participants to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 409). The purpose of the semi structured interviews in this research study was to gather in-depth information on how teacher wellbeing was currently conceptualised and supported in their school, the policies and practices currently in place and how the Covid-19 pandemic impacted on teacher wellbeing. Participants received the interview schedule prior to the interview along with an information sheet and consent form by email, while explaining the purpose of the study (Appendix C). The exact same questions are rarely asked of each participant in a qualitative case study as each participant may have had a distinctive experience or a unique story (Stake, 1995). The semi-structured nature of the interview schedule employed in this study allowed the researcher flexibility and spontaneity to probe answers further and to use additional unplanned questions to address unforeseen comments that arose (Cohen et al., 2011). This was evident, as the original interview schedule did not contain a question relevant to the impact of Covid-19, and how teachers were supported. Following the outbreak of the pandemic, this method allowed me to incorporate a question relevant to this topic, something which greatly added to the richness of the data.

Table 3 notes the key stakeholders in post primary education in Ireland. Not all listed in the Table participated in the research. Those that did participate included; The Teaching Council, NAPD, TUI, ASTI, JMB, ETBI, Principals/Deputy principals and teachers.

Table 4

Stakeholders in Irish Post Primary Education

Department of Education
NCCA
SEC
Teaching Council
NAPD
Teaching Unions: TUI ASTI
Management bodies: ACCS ETBI JMB
Board of management
Principals
Students
Parents

Table 5

Participant Characteristics Principals/Deputy Principals

Participant	Gender	Role	Experience
1	Male	Principal	Leinster
2	Female	Deputy Principal	Munster
3	Female	Principal	Leinster
4	Female	Deputy Principal	Leinster
5	Female	Deputy Principal	Leinster
6	Female	Deputy Principal	Leinster
7	Female	Principal	Munster

3.9 Semi-structured interview procedure

Thirteen interviews were conducted from March to June 2020, and each lasted approximately 30 to 40 minutes. The initial conversation with participants centred on

assurance of confidentiality and anonymity. The researcher explained how the research findings would be used, stored, and disposed of after use. After obtaining consent for recording the interview from the participant, the participant was reassured that the recording could be stopped at any time, and that withdrawal from the interview and destruction of the data gathered was at the discretion of the interviewee (Stake, 1995). The researcher endeavoured to conduct the interview with absence of judgement and the withholding of their own biases and values (Cohen et al., 2011).

3.10 Focus groups

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns, focus groups were a viable way of collecting data online and from a larger number of participants (Shaha et al., 2011). As a research method focus groups or interviews are generally not suited to formal testing of hypotheses in the traditional hypothetico-deductive sense. Instead, focus groups and interviews are used in research to examine peoples' experiences, opinions or attitudes around the issue of interest to the researcher (Kitzinger, 1995). This was deemed a suitable approach in terms of the research topic in question. Focus groups may also be used in conjunction with other methods such as questionnaires, as in this case (e.g., Sloan, 2000); as a precursor to the development of a structured survey instrument (e.g., Gillespie et al., 2001); or to aid in the interpretation of survey findings (e.g., Evason & Whittington, 1997).

The group dynamic influences the type of information yielded by focus groups, indeed some researchers focus specifically on the group dynamic and how this influences the interactions that take place within the group (Millward, 1995). In this research study, the aim is to investigate the practice and polices currently in place to support teacher wellbeing. Kitzinger (1995) argues that the group process is more effective in gathering

qualitative data than one to one interview as it allows participants to expand upon and clarify their views in ways not as accessible in interviews. In addition, the group dynamic may be less intimidating for participants when compared with interviews, as participants often provide mutual support for each other (Ho, 2006).

Less inhibited members of the group help to 'break the ice' for shyer participants (Kitzinger, 1995). The group dynamic may also present several challenges to the researcher. In some cases, the establishment of group norms and presence of dominant participants can effectively silence other voices in the group. In addition, participants can become defensive or withhold information if they do not feel comfortable in the focus group environment (Millward, 1995). Overcoming these issues requires considerable skill on the part of focus group moderator; their ability to conduct the group effectively is fundamental to its satisfactory operation (Krueger & Casey, 2009). This was ensured by the researcher in this study by ensuring that all participants were given a chance to speak and express their opinions free from interruptions by stronger participants in the focus group. Prior to the commencement of the focus group, the researcher explained the ground rules in place to have an effective outcome.

3.10.1 Participants in focus group

The sample in this study consisted of 7 post-primary teachers from 7 different schools (Table 5). Of the 7 participants, 5 were female and 2 were male. Participants ranged in age from 23 to 60, with teaching experience ranging from those in their first year of teaching to those teaching over 20 years+. Participants taught a wide variety of subjects and were employed in both urban and rural schools. They were also employed in both private and public schools (ETB's, voluntary secondary schools and community colleges), situated in areas with widely varying socioeconomic circumstances.

Participants were contacted directly by email (Appendix B) and asked to participate in a focus group about their experiences of wellbeing and how it was supported in their school. Information regarding the study was provided in detail along with an information sheet, consent form and interview stimuli (Appendix C) The focus group would last one hour.

Table 6

Participant Characteristics: Focus Group

Participant number	Gender	Years teaching	School type
1	Female	18	Private boarding
2	Female	19	ETB (Munster)
3	Male	10	ETB (Leinster)
4	Female	17	Voluntary
5	Male	19	Community
6	Female	18	ETB (Gaelcholáiste)
7	Female	18	ETB (Connaught)

3.10.2 Focus group procedure

Participants were contacted through email to take part in a study of their experiences of teacher wellbeing as second level teachers in Ireland, and the supports, practices and polices currently on place. Participants were advised of time and date of focus group. All interviews took place online due to Covid-19 restrictions. On commencement of the focus group, participants were introduced to each other and talked informally prior to the commencement of the interview. Once participants were all successfully logged on to meeting, they were informed of the information sheet and consent form that was previously distributed to them by email explaining the purpose of the study and that it would be recorded. Participants were reminded that they could withdraw from the process at any time and the information they provided would be held in the strictest confidence. Once all participants indicated their consent the recording equipment was turned on and the focus group commenced.

The group discussions broadly followed the interview schedule though there was flexibility in the ordering of the questions depending on the direction being taken by participants in their contributions. In general discussions flowed very naturally with little need for moderation and prompting. There were some issues at times where participants were asked to repeat their answer due to the quality of their broadband. Once the questions in the interview schedule were covered and discussions reached a conclusion, participants were thanked for their participation and the purpose of the study was again explained to them. Participants were informed they would receive a copy of the focus group transcript, which they could review.

3.11 Procedures to maximise validity, reliability and generalisability

Principles of validity and reliability were followed in undertaking this research such as avoidance of bias and ensuring transparency of findings, supported by evidence and triangulation of data (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 295). The extent to which reliability and validity can be assured in qualitative research has been contested (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Reliability and validity are "operationalized so rigidly in fixed design quantitative research" therefore the challenge for qualitative researchers is "to find alternative ways of operationalising them appropriate to the conditions and circumstances of flexible design research" (Robson, 2011, p. 156). Qualitative researchers need to ensure the credibility of their research by addressing a few criteria (Merriam, 1998) such as internal validity, reliability, and external validity.

3.11.1 Pilot of interview and online survey questions

To maximise the validity and reliability of the data collection instruments a pilot of both the online survey and interview questions was undertaken. This occurred with a Principal

and teachers that were not participating in the study. The Principal participant for interview purposes, was a Principal known to me outside my own school context. Six teachers in my own school completed my pilot survey and gave feedback on question structure and ease of understanding. The pilot process for both the online survey and semi-structed interviews was vital as it gave the researcher an opportunity to make some necessary modifications to the structure of the survey and interview schedule.

3.11.2 Internal validity

To maximise internal validity, it is important to use triangulation or multiple sources of data to verify the emerging findings (Robson, 2011). In this research study, the data was gathered over a six-month period from January to June 2020. This type of long-term observation adds to the validity of the findings (Merriam, 1998). I attempted to account for myself in the research by constructing constructs from the data collected and engaging in meaningful reflection as the researcher. While bias cannot be eradicated from qualitative research and must be carefully controlled, the validity and reliability of the research can be maintained by using reflexivity (Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007). A reflective journal was used to aid the sustenance of internal validity in this research study. This was used to record my experiences, thoughts, opinions and feelings as a researcher while also allowing them to be acknowledged as part of the data analysis and interpretation processes. It also allows for the researcher to critically engage with the process of the research, while reflecting on the experience.

3.11.3 External validity

The generalisability of the research findings is referred to as external validity (Merriam, 1998). Much of what may be learned from a single example can be applied to other cases, thanks to information gained from previous experiences (Stake, 1995). Naturalistic

generalisations, as defined by Stake (1995), are “conclusions reached by personal engagement in life's activities or by vicarious experience so skilfully crafted that the person feels as though it happened to them” (p. 85). This research study aids the reader in making naturalistic generalisations by ensuring that a chance for a vicarious experience is provided (Stake, 1995). It allows the reader to investigate and compare his or her own context with the research case, and so assess if the research findings are applicable to his or her own situation, using detailed descriptions and explanations of the research techniques and conclusions (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995).

3.11.4 Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of the research and its capacity to be duplicated, which can be difficult in qualitative research because human behaviour is constantly changing (Merriam, 1998). The reader is given “a chain of evidence” in this research study to explain every phase of the investigation to other researchers (Yin, 2009, p. 41). The study's credibility is bolstered by the use of data triangulation (Hammersley, 2007), in this case the online survey and interviews. This research study contains a clear and comprehensive description of the techniques utilised for data collecting, analysis, and decision-making which is necessary for clarifying how the researcher arrived at the conclusions and increasing the study's credibility (Hammersley, 2007; Merriam, 1998).

3.12 Ethical considerations

This research was guided by the Maynooth University Research Ethics Policy, the Maynooth University Reseach Integrity Policy & BERA Ethical Guidelines (2018). The research project was conducted in accordance with the Maynooth University Data Protection Policy and adhered with data protection laws. Ethical issues are evident in all types of research (Orb et al., 2001, p. 93) and all research begins from a position of ethical

tension (Guillemin & Gillam 2004). With the survey, details of the study were distributed by the National Principal and Deputy Principals' Association (NAPD) to all post-primary schools in Ireland. The email included confirmation of ethical approval, along with the survey link. This allowed for this possible tension to be resolved. The opening page of the survey included an introduction to the research project with the purpose of the research study clearly identified. Participants were also provided with contact details of the Secretary of the Maynooth University Ethics Committee along with contact details for both the researcher and supervisors.

The survey included a section for participants to confirm their consent before completing the survey. Those participants taking part in semi-structured interviews and focus group were provided with an information sheet and consent form by email before commencement of the interview. An interview schedule was also included in the email with an outline of the discussion topics. This allowed participants to become familiar with the topics should they wish to prepare in advance. The questions used to stimulate focus group discussion were formulated from the data received from the survey previously distributed. Interview schedule questions were formulated to explore how teachers felt teacher wellbeing was supported in their schools. Several prompts were developed for each question to assist in the discussion. The final interview schedule can be seen in Appendix D.

The interviews had initially begun face-to-face in February 2020, but due to the Covid-19 pandemic the remaining interviews took place online through the Microsoft Teams as directed and approved by Maynooth University. As interviews were recorded, participant also gave their consent verbally before the recording began. Consent forms were signed and returned to the researcher via email. Each of these steps ensured that participants were

fully informed of their role in the research (Cohen et al., 2011), become participants in the research rather than subjects and adopted the goals of the research as their own (Guillemin and Gillam 2004). The questions were also piloted in advance to minimise discomfort to participants. Participants were reassured that their anonymity and confidentiality would be always maintained and that pseudonyms would be assigned to all participants to ensure anonymity and confidentiality and 'to provide the best protection for participants' (Maynooth University, 2016, p. 2).

Participants were also assured that any information (other people, events and/or locations) that were shared or mentioned would be rendered unidentifiable for the purpose of the research study. I ensured to follow up with all participants following completion of the interviews to ensure that they were satisfied with the interview process and the topics discussed and data provided. A copy of the interview transcript was sent to participant via email, to allow them to be fully satisfied with the process. This also allowed for verification and to ensure the validity of the data collected. No problems or issues were noted in this process.

Adhering to the Maynooth University Research Ethics policy (Maynooth University 2020) participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the research at any time without any negative consequences. In compliance with Data Protection legislation and Maynooth University Guidelines for Data Collection, Storage, Retention and Disposal (Maynooth University 2016) the data obtained was processed fairly and ethically in accordance with the purposes for which it was volunteered and stored in a secure location. All hard copies were locked in a secure cabinet at the researcher's home. Electronic information was encrypted/password protected and stored securely on the Maynooth University server and accessed only by me, the researcher. Participants were also made

aware on both the information sheet and the consent form that the data would be retained for a period of ten years and would then be destroyed in a manner appropriate to the sensitivity of that data. The researcher would be solely responsible for destroying personally identifiable data. Manual data would be shredded confidentially by the researcher and electronic data will be reformatted or overwritten by the researcher in Maynooth University. After ten years all data will be destroyed. All participants were informed that the research will be written up and presented as a thesis. It may also be presented at National Conferences and/or written and presented for publication. A copy of the research findings would be made available to them upon request.

3.13 Data analysis

This study including Phase one and two generated a large data set which includes open ended survey questions, semi-structured interview and focus group transcripts. The researcher considered the importance of reducing data overload throughout the research process by writing summaries, memos and document sheets to keep track of the data while reducing unnecessary data, a concept emphasised by Miles and Huberman (1994) and the approach undertaken in the data collection process for this study.

Considering Dialectical Pluralism in this context, the researcher can actively explore whether a hidden consensus, synthesis or unity can be found behind the plurality of viewpoints (e.g. Robinson, 2020). This dialectical reasoning process involves critically examining and deconstructing apparently opposing presentations of complex matters to seek hidden but often unarticulated common assumptions. This allowed the researcher to find a unity in a way that does not over-ride plurality and difference; these often happily co-exist (Johnson, 2020). The researcher took a dialectical approach to both phase one quantitative (online surveys) and phase two qualitative data (interviews and focus group) shows that both emerge from a complex range of overlapping epistemologies.

SPSS (Version 25: IBM Corp., 2019) was used to conduct the statistical tests. Hierarchical multiple regression was used to assess the ability of the control measures (policy, management caring about them, wellbeing being on meeting agenda, support strategies in place, wellbeing related CPD), after controlling for the influence of age to predict levels of wellbeing as assessed by MHC. T-Test was also employed in Phase one of this study, which compares the means between two unrelated groups on the same continuous dependant variable.

The use of a qualitative data analysis package, MAXQDA was employed in this study which aided data organisation and structured exploration of the data. It is important to note that a QDA package cannot analyse or interpret the data, this can only be done by the researcher themselves (Robson, 2011). This research study utilised a thematic analysis approach based on the work of Braun and Clarke (2006) and with which the steps are illustrated in Table 6. Thematic analysis involves "identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data, while it minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 6). A theme refers to an important aspect of the data that relates to the research question and illustrates a type of response that follows a pattern within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Robson, 2011). However, prior to identifying themes, it is necessary to generate initial codes which in simple terms are interesting features or concepts of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Following this, coding is an important part of analysis process that allows the researcher to organise the data into relevant categories (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This involves initial first-level coding (Appendix F) consisting of labelling groups of words followed by second-level coding which reduces the initial codes into a fewer number of themes

(Miles & Huberman, 1994). Once the coding was completed in this study, the codes were collated into broader themes and sub-themes which were later reviewed and refined (Braun & Clarke, 2006) (Appendix G, H).

Table 7

Six-Step Approach to Thematic Analysis

1. Familiarising yourself with the data:	Transcribing the data, reading and re-reading the data, noting initial ideas
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collecting data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking that the themes work in relation to the Coded extracts (Level1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each of them, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definition names for each theme
6. Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Note. Adapted from *Using Thematic Analysis In Psychology* by V. Braun, & V. Clarke, 2006. Taylor & Francis.

The phases in thematic analysis are not sequential, since the researcher must go back and forth between analysing the data and examining the findings (Robson, 2011), which was necessary in Phase two this study. The first phase of the coding process was

familiarisation with the data collection, which was time consuming due to the large amount of data acquired in both the semi-structured interviews and focus group. The focus groups and interviews were transcribed and compiled and the researcher re-read the recorded data and took notes on initial views. MAXQDA was used to import the data from the interviews and focus groups. The researcher identified what were interesting traits or starting codes from across the data set in phase two. Responsibility, box-ticking exercises, and formal efforts are examples of such basic codes (Appendix G). In Phase Three, twenty codes were determined, which were then grouped into eight themes (Appendix H). Initial codes such as top-down approach, special policy, and specific CPD, for example, were grouped together under the theme collaboration.

Following that, the themes were evaluated in terms of their relevance to the coded excerpts, yielding three main themes: 1. Accountability 2. Perceptions and 3. Visibility (Appendix G). The third stage of coding required refining, leading to the creation of definitions and names for each of the three topics (Appendix G). Appendix F contains a list of coding sources and types. To provide a coherent narrative of the story generated by the data, detailed examination of the identified themes and substantial evidence of their presence is essential (Braun & Clarke, 2016). In this research study, extracts from the data provide examples of occurring themes and are embedded within an analytic narrative which examines the data in relation to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2016).

3.14 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the methodological approach used in this study. The philosophical assumptions of dialectical pluralism underpinning this study were outlined in its attempt to identify the gap in the literature pertaining to teacher wellbeing.

Subsequently, a mixed methods design was deemed appropriate for this research study, with the use of an online survey, semi-structured interviews and a focus group chosen.

This research design was discussed in relation to its strengths and possible weaknesses while also discussing the two studies in this research. Clarification was provided regarding the aspects of methodological rigour that were considered to ensure validity and reliability of the research. Ethical considerations were outlined with the data analysis approach described.

The findings from the qualitative and quantitative data analysis are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Presentation of findings

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the findings are presented. The findings are organised according to the research questions guiding the study , aiming to address how teacher wellbeing is supported in Ireland and the effectiveness of these interventions. In seeking to address the research gap relating to teacher wellbeing, this research comprises of two phases.

4.2 Phase one: Online survey

The quantitative survey is the main data set used to respond to Phase one. Management bodies were not included in question one due to its small sample size, making it statistically insignificant for analysis. T- test for opinion was utilised for this question, with 2 groups created 1. Principals/Deputy principals and 2. Teachers and Assistant principals (AP). AP's were included in this group due to their teaching hours.

1. Are there differences in opinions in how teachers and school leaders view wellbeing in relation to policy, management caring about them, wellbeing being on meeting agenda, support strategies in place and wellbeing related CPD?
2. What is the impact of practices on teachers' personal wellbeing and how much of the variance in wellbeing scores can be explained by systemic variables (policy, management caring about them, wellbeing being on meeting agenda, support strategies in place, wellbeing related CPD), after controlling for age?

4.3 Phase two: Semi-structured interviews and focus group

1. What are the similarities and differences in the perception of wellbeing across the 'three voices' (managerial agencies, principals/deputy principals, teachers?
2. What are the supports that can be put in place to enhance teacher's wellbeing?

The qualitative data provided by the respondents from semi-structured interviews and a focus group are the main dataset used to respond to Phase two.

4.3.1 Question one

Are there differences in opinions in how teachers and school leaders view wellbeing in relation to policy, management caring about them, wellbeing being on meeting agenda, support strategies in place and wellbeing related CPD?

4.3.2 Results

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the factors associated with higher levels of personal wellbeing for leaders and teachers. Statistically significant differences were found between leaders and teachers across all factors measured. Teachers scored higher in believing that having a wellbeing policy in school enhanced their wellbeing (M=2.11, SD=.76 vs M=1.74, SD=.50, t(272)=-4.94, p<.001). However, leaders scored higher in relation to believing that other factors will enhance teachers' wellbeing, i.e. having a wellbeing on the meeting agenda (M=2.45, SD=.89 vs M=1.92, SD=.79, t(203)=5.13, p<.001), Management cares (M=3.62, SD=.59 vs M=2.82, SD=.83, t(268)=9.29, p<.001), support strategies in place (M=3, SD=.89 vs M=2.16, SD=.78, t(273)=8.33, p<.001), and wellbeing-related CPD (M=2.73, SD=.93 vs M=2.02, SD=.79, t(195)=6.46, p<.001)). The magnitude of all differences was moderate. The results indicate that teachers and leaders differ in what they perceive impacts teachers' wellbeing.

Table 8

T test results

Factors	Leaders		Teachers				Eta
	M	SD	M	SD	df	t	squared
Wellbeing policy	1.74	0.50	2.11	0.76	272.14	-4.94*	-0.04
Wellbeing on meeting agenda	2.46	0.89	1.92	0.79	203.52	5.13*	0.04
Management cares	3.62	0.59	2.82	0.83	268.64	9.29*	0.06
Support strategies in place	3.00	0.86	2.16	0.78	273.00	8.33*	0.06
Wellbeing-related CPD	2.73	0.93	2.02	0.79	195.49	6.46*	0.05

*p<.001

4.3.3. Question two

3. What is the impact of practices on teachers' personal wellbeing and how much of the variance in wellbeing scores can be explained by systemic variables (policy, management caring about them, wellbeing being on meeting agenda, support strategies in place, wellbeing related CPD), after controlling for age.

This question explored the impact on teacher's wellbeing of (1) policy, (2) wellbeing related CPD, (3) support strategies, and (4) having wellbeing on staff meeting agendas. Specifically, the research question was: How much of the variance in wellbeing scores can be explained by systemic variables (policy, management caring about them, wellbeing being on meeting agenda, support strategies in place, wellbeing related CPD), after controlling for age.

4.3.4 Results

SPSS (Version 25: IBM Corp., 2019) was used to conduct the statistical tests. Hierarchical multiple regression was used to assess the ability of the control

measures (policy, management caring about them, wellbeing being on meeting agenda, support strategies in place, wellbeing related CPD), after controlling for the influence of age to predict levels of wellbeing as assessed by MHC. Preliminary analysis was conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity. Age was entered at Step 1, explaining 5% of the variance in Wellbeing MHC. After entry of the other four variables at step 2, the total variance explained by the model was R^2= 17, % F=9.63 f(df=6, 275) = 9.63, p<.001. The four measures explained an additional 12% of the variants in wellbeing after controlling for age R^2 change = .12, F change (df =5,275) = F change 8.07 p< .001. In the final model only 2 of the control measures were statistically significant with management cares about wellbeing recording a higher beta value (beta=.20, p < .05) followed by the support strategies for teachers' wellbeing (beta = .26,p< .05).

Table 9

Hierarchical Regression Model

	Model 1			Model 2		
Variable	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*B*	*SE B*	*β*
Age	.20	.05	.23**	.12	.05	.14*
Policy				.01	.06	.14
Management caring about them				.21	.08.	20*
Wellbeing being on meeting agenda				-.02	.08	.20
Support strategies in place				.26	.08	.26*
Wellbeing related CPD				-.06	.08	-.07
R^2	*.05*	*.17*				
F for change in R^2	*15.50*	*8.07*				

*p < . 05 ** p < .001.

From question one above, it transpired that there are statistically significant differences across the board between the two groups in their opinions on the selected variables. Phase two emerged (qualitative data) as further research was required having established these

differences between principals/deputy principals and teachers, the third voice (managerial agencies) was now required. To assess if there were any further differences between the three voices, semi-structed interviews and focus group were chosen to allow for a deeper discussion to identifying the similarities and differences from all three perspectives, but also to identify what supports and interventions could be put in place to enhance teachers' wellbeing.

4.4 Qualitative data findings:

3. What are the similarities and differences in the perception of wellbeing across the' three voices', i.e. managerial agencies, principals/deputy principals, teachers?
4. What are the supports that can be put in place to enhance teacher's wellbeing?

The rich and meaningful qualitative data provided by the respondents in the interviews and focus group are the main datasets used to respond to the questions in Phase two with the themes and subthemes outlined in Figure 6 and as follows:

Theme 1: Accountability *subthemes*: 1. A statutory requirement 2. Visibility 3. Perceptions

Theme 2: Visibility *subthemes:* 1. Collaboration 2. Defining wellbeing

Theme 3: Perception's *subthemes*: 1. Supports available 2. Whole-school approach

The following section is organised and presented under themes and subthemes as outlined below.

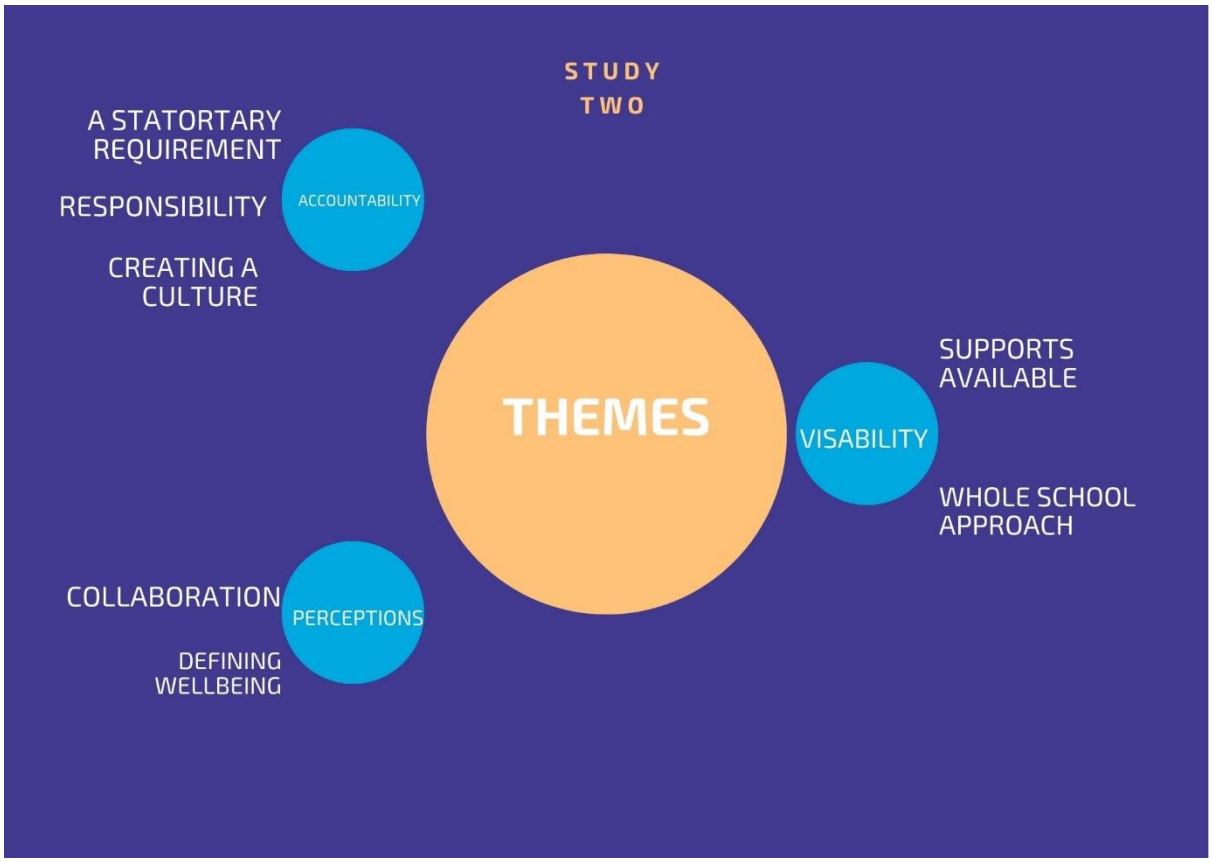
Theme: Accountability Subtheme: A statutory requirement, Responsibility, Creating a culture.

Theme: Perceptions Subthemes: Collaboration, Defining wellbeing

Theme: Visibility Subtheme: Supports available, Whole-school approach

Figure 5

Themes and Subthemes



4.4.1 Question one: what are the similarities and differences in the perception of wellbeing across managerial agencies, principals/deputy principals, and teachers?

This research question encapsulates all participants thoughts and opinions of how wellbeing is conceptualised and to where the responsibility lies. It may be gleamed from the data if there is some confusion around the area of accountability particularly in terms of legislation. This was a common thread across all three stakeholder groups.

The themes from this question include:

4.5 Accountability

This theme examines the participants views and opinions as to where the responsibility lies and to who is accountable for teacher wellbeing in post-primary school in Ireland. What is evident from the findings is the lack of consensus as to where this responsibility lies. Therefore, this question aims to examine the 'three voices' opinions in relation to wellbeing accountability, with a view to establishing a consensus. The 'three voices 'were harmonious in their views of this theme. This theme consists of the following subthemes explained below.

Subthemes: 1. A statutory requirement? 2. Responsibility 3. Creating a culture

4.5.1 A statutory requirement?

This subtheme explains the managerial agencies and principal's perspective on how wellbeing is legislated in the school environment. The focus group did not give any opinion or view on legislation.

Participants representing managerial agencies stated that Boards of Management and Education and Training Board (ETBs) as employers have legal obligations under this legislation, the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. This is also stated in the above act by the Department of Education.

> *Focus on the statutory requirements that's it. It's laid down in law, your employer. The employer's responsibility. (ASTI)*

This does not come without its difficulties for Boards of Managements. While the Board of Managements are seen in general as the employers, they have the legal responsibility under duty of care while also having full responsibility for grievance, disciplinary and policy implementation.

> *From the TUI perspective you would say this from legally speaking it's with the board of management. (TUI)*

It was agreed that it is a grey area, and dependant from one organisation to another, with some board of managements not realising the responsibility. The data also revealed that schools are being managed by volunteers, who may or may not have expertise in certain legal areas.

> *Some boards are acutely aware of their responsibility, others will only become aware of the extent of the responsibility when something goes wrong. (TUI),*

Section 8 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 requires a duty of care to your employers, with managerial agencies strong in their opinion of where wellbeing is situated in schools.

> *Under contract law, employment, law and duty of care is implied into every contract. The employer provides a safe place of work. My duty is to ensure my care for you while you're at work. That's where wellbeing sits. (JMB)*

However, equally the same act stipulates employees must take a responsibility for their own behaviour at the workplace, thus blurring the responsibility.

> *Staff have responsibility to each other and both on the health and safety legislation. And we're all responsible for our own health and safety and welfare comes within that (JMB).*

Evident in the findings is this blurring of the boundaries in terms of responsibility that creates difficulty in terms of legislation, leading participants to consider that this responsibility will never be defined. The individual's responsibility for their own wellbeing is impossible to legislate.

> *It's impossible to legislate, you just come back almost to culture, to exemplification, even down to modelling (TUI).*

Observations from the managerial agencies articulated that while the Department of Education hires teachers, inspects teachers' pay school and to some extent, determines the curriculum and allocates resources, it is the principals that determine what they do. They were also in agreement that while they legally accept the Department of Education is not the employer in most cases, they have extraordinary power over the system. The difficulty is then understanding if it is appropriate for the Department of Education to be involved and contribute when there is an issue of concern.

> *And we're not really sure whether it's appropriate for them to then say, when something goes, well, yeah, we want you to do this. But when something goes badly to say, Oh, no, sorry. That's nothing to do with whatsoever. We're not sure that's necessarily tenable.* (TUI).

The data from the observations of the managerial agencies in terms of the principal's role and responsibility indicated that ultimately, they are responsible, if there is no specific person assigned to this role or responsibility. This in itself creates difficulty as the data revealed the issue with job role and job description.

> *My experience is that if somebody's name isn't on a particular role or responsibility, it revolves back to the principal. I think that's the biggest issue to do with wellbeing (JMB).*

Similarly, data from the principal and deputy principal interviews revealed that all participants feel they have a responsibility and that ultimately it is their job. This data differed from how the managerial agencies perceived the role, in particular the unions.

> *Well, really that falls to the principal as far as I'm concerned, well, I suppose everything falls to the principal (Principal participant 3).*

When questioned about the role of the board of management and their responsibility, principals felt that the board of managements were far removed from the daily business of schools and as such would not have a direct influence or impact on the day to day running of the school or management of staff. They acknowledged the difficulties involved to support wellbeing alluding to the complete grey area of responsibility they feel exists for teacher wellbeing. The role they take on is in a non-official capacity. Interestingly, the data from the managerial agencies on the same topic reveals the implications of doing this as to what extent do you have authority to do anything about it if it is in a non-official capacity.

> *I would be a bit nervous for anybody taking on anything in a non-official capacity post. To what extent then do they have authority to do anything about it? You have no responsibility, and you have no power to do anything about it if it's official. But what happens if you miss read the situation, or you don't know that situation* (JMB).

This again raised the issue and concerns of role and job description for both principals and deputy principals. The other side of it is if it's everybody's responsibility, it's nobody's responsibility. There is a case for general making explicit where that responsibility lies in legislation and amongst the school environment.

4.5.2 Responsibility

All teachers in the focus group understand and accept their own personal responsibility for their wellbeing and the importance of taking this concept into the classroom. There is a huge responsibility on an individual level for people to be mindful of their own wellbeing.

> *When I go into the classroom, they get all of me good and bad. They are so impressionable, and they do pick up on things-- particular the older ones. They might say, "You're not yourself today, miss or whatever?" We do have to take on that responsibility. (Teacher participant 1 Focus group).*

> *It comes back to responsibility because if I choose to act in any way, rightly or wrongly, the students are watching what I'm doing. They are witnesses, they are learning from the minute they go in. As you say if this isn't embedded in yourself as a professional going in, how are we going to share that wellbeing with others, and being well? (Teacher participant 4 Focus group).*

Participants also noted that while teachers' own wellbeing was important, that of the senior management was just as important.

> *If we don't take care of the head, the rest of it will rot (TUI).*

The role of senior management, in particular that of principal and deputy principal is very challenging with high expectation. From this, the data revealed the frustrations of the participants in the focus group questioning why management cannot challenge and question the managerial and governing agencies.

> *I do think senior management wellbeing has been very challenged as well because of all that's expected of them. I would love to know why the principals can't challenge. Why don't they challenge the department or another agency? Why are they happy to accept all this additional stuff, and then it's fed down to us?* (Teacher participant 4 Focus group).

Participants explained how some experiences such as a negative voice in the staffroom can spread and impact on them and their wellbeing. Instead of creating a solution, people can become quite negative, thus impacting the wellbeing of not just their own but also of others. All participants noted the importance of how management in particular the principal can make a distinct difference to their wellbeing.

> *We have a new headmaster. He's only been there for about a year and a half. In the initial months of his appointment, he made time to meet with each one of us individually. I am going into year 19 of teaching. I have never had any longer than 10 minutes with any leader in my school since my interview. He met with me for 50 minutes and he did that to a staff of 65. That's management and caring about your staff (Teacher participant 1 Focus group)*

4.5.3 Creating a culture

This subtheme explains the importance of creating and fostering a culture of wellbeing in the school community that stems from the top down and filters through all aspects of the school.

While the teacher participants in the focus group acknowledged the part they themselves must play, they strongly implied that it needed to be guided or led by the senior management in the school including the principal, deputy and the assistant principals. Understanding that while management cannot be held responsible for it, they certainly create the culture to foster positive wellbeing. If teachers must teach, guide and accept students, the same thought should be applied to teachers. Management need to look at ways to support theses outside influences that can affect a teacher's wellbeing and implement strategies to support them.

> *Yes, I don't think (management) is fully responsible, but I think they must carry the lion's share of the load (Teacher participant 6 Focus group).*

> *They (management) can create the culture. If there's no attention given to the culture from there, I don't think develop from the ground up* (Teacher participant 2 Focus group).

While creating that culture and sense of top-down approach some participants noted the challenges management might face recognising that management can only do so much to support wellbeing and questioning whether it is part of their role.

> *I suppose it does have to come from management down, but I think there is only so much senior management can do as well. You're responsible for yourself too. I think everyone has a part to play. I think sometimes we put maybe too much back on them when really their job isn't our wellbeing (teacher participant 7 Focus group).*

This emphasised the issue in terms of principals and deputy principals' roles with some participants strong in their opinion that it is part of their duties, due to the fact they are in a management position.

> *That's what I mean by they have a role. I would say yes, it's every individual teacher but I do think those people that are getting paid for both have an extra responsibility there because they must take on extra roles as management in the school (Teacher participant 5 Focus group).*

The Managerial agencies recognised their role was a in a representative fashion, there to support and advice school management. They do not have a frontline relationship with principals. However, they did recognise the importance of looking after the school from the top down, implying that if you do not look after the head of the leadership in any organisation, it can deteriorate and become contagious down though system.

> *We, in a kind of a proxy way have a serious level of influence on teacher wellbeing and teacher performance and the teacher professionalism. It's mediated through the school leadership. That's the lens we're taking. There are our people and our parish in that sense (JMB).*

4.6 Perceptions

This theme explains how all participants define wellbeing and the impact this lens has on how wellbeing is supported in the school environment. It also examines the importance of a collaborative approach to wellbeing from all key stakeholders in the school environment.

Subthemes: 1. Defining wellbeing 2. collaboration

4.6.1 Defining wellbeing

Participants representing managerial agencies acknowledged that current research indicates that what is most beneficial in the promotion of wellbeing in education is to adopt a preventative, whole-school approach. This is also true of teachers and other staff members in the school environment, but according to the data has not transferred through the system to support teachers' wellbeing.

All participants acknowledged that much of the problem in terms of wellbeing in school is that there are many definitions of wellbeing, and while certainly participants agreed that definitions can vary, there was consensus across different stakeholder groups that it is important that any definition of wellbeing communicates its multi-dimensional nature. Participants from the managerial agencies acknowledged that wellbeing can certainly be associated with an individual in any given day, but it does not necessarily mean the absence of stress or negative emotions or the absence of mental health difficulties. It is important that all members of the education community including the department of education and all other governing bodies understand that everyone experiences vulnerability and a need for care at some stages of their teaching career.

All participants acknowledged that wellbeing is a personal journey but is connected to a broad range of factors that exist at both an individual and school level. There was an obvious struggle within the 3 voices in terms of the concept of wellbeing and its meaning. Participants identified this area as an issue of concern and a prominent one as how can schools address and support the concept of wellbeing if there is difficulty and difference in opinions from stakeholders as to what it means. As there has been numerous definitions given in terms of what wellbeing is and means, having not particular guideline or definition the school environment is undoubtedly an issue.

> *On your definition of wellbeing. So, is this part of the problem? We've had no end of definitions of wellbeing over the last few years, and for example, the area of junior cycle wellbeing. And we would argue on a day of that or say in the NCCN guidelines and that, that covers the entire school community. And what does document definition of wellbeing fit with the definition of wellbeing in terms of mental wellbeing?*
> *So yeah, I suppose it all ends up coming back to the definition, wellbeing (TUI).*

All participants felt that the term wellbeing needed a clearer definition to begin to support teachers. The data revealed the different perspectives amongst the participants, with many having different meanings and objectives.

> *It's not about the fluffy stuff. It's all about feeling supported (Teaching Council).*
> *The term wellbeing is bandied about so much that it would be nice to get more clear view of what that actually means because I've had people crying in my office shouting and screaming at me over a timetable, saying, "I was affecting their wellbeing because they don't have first and last class off, and the fact that they don't have a half-day from school (Principal participant 3).*

There was also some confusion with the concept of wellbeing when compared with duty of care, with participants feeling that the term duty of care was a broader concept. Not having a clear definite definition of both terms creates conflict and lack of understanding in schools from all perspectives. This again raised the issue in terms of responsibility from a legislative perspective when discussing duty of care, but there was an obvious confusion amongst all participants.

> *Duty of Care is making sure it's a safe place to work. Does that include wellbeing? (ASTI)*

The question of where wellbeing sits in the school environment was also questioned with uncertainty of where it belongs in the holistic environment. There is a vast landscape of various regulations to circulars ranging from duty of care to health and safety legislation with the data revealing what is missing is coherence and the notion of where wellbeing belongs. Understanding what the term wellbeing means to individual regardless of their position in the school is necessary for it to be supported.

> *Well, what does wellbeing mean to me? Who's responsible for mine?*

The data revealed that to some extent, with the managerial agencies, the importance of making this definition explicit. If this is not achieved, school leaders will be unable to read the climate or more importantly control it, perhaps ultimately impacting students results. All participants questioned what does wellbeing mean to me? Who's responsible for mine? A school need to be able to justify what they stand for including the wellbeing of its teachers and according to the managerial agencies in the date that is the centre of the educator in the documentation.

Most of the managerial agencies explained that what is missing is coherence. There is a landscape from everything including from a health and safety perspective to dignity at the workplace, to duty of care, but with a lack of understanding of what they mean and to whom they apply to.

4.6.2 Collaboration

This subtheme examines how a collaborative approach is necessary for teacher wellbeing in post-primary schools in Ireland. Collaboration from all key stakeholders is an important and effective factor when supporting teacher wellbeing.

The observations from the interviews and focus group imply the importance of a collaborative approach for the planning and implementation supports for teacher wellbeing. Participants also noted the importance of the environment and having and using the correct language to support teachers and their wellbeing. Unless it's an integrated approach where people will see this (teacher wellbeing) is part of a bigger and holistic approach and involving all the key stakeholders. In this research study, the Department of Education or the Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCS) did not participate following an invitation.

> *I suppose if you look at the department, it's so traditional in its approach. I suppose it's floundering in this new area of growth of wellbeing (TUI).*

While the notion of collaboration was widely evident in the discussion, it did raise the question among both union and teacher participants as to why there is no teacher representative on the Wellbeing for Teachers and Learners' Group. This collaborative endeavour includes representatives from the Irish Primary Principals' Network, the Teaching Council, the Ombudsman for Children's Office, the National Parent's Council and the National Principals and Deputy Principals association with the aim of coming together to ensure the area of wellbeing has a positive impact on the whole-school environment. It raised many concerns as to how this could be best practice for engagement collaboration. This is how one teacher put it:

> *You just can't talk about this, about engagement collaboration, and you have no teacher here. You can't call this best practice. (Teacher Participant 3 Focus group)*

The issue of collaboration was also relevant when discussing the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for practice, as the data from the union representatives revealed that there was no consultation from teacher representative on this document. This strongly implies the frustration from the lack of collaboration on teacher wellbeing practices and policies. The framework indicates to endeavour to promote the wellbeing of school and centre for education personnel and to review the current range of wellbeing supports available to staff with a view to ensuring best practice in early intervention and prevention for supporting positive occupational health and wellbeing. It is noted from the data that this is an incomplete chapter. It can be reasonably deduced that the omission of this has increased participants frustrations in terms of the lack of collaboration, consultation and lack of emphasis on teacher wellbeing in general.

4.7 Supports to enhance teachers' wellbeing

Research question two: Supports that can be put in place to enhance teachers' wellbeing

This question examines the supports that participates feel could be implemented to help support teacher's wellbeing. It also evaluates some of the current practices in place and what management can do in the school environment to show they care. Adopting a whole-school approach and the importance of this approach is discussed by the participants who were in full consensus.

The themes from this research question are:

4.8 Visibility of supports

This theme refers to how visible the supports available to teachers for their wellbeing are in the school environment. It also refers to the importance of whole-school approach to wellbeing, with this approach visible and apparent in schools.

4.8.1 Subthemes:1. Supports available 2. Whole-school approach

4.8.1 Informal and formal supports

All teachers felt that this was a box ticking exercise with very little formal initiatives in place to support teacher wellbeing. This is how one teacher responded to a question when asked about supports for teachers' wellbeing in their school:

> *Honestly, very little. A lot of lip-service paid to, "Oh, we have to mind teacher wellbeing, we have to take care of the teachers," but ever-increasing workload and nothing really being done to support any of us while the workload is increasing. I suppose leading to huge frustration and every time it's mentioned at the staff meeting, it's, "Oh yes, we must do something, we must do something," but nothing is ever done. (Teacher participant 5 Focus group).*

One teacher felt that there was some support for teacher wellbeing in the school, but not in a formal way:

> *I don't think it's formalised, but I do feel there's some nod to teacher wellbeing in our school. (Teacher participant 3 Focus group).*

One participant described the initiatives provided as more of an entertainment committee that you might have in college rather than a professional wellbeing committee that provides and supports correct polices and implements practices.

> *They don't really care what we're doing...yoga after school or yoga before school etc. but that's all coming from things staff have …. Nearly like the entertainment committee in college more than something coming from a policy that was created to protect teacher wellbeing (Teacher participant 2 Focus group).*

Participants explained that all the informal initiatives are organised and led by the teachers themselves. These formal and informal initiatives are outlined in Table 9.

Participants stated that while some wellbeing committees existed (one out of seven participants) they were informal and did not take priority over other communities established in the school. This was in contrast to all participants in the focus group having a wellbeing policy for the students in their school. Noticeably absent was a wellbeing policy for teachers with one out of seven participants in the focus group stating they have a wellbeing policy for teachers in their school.

Table 10

Informal and Formal Supports Available to Teachers

Informal Supports	Formal Supports
Social events/Coffee morning/Treats in staffroom	Employee Assistance Scheme (Departmental led)
Social nights: Christmas/Summer/Occasional	Wellbeing policy
Social activities e.g., yoga	2-hour CPD with focus on Wellbeing
Participants noted that these initiatives are teacher led and organised	Participants noted the lack of formal supports offered in schools

4.8.2 Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

Most of the participants from the managerial agencies recognised the Department of Education's role in teacher wellbeing with the provision of the Occupational Health Strategy. The aim of this strategy is to promote the health and wellbeing of employees in the workplace, with a strong focus on prevention. The Occupational Health Strategy comprises the funded Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme (EAWP) and the Occupational Health Service (OHS). The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) is currently provided by Spectrum.Life. They are providing this support under the banner of 'Wellbeing Together: Folláinne Le Chéile'. However, some participants felt the previous programme, 'Inspire' that was in place up until 2019, was not as efficient as previous programmes acknowledging the difficulties teachers faced with this service, including gaining access to the programme.

> *We've encountered quite a few members who have had difficulties in terms of accessing extent of support. With the Inspire programme, that didn't seem to be the same problem.* (TUI).

Participants felt that this could be connected to the decrease in budget from the department. The managerial agencies noted that statistically, there is still very low level of engagement and that's not unusual with a the take up rate is between 1% to 3%. In any employee assistance service, it would not be unusual for any organization that provides an EAP or EAS to have a service with a very low uptake. The service only touches on people when they need it most for example a bereavement, financial difficulty or difficult family relationships.

> *People dip in and out at this point when they're forced to look at something that is impacting on them emotionally, health-wise. That's when the trigger is triggered. It's not something you can't say every day, well, how's your wellbeing? (TUI)*

Teachers who choose to avail of this service are entitled to counselling services up to six counselling paid by the department, but it is a tired approach with an element of self-care audit. That audit then indicates to the individual if counselling is required. It has a guided self-assessment and if you feel it then that you need counselling, then the telephone number is available to you to address the self-help courses, five ways to Wellbeing Database and Wellbeing Information Library. Managerial agencies (not including the unions) felt that it is this tiered approach that unions are disappointed with.

> *Again, from our management perspective, it's great to say to schools, but I think the unions have a different view of it and they don't feel it's fulfilling the counselling requirements. (JMB)*

There is also somewhat an element of confusion amongst participants when the programme is changed to a different managing body with a different name. It was recognised that the contract is put to tender and so from a financial aspect the department have made the change to different organisations.

> *Having a different dynamic and change name, people get confused (NAPD)*

The managerial agencies, being part of the stakeholders receive feedback on the uptake of the programme and the data revealed the main uptake on counselling sessions with stress being the highest followed by depression, and work-life balance. Unions strongly stated their concerns in relation to the now former Inspire programme which ran up until 2020.

> *We have serious doubts as to whether it reaches to standards of care. And we have, our department needs a lot more money put into it, needs review. Yes. And that's the reality...and also, it's the number of sessions that you were originally entitled to with care call has been reduced to three and family are no longer eligible (ASTI)*

The data revealed that one out of six principal/deputy principals' participants were aware of the Inspire programme, questioning how they can offer this department support to teachers in their school if they are unaware that it exists.

4.8.3 Support for principals

The data revealed the pressure and lack of support senior management feel in terms of their wellbeing, with many factors contributing to this feeling. A lack of role and job description was noted as a major concern with participants feeling that if it was not in any other person's job description, it was essentially their job. Participants also acknowledged what they referred to as the 'do ability of the job' and the increasing administrative burden that's based around governance rather than the ability to do a good job. This was due to what they felt was relationships in the school community. Another significant factor has been an enormous increase in compliance and administrative tasks, which is affecting the principal's job of having relationships with the teachers, students, and parents, while also being responsible for the educational outcomes. This has an enormous impact on managements wellbeing. Substantial more support is required not only for teachers, but senior management also to support their wellbeing. Participants also recognised the importance of looking after their own wellbeing, something which is not often discussed or supported.

> *If you're on an airplane, absolutely student wellbeing is important to us. If you're on an airplane, you must put on your own mask first. (The Teaching Council)*
> *There is a lot being done individually at different school levels and as the regulator, I suppose we have to sit outside that slightly (The Teaching Council)*

4.8.4 A caring management

Teachers suggested several changes that management can implement to support teacher wellbeing. These are outlined in Table 10 with direct quotes taken from both the open ended questions from the survey and some of the comments from teachers in the focus group. It indicates that according to teachers, sometimes simple changes in schools' policies and practices can make a significant difference. Some of these supports included a reduction in new initiatives implemented during the school year, effective CPD for

teachers' wellbeing and a genuine showing of appreciation and acknowledgment from senior management.

Table 11

Summary of What Management Can Do to Support Teacher Wellbeing

What can school management do more of to enhance teacher wellbeing?
Be given guidance to help implement wellness strategies
Implement an Email policy (set hours)
Liaise and communicate actively with all staff
Adopt and implement a wellbeing policy
Know the staff, opportunity to meet staff, planned CPD
Keep morale high. Be positive in interactions with staff.
More focus in meetings/more full staff initiatives.
Be caring, understanding. Provide time at meetings and information about CPD programmes.
Allow more time for managing people and less time creating documents
Give acknowledgement of the great work done, be genuine in doing so
Support staff, reduce burden by good organisation of school events and responsibilities on teachers
Less initiatives. We are drowning with initiative overload
Facilitate social interaction and recreation
Notice the little things and regular informal and formal praise measures
Have a wellbeing for teachers' policy and implement it
CPD that is about or promotes wellbeing
Find time to work on a specific policy for teacher wellbeing
Source formal initiatives that could help teacher wellbeing.
Wellbeing on staff meeting agendas
Trust. Listen. Be open & honest. Support without feeling that they have all the answers.
A simple thank you
Analyse not only student wellbeing but teachers also.
Have a post for wellbeing

4.8.5 Teacher accessibility

Having no email policy, where teachers were accessible at all times of the day and night was revealed to be an issue, as teachers felt they were always contactable.

> *The first thing I'd like to see is that they would stop sending us emails at seven and eight o'clock at night. That's inappropriate that we do-- we should have boundaries, we should have set boundaries. In general, there's nothing so urgent that they need to be encroaching on us at home time. Where if we were a private industry, I don't think it would be like that (Teacher participant 6 Focus group).*

One participant in the focus group taught in a private boarding school and acknowledged the difficulty that an email policy might create.

> *In the case of an email policy, we don't have one. We're a boarding school. We work 24 hours a day. I know that's a self-discipline that I must enforce on myself. I struggled with that boundary checking emails at godly hours (Teacher participant 1 Focus group).*

Participants also noted how accessibility has increased Post Covid, as the data revealed that not only students, but parents also expect even more access to teachers. This strongly suggests that schools need to establish a policy to deal with these issues. It was also noted that proper planning and consideration should be given when planning staff meeting, parent teacher meetings and other school calendar dates, to ease the stress and burden on teachers over the school year.

Some participants explained that contact directly from parents had also increased post covid, making teachers more accessible to them. Most of the participants found that parents will now challenge and question teacher's professional judgement. This strongly suggests that this has happened stemming from the use of predicative grading from the Leaving Certificate 2020.

> *What is very interesting is the number of parents who have emailed since reports went live. Parents now will be challenging, and questioning, teachers' professional judgement on a fifth-year report for fear that it could impact on the sixth year (Teacher participant 4 Focus group).*

4.8.6 Acknowledgement

All participants acknowledged their desire for a simple acknowledgment and for issues to be dealt with the correct fashion. Acknowledging the stresses and anxiety present daily

would also help teachers to support their wellbeing, either from their managerial agency or form senior management in the school.

> *A "thank you" goes a long way. With our new headmaster, it's not something we've ever experienced before. He says, "Thank you," and your thinking, "Oh. Was that for me?*" (Teacher participant 7 Focus group)

A more formal structure to support teacher wellbeing is vital and that input in terms of a budget was required from management or the Department of Education. All participants in the focus group took issue with the use of Croke park hours and the data revealed that participant felt they could be put to better use, including using part of the hours to facilitate teacher's wellbeing. This strongly implies that Croke park hours are not currently being used to facilitate CPD for wellbeing in any way. While appreciating the allocation of Croke park hours are necessary for certain topics such as subject planning, the participants strongly felt that some of the hours could be allocated to teacher wellbeing.

All participants in the focus group explained how the issue of sick pay has been a huge source of stress for teachers. Teachers are attending school on days where perhaps they should not be due to the worry of a reduction on the number of sick days they could take. Sick leave and sick days have also impacted on senior management in terms of substitution and supervision of classes.

Having a school environment where management value transparency and communication and are open and available can go a long way to develop the culture if wellbeing in the school. While participants emphasised the top-down approach, they were also aware that it needs to feed up the system as well.

Participants in the focus group voiced their frustrations on the issue of initiative overload, suggesting that management could be stronger in their approach on accepting new initiatives from the department, or direct these frustrations to the managerial agencies who represent them at departmental level.

> *I just wish principals were more assertive in saying, "Well, we can't actually do that," and more. They keep saying yes, yes to everything, and then we're the ones that have to do it (Teacher participant 5 Focus group)*

Participants in the focus group emphasised the challenges of not having a role description with management not clearly defining their roles and responsibilities.

> *What is needed is clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and that they're looked at, and discuss what's new, and maybe shared if the role is overloaded (Teacher participant 3 Focus group)*

Participants in the focus group were all in agreement that they would be able to recognise a genuine thank you to staff, and that it was an important factor. This included sending a generic email to all members of staff and not directly to the individuals involved. Individual recognition was identified as an important factor to all participants to support their wellbeing and help the feel acknowledged.

> *A genuine, "I am thanking you for the work you did," as opposed to "thanks, everyone, for all your hard work." You're sitting there thinking, "No. Everyone didn't work hard. I did work hard, and X, Y, and Z worked hard, but everyone didn't work hard (Teacher participant 7 Focus group)*

Some participants noted the importance of teachers acknowledging other teachers in their schools, giving the, the same recognition of something that is well done, as would be done and expected with students. Participants also acknowledged the importance of hearing and receiving the recognition from management directly, rather than through second-hand knowledge though other channels in the school.

> *The principal doesn't sing her praise to me, or she doesn't sing them to the other teacher whereas she'd be great at telling me, oh, didn't she do a wonderful job. I then feed that back, but we haven't heard that praise directly form the principal...it's a pity (Teacher participant 7 Focus group)*

Team building to increase staff morale was revealed in the data as an important factor to support teacher wellbeing with all participants agreeing. Activities such as staff bonding days were suggested as an important way for staff and management to collaborate at the beginning of the year.

Focus group participants explained that with an increasing level of discussion on student wellbeing and the number of policies and people that were seconded into the role to drive this on. Wellbeing is now correlated with CBAs, with participants emphasising the workload that the teachers have had to take on. There is also a reduction in curriculum time if you're in an optional subject. Yet, the demands are high on teachers to meet the needs of the student wellbeing and the staff piece forgotten alongside of it. There is an increased workload which has a direct correlation to negative feelings of wellbeing, junior cycle requirements, CBA's, formative assessment, inspections, planning, student support, cross curricular planning. Participants strongly suggested the need for guidance that instructs all schools to ensure staff wellbeing is in every staff meeting agenda and school management have this as a focus each term.

Teachers want to be affirmed, with all participants in the focus group putting this high on their list as to how management might support their wellbeing. Teachers are being coached daily on how to affirm our students. They strongly implied that this was not the case for teachers as they must be affirmed as well on an individual basis.

> *I suppose, ultimately, it's just compacted, its initiative overload, it's continuous dumping, dumping, dumping. All the time we're being asked to make sacrifices and cuts (Teacher participant 2 Focus group).*

There was an element of fear and unrest amongst the teacher participants as many of them felt that the culture previously established was being eroded and lost. One participant

described her experience of how this erosion happened in her school in relation to the class teacher system and role:

> *We always had a class teacher system at school. The DES comes in, does an inspection, tells us we have to get rid of the class teachers because we can't justify that one period. Now our whole system which was used to pick up on a range of issues in the morning is being eroded. That impacts then on year heads and on senior management. I would be fearful of that erosion of what makes the schools work (Teacher participant 6 Focus group).*

Another participant agreed, echoing the same sentiments:

> *We had the same, we had an inspection. We used to have 10 minutes every morning to talk to your year or class. Inspector came and said, "That does not count as class contact hours, it has to go. A week later and it was gone. On the same token those same people are coming in and saying, "You have to have wellbeing, you have to have a wellbeing." I don't understand how those 10 minutes every day didn't count as well being. For us, it was a roll call, which fed into class time, contact teacher every morning taking the role, taking the notes. It was complete wellbeing. You pick up on things. People came to me afterwards as year head and said, "God, Mary isn't herself today or something's going on at home." That's well-being piece, which is vital, gone because it just doesn't slot into a certain allocation of hours or well-being (Teacher participant 5 Focus group)*

4.9 Whole-school approach

This subtheme encapsulates the participants view of the importance of a whole-school approach, through the development and implementation of a national framework that place the same value on teachers as it does students. All stakeholders including leaders, teachers and students need to be considered.

Participants particularly managerial agencies argued that research indicates that a multi-component, preventative, whole-school approach to the promotion of wellbeing, with interventions at both universal and targeted levels, is the most beneficial and evidence informed approach for schools and centres of education. The data revealed that all participants agreed a whole-school approach involving all members of the school community engaging in a collaborative process of change is needed to impact wellbeing. Adopting a whole-school approach has been found to have a wide range benefit for

students, including their mental health, with participants strongly implying the same approach is necessary for teachers.

> *A whole-school approach supports the integration of systems within the school community (NAPD)*

While acknowledging the importance of this whole-school approach, the data revealed the absence of this collaboration. It is noted from some participants that teachers took it upon themselves to set up a wellbeing committee, stemming from the issue that while there was such an emphasis on student wellbeing, teachers were forgotten.

> *Because they (management) are so concerned about the students and their welfare, we thought "Well, maybe we need to remind them of ours (Teacher participant 2 Focus group)*

Participants strongly implied this lack of emphasis on teachers is strongly evident in the Wellbeing Policy statement and Framework for Practice (DOE, 2018). Most of the participants felt that the new framework is not effective and does not reflect teacher wellbeing. It is strongly implied that it was a missed opportunity by the government to focus on schools as whole communities.

> *All staff in the school have a right to voice their wellbeing. I think, unfortunately the new framework, it doesn't reflect that. I think it was a missed opportunity (JMB)*
> *It's all student centred. And I think that the teacher has been a little bit pushed to the side and while acknowledging how important students' wellbeing is with a well teacher, I think it has huge ripple effects (Principal 3)*
> *There is a lot of discussion around it (wellbeing) in particular the student voice and that of the parent. However, there has been very little discussion on the voice of staff members. (TUI)*
> *We have to fight to get definition of teacher wellbeing, of recognition of teacher wellbeing, but we did have to say not many other people were saying, hang on wellbeing is a built a community. And the community's not your students (ASTI)*

Overall, all participants want the same solution, a collaborative and whole-school approach to wellbeing, including all stakeholders from leader to teachers.

4.10 Conclusion

The research findings presented in this chapter convey how teacher wellbeing is conceptualised and supported by the 'three voices'' i.e. Managerial agencies and governing bodies, principals/deputy principals and teachers. The T-Test for opinion (Phase one, question 1), showed statistically significant differences across the board with group 1, Principals/Deputy principals scoring higher than overall wellbeing than teachers and assistant principals (AP) including emotional, social and psychological wellbeing. Hierarchical multiple regression (Phase one, question 2) was used to assess the ability of the control measures (policy, management caring about them, wellbeing being on meeting agenda, support strategies in place, wellbeing related CPD), after controlling for the influence of age to predict levels of wellbeing as assessed by MHC. There is confusion in terms of defining wellbeing making it difficult to acknowledge accountability, with participants frustration at this lack of ownership evident. There is also evidence from the findings at the lack of formal initiatives provided to support teachers' wellbeing. The following chapter will explore the implications of these research findings both practice and policy in detail.

Chapter 5: Discussion of findings

5.1 Introduction

This thesis explores how teacher wellbeing is currently supported and conceptualised according to different stakeholder groups (the 'three voices'): principals/deputy principals, managerial agencies and unions as well as teachers, at post-primary level in Ireland. It is informed by dialectical pluralism which is a process in which all stakeholders can come together to carefully and systematically listen, understand, appreciate, and learn from multiple paradigms, disciplines, values, methodologies, and perspectives to collaborate on research or projects about which the collective cares about (Johnson, 2017), in this instance, the collaboration of managerial agencies, principals and teachers.

The research enabled the concept of teacher wellbeing as a 'project' to be discussed by the 'three voices' and appreciate and learn from how they perceive and conceptualise teacher wellbeing. It is also underpinned by Keyes (2002) Mental Heath Continuum (MHC) which enabled teachers personal wellbeing, including emotional, social and psychological wellbeing, to be measured. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological systems theory was also considered, which focuses on the impact the environment, in this case the school environment has an individual's (teachers) development and wellbeing. The research study was also informed by key literature pertaining to wellbeing (Burke, 2021, Diener & Ryan, 2009, McCallum & Price, 2012, Roffey, 2012, Rowland, 2008, Seligman, 2011a).

This chapter will discuss the main findings of this study, while presenting critical interpretations in line with current and previous research. In seeking to address the gap in research pertaining to teacher wellbeing, this research was guided by the research questions, as addressed by different data sets in chapter four. While the research consisted

of two phases, where Phase one (online survey) resulted in further development and discussion required in Phase two (semi-structured interviews/focus group), this chapter discusses the main findings that emerged from both studies.

5.2 Phase one: Online survey

The research examined the differences in opinions in how teachers (including assistant principals) and school leaders (principals/deputy principals) view wellbeing in relation to certain variables such as policy, management caring about them, wellbeing being on meeting agenda, support strategies in place and wellbeing related CPD. Interestingly, school leaders felt that having a wellbeing policy in school was not an important aspect school culture. However, school leaders felt that other variables such as management caring about them, wellbeing being on meeting agendas and support strategies in place were of high importance when compared to the opinions of teachers.

This might be part of the 'box ticking' exercise for school leaders when it comes to school planning. However, teachers placed their importance on having a policy as the most important variable, supporting research by Snoek (2021) who emphasised that education policies should not only focus on the wellbeing and learning of pupils but also on the wellbeing and learning of teacher, as the latter is the precondition for the former. The research emphasised the importance of establishing a wellbeing policy and framework for the school environment. This could drive policy direction while also helping to inform priorities and agenda setting within the DES for teacher wellbeing. Teacher focused policies including those to support their wellbeing are not just central to attracting teachers to be in the profession, but also about creating the conditions that encourage teachers to stay passionate and inspired throughout their career (Snoek, 2021).

The research also examined the impact of practices on teachers' personal wellbeing and how much of the variance in wellbeing scores can be explained by the same variables, after controlling for age. The results indicated that having a policy and or/reinforcing it doesn't make a difference to educators' wellbeing. What makes a difference was knowing whether the school had it or not. Ambivalence was associated with significantly lower wellbeing. However, interestingly the research showed the best indicator of teachers wellbeing is not the development or implementation of a policy, but management showing they care by ensuring that support structures are in place to support them when required. Essentially, it is about establishing a culture of basic procedure and respect for teachers . When Bronfenbrenner's (1979) nested structure in considered in this context, it can help to identify teacher's perceptions of the environment (school)and how it connects with their wellbeing. It also emphasise the importance of the individual (teacher) and their school surroundings (microsystem and ecosystem) where they want to feel acknowledged and supported at a basic level as they interact with people on daily basis.

The research study is unique as it is the first study that has identified that the difference in participants' wellbeing score can be predicted by (i) Support strategies for teachers (ii) Management caring about them. These results are inconsistent with past research by McCallum & Price (2010) studies which showed that teachers need a wellbeing strategy in place to assure their own wellbeing for their effectiveness in the classroom. By having and incorporating a wellbeing strategy, teachers feel supported, and management can show they care. However, introducing a wellbeing policy for teachers should be introduced collaboratively as research by Beryl (2009) caution making change in individuals when the system is part of the problem leaves basic structures intact and is unlikely to affect the problem. These findings are therefore in line with previous studies

indicating that policy makers should consider making changes for teachers rather in teachers, suggesting the issue of teacher wellbeing is a complex issue that is best addressed using a holistic approach (Beryl, 2009). Research by the Teacher Wellbeing Index (2018) found there needs to be an explicit focus on ensuring the wellbeing needs of the staff are met, not just at surface level but throughout the policy itself. It is prudent to suggest that management should consider introducing basic support strategies for teachers in schools to ensure they feel supported at a time when they are feeling vulnerable. However, it is also possible to suggest that collaboration is required when developing a wellbeing policy for schools, as research by McCallum and Price (2012) have indicated that considering teacher wellbeing as a shared responsibility creates an opportunity for schools and sectors to work in partnership with managerial agencies and professional associations. The results confirm the association between management showing that they care and improved teacher wellbeing, supporting previous studies as evidence indicates that employers, such as school leaders and managerial agencies, who commit to invest in their staff to promote teacher wellbeing, bring about significant benefits for both teacher and student (Naghieh et al., 2015).

Phase one (online survey) provides a comprehensive outline of the importance of teacher wellbeing at post-primary level. These findings can serve to (i) identify support strategies for teachers in schools (ii) identify strategies where management show they care about them (iii) inform the policy makers of the components that need to be incorporated in developing an effective wellbeing policy and interventions (iv) inform the stakeholders and school leaders that if you put both support strategies in place and show staff that you care, you could potentially enhance teacher wellbeing. Further research needs to be undertaken to evaluate these potential support strategies that management can implement and to measure their effectiveness.

5.3 Phase two: Semi-structured interviews and focus group

This phase examines the similarities and differences in the perception of wellbeing across the ‘three voices' 1. principals/deputy principals 2. managerial bodies 3. teachers, and identifies and assesses the supports that can be put in place to enhance teachers’ wellbeing.

5.3.1 Defining wellbeing

This is the first study that examines how wellbeing is defined by the three stakeholder groups, managerial agencies, teachers and school leaders. This is important as the findings from this research emphasise the varying and differing perceptions of wellbeing and how it is perceived, while also acknowledging the lack of a common definition suitable for schools. This is in line with past research as the study confirms that wellbeing is multifaceted in nature and complex to define and while there were commonalities evident in the key components of a definition of wellbeing, there was also a consensus that wellbeing is subjective. To enable a school to follow a wellbeing policy and framework, the need for a clear definition is imperative, in line with research by Thornburn (2018), who noted that adverse consequences arise when individual perceptions of the term are not addressed, and when a common definition is not outlined to ensure that everyone is working towards a common goal.

This study found that there is confusion amongst all ‘three voices’ when it comes to this definition in the school context with little empirical evidence on the definition of teachers’ wellbeing and limited knowledge on how it is measured (McCallum et al., 2017), showing there is confusion as to how wellbeing is defined. It is widely accepted that wellbeing is important in the school environment, with links associated to students’ outcomes, yet despite this emphasis, there is still much confusion as to what wellbeing means. However,

while it is clear from the research that wellbeing is a growing concept in recent decades (e.g., Diener et al., 1999; Kahneman et al., 1999; Keyes et al., 2002; Seligman, 2011b; Stratham & Chase, 2010;), what is absent is the theory-based formulations of wellbeing in both research and practice. This has resulted in the blurring and overly broad definitions of wellbeing (Forgeard et al., 2011) The findings revealed the difficulties involved establishing a definition for wellbeing in the school environment, as evidenced in previous research by Carter (2016), where he acknowledged how the seeking of a definition of wellbeing is a complex pursuit, since it is increasingly utilised in conversations, in the community and global media and within the literature but in so many ways. Having no clear definition of wellbeing creates difficulties for many aspects of the school culture, from management decisions to legal responsibility and the blurring of the boundaries in terms of accountability.

A significant number of academic research emphasises how the definitions of wellbeing differ across the literature (Dodge et al., 2012; McCallum et al., 2017). It was well noted in the findings that wellbeing is also a personal journey, and is something all three voices aim for, yet it is unique to everyone, a concept supported by McCallum and Price (2015) who emphasised that wellbeing is something we all strive for yet is something that is unique to each one of us and provides us with a sense of who we are, which needs to be respected. The uniqueness of this study shows the impact of a wellbeing definition in school culture and the importance of recognition of this impact on teacher wellbeing. The uniqueness of this study shows the possibility of establishing a definition that encompasses all ‘three voices’: a tangible contribution to knowledge.

The study also stresses the importance of having a collaborative approach on the agreement of the definition of wellbeing from all key stakeholders, a concept supported

by Ryff & Keyes (1995), who stated that all definitions of wellbeing highlight the multidimensional aspect of the concept but also the need to embrace a series of components (McCallum et al., 2017). Participants in the study acknowledged how fluid and diverse wellbeing can be, like previous research by McCallum & Price (2016), where wellbeing also respects the beliefs and values of individual, family, community, experiences, culture, opportunities, and contexts across time and change. This definition can be relative to a teacher's stage of their teaching career and the experience they have as it encompasses individual elements that interact across a lifespan (McCallum & Price, 2016) thus making it a difficult process. Diener (2000) has shown that the links to happiness alter between young versus old people, suggesting that there are differences between younger and older teachers in the school environment on what is required to make them feel happy or 'well' in their being. Similarly, Diener et al. (1995) reported that there are different connections to happiness in differing cultures, of which there are many in all school environments, again making the definition of wellbeing a difficult process. Wellbeing perhaps can only then be described in very broad terms where it needs to be considered in relation to how an individual feels and functions across several areas.

The study emphasised the difficulty defining wellbeing in the school context, due to it being experienced differently by different people, which perhaps can be explained by Dierner's (2009) definition, where wellbeing needs to be considered in relation to how an individual, in this context, a teacher, feels and functions across several areas, such as cognitive, emotional, social, physical and spiritual wellbeing. This concept is supported by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, which stressed the importance of studying an individual within the context of the multiple environments in which they are positioned (Darling, 2007), and not just one specific setting such as the school

environment. When formulating a definition for teacher wellbeing perhaps it needs to then be considered by the key stakeholders in this context.

Schools are central to promoting the wellbeing of children, young people and teachers, therefore it is no surprise that the participants in the study are challenging and questioning the educational stakeholders, in particular principals and deputy principals, to centre teacher wellbeing as both a foundation to, and integral part of the school's community structures. However, to achieve this, a collaborative and agreed definition of wellbeing needs to exist. This is the challenge, but a necessary requirement for educational contexts so as to move forward with supporting teacher wellbeing effectively. This research has strongly contributed to the process of establishing an agreed definition of wellbeing in the school environment.

5.4 Accountability

The study acknowledged and emphasised the participants' frustrations at the lack of ownership and responsibility of teachers' wellbeing in the school environment. There was obvious confusion amongst all participants, with conflicting responses and opinions amongst the 'three voices' as to where the responsibility lies and whose role it is. Confusion of roles and conflicts in role perceptions in schools can affect organisational performance in a negative way (Owens & Valesky, 2007), which was evident in this study with role ambiguity highlighted amongst participants, particularly amongst principals and deputy principals. This finding is supported by Rizzo et al. (1970) who acknowledged a lack of certainty about the requirements of the role, would increase the probability of dissatisfaction, anxiety, and performance, while Little (1996) found cases of role conflict, or a lack of compatibility within the requirements of a role, leading to stress and disappointment. The current study stresses the importance of identifying and recognising accountability for teachers' wellbeing to alleviate confusion amongst all key

stakeholders. Clear lines of responsibility are vital to supporting teacher's wellbeing, while also acknowledging when these lines are broken and what actions to subsequently take (UNESCO, 2017). However, this cannot happen currently in the school context, as the study has shown that that these lines are blurred and obscured. Further research needs to explore and examine these blurred lines, to find a collaborative solution.

5.5 Whole-school approach

The study stresses the importance of a whole-school approach to wellbeing in schools, a concept supported by Tough (2016) who noted that in working as a community, there is the ability to flourish. This concept is also supported by the DES (2019) who noted that embedded within a whole-school approach is the recognition that all members of the school community can have different needs at different times (2019, p. 34**).** Drawing on Bronfenbrenner's (1992) ecological systems model, whole-school approaches to enhancing teacher wellbeing can encompass the intrapersonal, environmental, behavioural, and political domains that affect educators. This can help the whole-school communities think about the contexts they function in (McCallum & Price, 2016; Price & McCallum, 2015b). With the importance of a whole-school approach unanimous across all 'three voices', considering ecological influences is important as they directly link to establishing positive school climate, in line with Cohen et al. (2009) where they define as "the quality and character of school life" (p. 182). Further strengthening this finding, Bosworth and Judkins (2014) describe "safe, caring, participatory, and responsive school climates foster attachment and bonding to school" (p. 301) which is inclusive of all school community members, staff, students and parents/carers.

However, some variances emerged within the data in relation to this as there is an overwhelming emphasis on the wellbeing of students. The wellbeing framework

specifically states and acknowledges that wellbeing is as important for the staff as for the children and young people and that appropriate supports are available for staff wellbeing" (DES, 2019, p. 40), however the findings suggest otherwise. Participants recognised that in a school setting, students are the priority; this is in line with policy, with the DES (silent contributor to in this study) stating that 'the wellbeing needs and the best interests of our children and young people are a central focus of this policy (DES, 2019, p. 9), therefore there is incongruence in what the DES say and how they act. This is diminishing for teachers, who as the study as indicated feel they are being left behind.

The study also shows the importance of the 'visibility' of wellbeing within the school environment, while challenging the assumption that wellbeing activities are implicitly 'known' about by all in the school community, thus supporting the concept that the ability to create a culture of wellbeing is the most effective way to consolidate the key areas of wellbeing curriculum, rather than a once -off activity (DES, HSE & DOH, 2013). This notion of a whole-school approach is supported by the concept of systems thinking, where researchers such as Senge (2000) and Fullan (2003, 2005) draw on this process to describe how schools work. Schools utilise community strengths to build a shared vision and a plan for change, which is necessary if teachers' wellbeing is to be effectively supported. It is also necessary as the study has indicated the importance of teachers being involved and acknowledged in the process, and for leaders to acknowledge and implement procedures and practices to enable this approach.

The findings also indicated that while the wellbeing framework outlines the various ways that student wellbeing can be assessed and monitored, there is no specific reference to that of tracking teachers' wellbeing. However, if both were similarly addressed and supported in the framework it would enable changes and a focus towards authentic

wellbeing promotion (Kern et al., 2015a, 2015b). The study noted the need for this emphasis to now be balanced, allowing the wellbeing of teachers to be supported and nurtured in the same way as that of their students', a concept supported by Goldberg et al (2019), which suggests that the most effective wellbeing interventions are through a whole-school approach, in which wellbeing permeates through the entire community.

This study has shown the importance of supporting wellbeing through a top-down approach from the school management and leaders and the importance of creating a positive culture of wellbeing in the school environment. Previous research supports this concept as Schleicher (2018) acknowledges that schools and staff cannot implement such a huge area of change alone as schools do not operate in isolation from the rest of their community. Participants also acknowledged the importance of the role and relationship of leadership and teacher wellbeing as Principals were found as having a significant impact on teacher wellbeing, notably in terms of introduction of new teachers, school culture, instructional leadership, and prioritisation of addressing school requirements (Brock & Chaitlin, 2008, cited in Long et al., 2012, p. 383).

5.6 Supporting teacher wellbeing.

This research study has shown that most of the participants felt that teachers' wellbeing was not being supported in the same way as student wellbeing, supporting research by Roffey (2012) who stated that wellbeing in schools is typically centred on meeting students' needs yet acknowledging that teacher wellbeing should also be addressed. Participants noted while interventions to support and address teacher wellbeing are beginning to feature alongside student wellbeing (Jones et al., 2013), they felt the same value was not placed on these interventions and compared them to a box ticking exercise.

Applying interventions made teachers feel calmer and more positive in the classroom (Turner & Theikling, 2019), thus supporting the finding in this study of the importance of effective and supportive interventions. This could be achieved through the use of positive psychology education in schools with more positive psychology interventions and programmes. This could be while also considering it as a as a whole-school approach as evident in the research, therefore strengthened by the results of this study. Supporting Bronfenbrenner, Roffey (2012) acknowledged the similarities in how both teacher and students' wellbeing can be supported, while also highlighting the synergy between the promotion of the wellbeing of the teacher and the promotion of the wellbeing of their students. Teachers emphasised the need to feel valued and supported while nurturing a sense of belonging in students and teachers has been found to be beneficial to academic performance and health (Blum, 2005). Teachers can benefit from having their strengths recognised by school leaders in the same way that students can benefit from having their teachers recognise their skills (Noble & McGrath, 2012a). Making teachers feel valued, respected, and cared for school leaders can improve their wellbeing and favourably influence how teachers connect with one another and, eventually, with their students (Roffey, 2012).

It was also noted from the research the absence of effective supports offered in schools highlighting the concept that care of self and others, in addition to emotional wellbeing are compromised when there is an absence of resources (Thorburn, 2018). All the participants, including leaders want to be acknowledged and valued (Roffey, 2008), but feel that time is not prioritised for teacher wellbeing on the school calendar. It is necessary to establish a positive perception of teacher wellbeing in the school environment from the start, as traditional values slow the process of change in education, making it difficult to change stakeholders' negative perceptions once they have been held for a long period of

time (Jonasson, 2016), emphasising the importance of establishing a definition for the school environment as evident in the study. The findings from the current study call for a new definition of wellbeing that incorporates school environment.

The study stresses the concept that supporting teacher wellbeing is not only important for the teacher themselves but, as research has shown us, has a direct impact on students' (Huynh & Stewart-Tufescu, 2019). Participants also acknowledged the amount of emotional energy needed to effectively engage in an estimated thousand interpersonal contacts a day (Holmes, 2005). As supported by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological systems theory (1979), interactions directly impact on whether a teacher feels supported, valued and recognised, while emphasising the importance of supporting and assisting teachers in developing their self-regulatory resources for coping and being resilient (Roeser, et al., 2013, p. 789). Implementing effective, worthwhile supports and interventions as indicated in the findings, that are not viewed by teachers as simply a box ticking exercise is vital for teachers' wellbeing. The findings highlighted the need to develop explicit structures where teachers feel supported and part of a professional learning community (Roffey, 2012), supporting past research by Gibbs (2011) who suggested that practices that happen in the school environment impact on a teacher's self-belief, motivation and wellbeing creating a strong argument for exploring what teacher wellbeing means in practice and the ways that this can be developed.

The research highlighted that there was some emphasis and discussion on a wellbeing policy in schools, with participants acknowledging that in some cases it was just a means to comply with policy and guidelines from the DES. However, merely complying with policy does not necessarily address and support the issue of teacher wellbeing effectively. This is a concept supported by the OECD (2017b) where analysis of data suggests that

implementation of educational policies does not always lead to achievement of the intended outcomes of policy makers and, in some cases, the intended outcomes do not fully match the needs of the schools required to implement these policies. There can be a focus on formulating the policy with little or no follow up on how to make the policy take effect in education (Hess, 2013). This study suggests that there is a distance between policy and practice which highlights the issue of the lack of consultation between policy makers and the key school stakeholders to determine how teachers' wellbeing is acknowledged and how it can be supported effectively at both school and national policy level.

Participants from the focus group acknowledged the importance of good communication between management and teachers as a critical requisite for the enhancement of wellbeing, supporting research by De Nobile, (2008) who outlined how positive communication within relationships can increase job satisfaction and therefore wellbeing for teachers. In this research De Noble (2008) found that both positive downward communication and positive horizontal communication between colleagues was found to lead to improved outcomes for both teachers and students. Teacher participants heavily emphasised the importance of improving supports for teachers wellbeing in an inclusive manner, supporting research by Roffey (2012), who stated that improving and sustaining teacher wellbeing is not only important for teachers themselves but also for their students. Evident from the study from the teacher participants, is the concept that improving the wellbeing of teachers can directly improve the wellbeing of students. This in line with previous research by Roffey (2012) who acknowledged that through fostering a sense of belonging, improving teacher-student relationships, recognising strengths and communicating positively within relationships.

5.7 Limitations of the research

The study lacked representation from the Department of |Education (DES) and the Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCS) and as mentioned previously, the reason for their non-participation was unclear. It is possible time constraints were an issue and with the sudden onset of Covid-19, it limited their time to participate and respond to such research. However, despite this limitation, the participants involved were sufficient for representation purposes. The sample size in the quantitative data had 293 participants, and although were a national representation, a larger number of respondents would give a better overview of what is required a national level. Future research should expand the sample size.

Another limitation of the study pertained to the pandemic Covid-19, which had just developed as data collection began. One interview took place face to face with all remaining interviews and focus group taking place online. There was an initial worry that being online would affect the effectiveness of the interviews, perhaps because it might be more difficult to read body language and gauge the flow of the conversation. However, the interviews and focus group online were very effective, with all participants noting this effectiveness due to non-travel to a venue and being comfortable in their own surroundings. It is noted that with two out of the six principal/deputy principal interviews there was a Wi-Fi issue which resulted in the interviews being rescheduled.

5.8 Implications for practice, policy, and research

The research findings from this study have implications for practice, policy, and future research in the field as outlined below.

5.8.1 Recommendations for practice

This research showed that policy does not really matter as much as enacting the policy, with participants noting the importance of feeling they are supported and management showing that they care, rather than knowing about the actual policy itself. Therefore, given the research findings from the quantitative data, it is recommended that school leaders might change their approach to how they support teacher wellbeing, with an emphasis on the actual supports in the school and their effectiveness, rather than on the implementation of the policy itself.

The author acknowledges the following ways management can potentially show they care as developed from the body of work completed:

- Recognise teachers' work and achievements
- A simple and genuine 'Thank you'
- Complement or praise privately
- Encourage open communication with management
- Support career growth and development
- Demonstrate your trust
- Be transparent
- Participate and promote active listening
- Set professional boundaries

This could also be useful for newly appointed principals and deputy principals, as the findings suggest that by redesigning or restructuring programmes to include how to show they care and support teachers, might increase the effectiveness of their wellbeing supports and the approach that they take.

This research has given practitioners the opportunity to draw on additional resources that might be required to support teacher wellbeing including providing more direct CPD specifically in teacher wellbeing.

It is necessary to evaluate key school policies that contribute to teacher wellbeing and evaluate their effectiveness with all stakeholders in the school. Provide the opportunity for increased regular time together for teachers and ensure CPD scheduled at the beginning and end of the school year has a practical but effective wellbeing focus.

Mentoring and professional development programmes, such as Tánaiste and Misneach for newly appointed principals and deputy principals, could incentivise schools to develop initiatives to effectively support teacher wellbeing.

Mentoring-school partnerships could contribute to the development of effective initiatives in supporting teachers' wellbeing from the leaders' perspective while also involving all key stakeholders in a whole-school approach

This partnership approach could be explored in a research context initially. External expertise, from bodies outside of the school environment, could be provided to schools who wish to engage in such initiatives to support teacher wellbeing. This external support would aim to build capacity and confidence within schools so that the level of external support could be reduced over time.

5.8.2 Recommendations for policy

The research findings have implications for policy development on supporting teacher wellbeing at post-primary level in Ireland.

Clearly define wellbeing in the school environment, that will help to ensure different stakeholders in all schools have clarity on the exact nature of the definition and what this entails. While the author acknowledges the difficulty of defining teacher wellbeing, the following tentative definition is suggested: Wellbeing is your ability to feel good and

function effectively while giving you the resources to navigate the highs and lows in our work and in our lives**.** It is diverse and fluid while respecting individual, family and community beliefs, values, experiences, culture, opportunities and contexts across time. It is something we all aim for yet is unique to each of us.

The DES Inspectorate could also advocate the development of effective supports and initiatives suitable for supporting teacher wellbeing through consultation with and collaboration of all key stakeholders, including teachers. Pertinent supports strategies recognised from this research include:

- Regular and effective CPD for teachers' wellbeing
- A 'top down' approach visible to wellbeing
- Informal wellbeing initiatives provided in school
- Acknowledging the support strategies provided by the DES, with responsibility on management to ensure distribution of these information.

Wellbeing for teachers should be an inclusive practice in the school environment and valued as a crucial component for school effectiveness and development. With guidelines for the allocation of wellbeing hours and resources for students, it would be helpful if recommendations and guidelines for teachers were also issued. It is crucial that teachers are included in these guidelines in a realistic way and a whole-school approach is seriously undertaken, while taking into consideration the findings from the 'three voices' from this study.

Policy must carefully balance effective and efficient support for teachers' wellbeing and school autonomy. Given the literature that documents the lack of research on teacher wellbeing in the Irish context and the research findings presented in this study, a shift in

focus is required in DES policy and the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (2019), from the quality and effectiveness of supports offered in school to support teacher wellbeing, and more importantly that it is not simply viewed as a box-ticking exercise.

School leaders need to be armed with the guidelines and resources needed to support teachers' wellbeing and show them that they care about their wellbeing with a sustainable model of support for teacher wellbeing available for implementation.

The Employee assistance scheme (Folláine le Chéile) could benefit from consideration of the research findings from this study in its endeavour to support schools in the context of a collaborative and whole-school approach to supporting teacher wellbeing, in particular, further work on establishing a wellbeing definition.

It is necessary for all schools to implement a structured plan to follow when implementing new policies requiring policy makers to take responsibility for providing a cohesive plan of action, with specific targets to be met by all schools which can be measured nationally. Allocating time to plan and collaborate on wellbeing initiatives within school hours regularly. This requires the Department of Education to take responsibility for the allocation of hours, not just for students but teachers also. This will ensure correct implementation of the policy while recognising that regular planning time is necessary to cover the minimum of what the Wellbeing Framework asks.

5.8.3 Recommendations for research

The study indicated the importance of putting effective support practices in place to enhance teachers' wellbeing and by management showing that they care. Therefore, further research and engagement with schools in this area could test the implementation of intervention support strategies and review their effectiveness.

Further research to explore how policy makers intend the Wellbeing Framework to be implemented for teacher is necessary to allow further development of policy. This would give insight into the expectation from a policy level and open discussion on the realities which schools face.

It would be beneficial to investigate what policy makers are saying and emphasising about teacher wellbeing when there is no evidence of a specific time frame or structured plan to implement wellbeing strategies in schools. This would determine the rationale behind policies failing at post-primary level and why there is currently no way to measure or evaluate its effectiveness.

Further research is also necessary to determine why there are varying strategies and interventions for teacher wellbeing at post-primary level, with no consistent or directed plan from the DES.

5.9 Conclusion

The findings from this research study highlight the glaring gap that exists between student and teacher wellbeing in terms of how it is perceived and conceptualised in post-primary schools in Ireland along with the difference in supports available to both. The research also identifies the gap in policy development nationally for teachers wellbeing and how the framework and guidance received form the department are interpreted and implemented in the school environment. Although the new junior cycle programme identifies that wellbeing is multidimensional, it is evident from this research that wellbeing is open to many interpretations as evident by the ‘three voices’ in this study and so presents challenges in terms of its definition how it is interpreted. The importance

of considering but also promptly addressing teacher wellbeing is strongly evident from the research findings. This concept is supported by the wellbeing guidelines for junior cycle (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2017), in which it recommends that opportunities are created for staff to reflect on their own needs while planning for wellbeing (Nohilly & Tynan, 2019).

What is obvious from the research is the lack of awareness of government led initiatives, while provided by the department, there is no follow up on how these initiatives are distributed or whether they are implemented at school level. There is a need for the development of a conceptual framework which would encompass the holistic and multidimensional nature of wellbeing for teachers. Teacher wellbeing and wellbeing in general is a high priority presently in Ireland, particularly following the Covid 19 pandemic. Therefore this research is relevant and timely as it seeks to promote further discussion and research for teachers wellbeing. It's their time now.

This chapter has provided a detailed analysis of the research findings in relation to how teacher wellbeing is conceptualised and supported in post-primary schools by the 'three voices while also acknowledging the gap in the literature pertaining to teachers wellbeing. Limitations of the study were presented and a synthesis of the implications of this research for future research, policy and practice described.
The following chapter provides a conclusion to this research study. A succinct summary of the research approach, methodological approach, and research findings is outlined with concluding remarks.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This study is unique as it is the first research that has considered teachers wellbeing from all 'three voices' in post-primary schools in Ireland, i.e., 1. managerial agencies/ governing bodies, 2. principals/deputy principals 3. teachers. It is also unique in terms of the many perspectives with which wellbeing was viewed, i.e. emotional, psychological, social and educational. The research has made a valuable contribution to knowledge and practice as it has identified the importance of measuring teachers wellbeing as currently there is no evidence of how teacher wellbeing can be assessed or measured at post-primary level in Ireland. It also identified the importance of a national policy specifically for teachers wellbeing, with correct interpretation and implementation by school leaders of this policy.

This chapter draws the study to a close. A summary of the research study, including a synthesis of the research findings considering the aims and objectives of the research, is presented. Following this, the research strengths and contribution to knowledge are presented with concluding comments.

6.2 Summary of research approach

This research study set out to explore how teacher wellbeing is conceptualised and currently supported in post-primary schools in Ireland. It sought to address a gap in the research in relation to how teachers' wellbeing can be enhanced effectively. It is informed by dialectical pluralism which is a process in which all stakeholders can come together to carefully and systematically listen, understand, appreciate, and learn from multiple paradigms, disciplines, values, methodologies, and perspectives to collaborate

on research or projects about which the collective cares about (Johnson, 2017). It was also informed by key literature pertaining to wellbeing (Burke, 2020; Dierner & Ryan, 2009; McCallum & Price, 2012; Roffey, 2012; Rowland, 2008; Seligman, 2011a).

The analysis from question one, Phase one led to this study (qualitative data) where all three voices were included in the interview and focus group process. Having established that there were differences between principals/deputy principals and teachers in how they viewed wellbeing in relation to policy, management caring about them, wellbeing being on meeting agenda, support strategies in place and wellbeing related CPD, further research was required to investigate if there were any further differences in opinions and on how teacher wellbeing can be better supported.

6.3 Summary of findings

This research study aimed to investigate and examine how teacher wellbeing is currently conceptualised and supported by the 'three voices' in post-primary schools in Ireland. To address this, the research emerged into two phases, with both qualitative and quantitative data. Critical analysis of how teacher wellbeing is conceptualised in the school environment was required and an examination of the practices and supports currently in place in schools. This was achieved through a thorough investigation of how the 'three voices' understand and perceive teacher wellbeing and how it is currently supported.

The quantitative data (Phase one) showed that principals/deputy principals scored higher in overall wellbeing than teachers and assistant principals (AP), including emotional, social and psychological wellbeing, with statistically significant differences between the two groups. It also showed the importance of school leaders ensuring that supports put in place are not merely a box ticking exercise to comply with department guidelines issued

by the department of education. The study also showed that even though AP's are part of the management team, but also teaching, they too feel that wellbeing supports are not effective in schools. This study also showed how much of the variance in wellbeing scores can be explained by systemic variables (policy, management caring about them, wellbeing being on staff meeting agenda, support strategies for teachers in place, wellbeing-related CPD), after controlling for age. The results of this study indicate that having a policy and/or implementing it doesn't make a difference to educators' wellbeing. What makes a difference to teachers and assistant principals was knowing whether the school had it or not. Ambivalence about having a policy was associated with significantly lower wellbeing. The research also identified that the difference in participants' wellbeing score can be predicted by: (i) support strategies for teachers and (ii) management care for teachers. By having and implementing a wellbeing strategy, teachers feel supported and cared for by management.

Phase two, consisting of semi-structured interviews and a focus group was utilised to build on Phase one and to further examine and have deeper engagement with participants on the similarities and differences across the 'three voices'. It emphasised the difficulty in terms of accountability of teacher wellbeing, as the lines of responsibility are blurred thus creating difficulty establishing roles of responsibility. The findings showed the difficulties that emerge due to a lack of a shared definition of wellbeing in schools. While participants acknowledged that some supports were currently in place, teachers viewed them as a box ticking exercise with little or no thought given to the effectiveness of these supports or their effectiveness.

6.4 Strengths of the study

This research is unique in both its aims and findings, as there is no other research which has examined the perceptions, similarities and differences of wellbeing of these three groups or measured teachers' wellbeing at post-primary level in Ireland. A key strength of the study lies with emphasis on the teachers' wellbeing rather than the student as it endeavoured to close the gap in the literature pertaining to teachers wellbeing. This study focused on teacher wellbeing and provided subjective, rich qualitative and quantitative data that produced descriptive evidence of current professional practice from the 'three voices', underpinned by the dialectical pluralism paradigm. The variations in the 'three voices' narratives illuminated contextual factors, while highlighting the unpredictability of human behaviour through the participants with insights which can be gained on what enhances and supports teachers' wellbeing such as having a policy in place and providing effective and sustainable support systems in place.

Fundamentally, this study has shown the difficulty of reaching a concise definition of wellbeing as the data highlighted it means different things to different people, particularly with various stakeholders involved. As the study progressed, this lack of a precise and agreed definition of wellbeing emerged as an issue. However, it did emphasise the need for one specific definition in relation to wellbeing in the school environment that is common to all. The challenges and obstacles to teacher wellbeing, its perception and lack of supports and shared definition which this study highlights, provides an excellent opportunity for policy makers and school leaders to understand the needs of teachers to enhance their wellbeing. The contribution of teachers as one of the 'three voices' in this research allowed their voice to be heard and may allow their insights to be incorporated in future planning of policies which the DES sets out. They emphasised the importance of a collaborative approach, with all key stakeholders, including the main managerial

agencies and governing bodies, principals/deputy principals and teachers involved. Finally, the gap between the policy statements, perceptions of wellbeing of both school leaders and managerial agencies needs to be addressed. While it is necessary for the DOE to outline a policy to promote wellbeing in schools, there is no evidence of an effective structure to implement, measure and evaluate the policy, considering both teacher and student. This emphasises the disconnect between policy makers and key stakeholders in the school environment, which needs to be addressed. The study also highlighted the importance of effective supports to enhance teachers' wellbeing, ones that can be measured and evaluated effectively. As this research has emphasised the lack of research and literature on teacher wellbeing and how it can be measured, evaluated and effectively supported, there is a need for further research to explore this area. This research study also suggests that any future research in this area should have a strengths-based approach, with particular focus on exploring the factors that support teacher wellbeing and how it can be improved, measured and evaluated.

6.5 Conclusion

The study has exposed, through the narratives of the 'three voices', how teacher wellbeing is perceived, conceptualised and supported in post-primary schools in Ireland. The participants identified the importance of wellbeing in the school environment and acknowledged the multifaceted nature of wellbeing itself. It identified the components which contribute to teacher wellbeing and the challenges it faced while highlighting the need for collaboration between policy makers and key stakeholders. The core themes and subthemes were discussed and critiqued in light of past and current research and polices.

While acknowledging the present situation is problematic, with teachers feeling ineffectively supported, both evident in policy and practice, the research has presented a

positive step forward. The research is unique as there is currently no other research that has examined teacher wellbeing from the perspective of the 'three voices'. It is now necessary to utilise this information gained from the research and apply it to the school setting, whilst recommending change in policy. The study has identified a range of strategies and interventions teachers feel worthwhile to support their wellbeing, and so has contributed to existing teacher wellbeing literature. It has also established that there is a consensus amongst all 'three voices' of the importance of establishing an agreed definition of wellbeing for schools. More importantly, it is hoped that this research study and its findings will prompt further discussions amongst managerial agencies, principal/deputy principals and teachers regarding the ways teacher wellbeing can be effectively supported both now and in the future. It would be beneficial for all key stakeholders to reflect on these findings and consider making meaningful changes across all levels, to improve the wellbeing of teachers, the key objective of this research study.

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Appendix A : Online survey

Dear Participant,
Thank you for agreeing to complete this questionnaire. I very much appreciate you giving up the 5 minutes (approximately) that it will take to complete.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to better understand how senior management understand and support teacher wellbeing at post primary level in Ireland.

Ethical approval

This study has been reviewed and received ethical approval from Maynooth University Research Ethics committee. If during your participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact the Secretary of the National University of Ireland Maynooth Ethics Committee at research.ethics@nuim.ie or +353 (0)1 708 6019. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

Withdrawal of Consent

Participation is completely voluntary. Please remember, you have the choice to opt out of this project at any time without adverse consequences.

Confidentiality

The identity and location of the school and all staff will be protected in the published dissertation. Participants will not be named and all information from the study will be treated with confidence and anonymity. All data gathered will be completely **anonymous** and will be safely stored and destroyed in a confidential manner after completion of the research. A hard-bound copy of the final dissertation will be filed in Maynooth University. The findings may also be presented to colleagues or published in relevant educational journals.

Thank you once again for agreeing to complete the survey.

Kind regards

Annemarie Doran

Doctoral Student, Maynooth University

p. 2 CONSENT PAGE

In agreeing to participate in this research, I understand the following:

- This research is being conducted by Annemarie Doran, a Doctoral student at the Department of Education, Maynooth University.

- I have been informed as to the general nature of the study and agree voluntarily to participate in the survey.
- There are no known expected discomforts or risks associated with participation. The researcher has agreed that any identifying information will be removed from responses.
- All data from the study will be treated confidentially. No participant's data will be identified by name at any stage of the data analysis or in the student's thesis.

Add item

1 By clicking on the consent below, I agree to participate in the survey:

p. 3 SECTION ONE: Personal Information

2 Please select your gender

- Male
- Female

3 Please indicate the appropriate age category for you

- 18-29
- 30-39
- 40-49

Show all (5)

4 Please indicate your province

- Ulster
- Munster
- Leinster

Show all (4)

5 What role best describes you?

- Principal
- Deputy principal
- Assistant principal

Show all (4)

6 What type of school do you work in?

- Voluntary secondary school
- Vocational school/Community College
- Community/Comprehensive school

Show all (6)

a If you selected Other, please specify:

7 How long have you been teaching?

- Newly appointed
- 1-5 years
- 6-10

Show all (4)

8 How long have you been in a management role?

- Newly appointed
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years

Show all (5)

p. 4 SECTION TWO: Policy

9 Is there currently a wellbeing policy for teachers in your school?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

10 Is this policy reinforced?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Show all (4)

11 Who is responsible for the implementation of this policy?

- Deputy principal
- Assistant principal

Show all (6)

a If you selected Other, please specify:

12 Please indicate how important you think a teacher wellbeing policy is for your school

- Not very important
- Important
- Very important

Show all (4)

p. 5 SECTION THREE: Management of Teachers' Wellbeing

13 Rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
My management cares about teachers' wellbeing				
Teacher wellbeing is on staff meeting agendas				
There are support strategies and supports available in my school for teachers' wellbeing				
There is specific wellbeing related CPD in place in my school				

14 Please answer the following questions about how you have been feeling during the past month. Place a check mark in the box that best represents how often you have experienced or felt the following:

	NEVER	ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK	ABOUT ONCE A WEEK	ABOUT 2 OR 3 TIMES A WEEK	ALMOST EVERY DAY	EVERY DAY
1. happy						
2. interested in life						
3. satisfied with life						
4. that you had something important to contribute to society						
5. that you belonged to a community (like a social group, or your neighbourhood)						
6. that our society is a good place, or is becoming a better place, for all people						
7. that people are basically good						
8. that the way our society works makes sense to you						
9. that you like most parts of your personality						
10. that you are good at managing the responsibilities of your daily life						
11. that you warm and trusting relationships with others						
12. that you had experiences that challenged you to						

grow and become a better person						
13. that you are confident to think or express your own ideas and opinions						
14. that your life has a sense of direction or meaning to it						

p. 6 FINAL SECTION

15 What formal initiatives were organised in this school year to enhance teachers' wellbeing?

16 What informal initiatives were organised this year to enhance teachers' wellbeing?

17 What can the Department of Education do more of to help you enhance your wellbeing?

18 What can school management do more of to enhance teacher wellbeing?

p. 7 THANK YOU

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. I appreciate your input and time.

If you would like to contact me please email annemarie.doran.2018@mumail.ie

Appendix B: Sample email sent to managerial agencies/governing bodies

Good afternoon,

I do hope you are well.
My name is Annemarie Doran and I am a post primary teacher in Coláiste Pobail Osraí in Kilkenny. I am currently in year 3 of my Doctoral studies in Maynooth University and have commenced gathering data. My research is looking at how teacher wellbeing is perceived and currently supported by senior management in post primary schools in Ireland. Within the research, I am looking at 3 different perspectives: 1. Principals/Deputy principal 2. Teachers and 3. Managerial agencies/governing bodies (JMB, ACCS, ETBI, ASTI, TUI, NAPD, The Teaching Council). I am also looking at how current practices compare to what is happening internationally. From the research and having examined the various wellbeing models available, I am hoping to suggest a model suitable for supporting teacher wellbeing in Ireland at post primary level.

I was wondering if it would be possible to speak with a representative from_____about this research?

Please do contact me at any stage if you need further information in relation to this.
Hoping that this is possible,

Kindest regards,

Annemarie Doran

Appendix C: Information and consent form for research participants

Information Sheet

Purpose of the study
I am Annemarie Doran, a Doctorate of Education student in Maynooth University. As part of my course I am undertaking a research study to explore how teacher wellbeing is conceptualised and supported by senior management in Irish post primary schools and examine the National guidelines and polices currently in place.

What will the study involve?
The study will involve you the participant, reading the information sheet, signing a consent form to partake in the study, completing a questionnaire and if willing and necessary then participating in a 60-minute interview with me organised at a time and location convenient to you.

Who has approved this study?
This study has been reviewed and received ethical approval from Maynooth University Ethics Committee and the Education Doctoral Research Committee. You may have a copy of this approval if you request it.

Why have you been asked to take part?
You have been asked to take part in this study because of your knowledge and experience in this field.

Do you have to take part?
No, you are under no obligation to take part. I hope you will agree to participate but it is your choice. If you decide to take part, you will be provided with an information sheet and asked to sign a consent form. You will also be provided with a schedule of the interview in advance of the interview. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any stage without giving any reason. You are also free to withdraw your information up until such a time as the research findings are reported.

What information will be collected?
The information that will be collected will include your name on the consent form and email address for the purpose of organising an interview. Email addresses will be kept separate from the data. The interview/questionnaire/focus group will collect data of your experience and knowledge of teacher wellbeing and how it is supported post primary Irish schools. The data will be anonymised by me, and no person will see the collected data before you.

Will participation in the study be kept confidential?
Yes, all information that is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept confidential. No names will be identifiable at any time. All hard copies will be locked in a secure cabinet at the researchers' office. Electronic information will be encrypted/password protected and stored securely on the Maynooth University server and will be accessed only by me, Annemarie Doran and my supervisors, Dr. Celine Healy and Dr. Jolanta Burke.

'It must be recognised that, in some circumstances, confidentiality of research data and records may be overridden by courts in the event of litigation or in the course of investigation by lawful

authority. In such circumstances the University will take all reasonable steps within law to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to the greatest possible extent.'

No information will be distributed to any other unauthorised individual or third party. If you wish, a copy of the data you provide can also be made available to you.

What will happen to the information which you give?
All the information you provide will be kept at Maynooth University in such a way that it will not be possible to identify you. Electronic data will be encrypted, and hard copies of the data will be kept in a secure cabinet. On completion of the research, the data will be retained on the MU server. After ten years, all data will be destroyed. Manual data will be shredded confidentially by me and electronic data will be reformatted or overwritten by me in Maynooth University.

What will happen to the results?
The research will be written up and presented as a thesis. It may also be presented at National Conferences and/or written and presented for publication. A copy of the research findings will be made available to you upon request.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?
I do not envisage any possible disadvantage to you taking part in this research study. If you feel that the research has not been carried out as described above, you may contact my supervisors,
Dr Celine Healy,
Phone: 01-7086087,
Email: celine.healy@mu.ie

Dr. Jolanta Burke
Phone:01-7083466
Email: Jolanta.burke@mumail.ie

Any further queries?
If you require any further information you may contact me,
Annemarie Doran
Phone : 087-6732039
Email : annemarie.doran.2018@mumail.ie

If you agree to take part in the study, please complete and sign the consent form overleaf.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Consent form

I……agree to participate in Annemarie Doran's research study titled

'An exploration of how teacher wellbeing is conceptualised and supported by the main stakeholders in post-primary schools in Ireland

Please tick each statement below:

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me in writing. I've been able to ask questions, which were answered satisfactorily. ☐

I am participating voluntarily. ☐

I agree to participate in a semi-structured interview/focus group and/or questionnaire.

☐

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether that is before it starts or while I am participating. ☐

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data right up to data reporting. ☐

It has been explained to me how my data will be managed and that I may access it on request.

☐

I understand the limits of confidentiality as described in the information sheet. ☐

I understand that my data, in an anonymous format may presented at National Conferences and in any subsequent publications if I give permission: ☐

I agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my assignment. ☐
I do not agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my assignment. ☐

I agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview. ☐
I do not agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview. ☐

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Participant Name in block capitals: _____

I the undersigned have taken the time to fully explain to the above participant the nature and purpose of this study in a manner that they could understand. I have explained the risks involved as well as the possible benefits. I have invited them to ask questions on any aspect of the study that concerned them.

Signed……. Date…….

Researcher Name in block capitals ……...

If during your participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact the Secretary of the Maynooth University Ethics Committee at research.ethics@mu.ie or +353 (0)1 708 6019. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

For your information the Data Controller for this research project is Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co. Kildare. Maynooth University Data Protection officer is Ann McKeon in Humanity house, room 17, who can be contacted at ann.mckeon@mu.ie. Maynooth University Data Privacy policies can be found at https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/data-protection.

Two copies to be made: 1 for participant, 1 for researcher

Appendix D: Semi-structured interviews: Guiding questions

The following questions are to be used as guide, as it is important the conversation is allowed to flow.

1. In terms of teacher wellbeing, how is it supported in your school/by your organisation? i.e. practices and policies currently in place.
2. Who do you think has responsibility for wellbeing in schools?
3. How was teacher wellbeing supported during lockdown?
4. Are you aware of the programmes/supports offered by the Department of Education?
5. Who is responsible for the implementation of these programmes?
6. How do you/your organisation conceptualise or define wellbeing in the school context?

Appendix E: Focus groups: Guiding questions

The following questions are to be used as a guide, as it is important the conversation is allowed to flow.

1. What are the practices currently in place to support teacher wellbeing?
2. Is there a wellbeing policy in your school?
3. Who would you approach in your school if you felt you had an issue with your wellbeing?
4. Was there any extra support for teachers wellbeing during Covid?
5. Who do you think is responsible for supporting teachers wellbeing?
6. Do you think you would recognise someone on staff who was struggling with their wellbeing?
7. What can management put in place to show teachers that they care about them and their wellbeing?

Appendix F: Excerpt of coding tables

Key codes	Principal participant #1	JMB	The Teaching Council	NAPD	TUI	ASTI	ETBI	Focus group participant #3
Responsibility/legal requirement	Personal responsibility Falls to principal Little guidance Grey area Blurred lines	Personal responsibility Grey area	Personal responsibility	Personal responsibility Grey area	Personal responsibility Board of management but grey area	Personal responsibility Board of management but grey area	Personal responsibility	top down approach needed leadership required style of leadership role of senior management personal responsibility also needs to be guided
Formal/Informal supports	Not aware of Inspire programme	Employee assistance	Acknowledged existence of employee assistance Supports in place from the Teaching Council in supporting wellbeing Enzines, webinars	Employee assistance Mentoring for newly appointed principals	Employee assistance. Effectiveness?	Employee assistance but how effective is it?	Employee assistance	Box ticking Initiative overload Nothing formal

Key codes	Principal participant #1	JMB	The Teaching Council	NAPD	TUI	ASTI	ETBI	Focus group participant #3
Wellbeing policy	Nothing official in school Did not reference framework	Referenced departments wellbeing framework	Referenced departments wellbeing framework	Referenced departments wellbeing framework	Referenced departments wellbeing framework Framework a missed opportunity by department	Referenced departments wellbeing framework Very disappointed with framework and brief mention of teacher little or no thought of the teachers wellbeing and the supports they need	Referenced departments wellbeing framework	No official wellbeing policy in school What is offered perceived as a box ticking g exercise Teachers should be afforded the same as students
Working together/Collaboration								Same emphasis needed on teachers as on student Framework needs to reflect the importance of the teacher also
How wellbeing is perceived?	Wellbeing versus welfare?				Duty of care? Need to take care of the head first?			Top down approach needed Perception of wellbeing needs to change…not seen as a weakness

Key codes	Principal participant #1	JMB	The Teaching council	NAPD	TUI	ASTI	ETBI	Focus group participant #3
Improvements needed	What about management and principals/deputy principals? Who looks after our wellbeing?	Revision of framework required More emphasis on teacher Clarity in terms of responsibility			Revision of framework required	Revision of framework required		Problem of sending emails at irregular hours Lack of a simple acknowledgement From management Effective wellbeing policy Duty of care from management? Effective CPD specifically for wellbeing Better use of Croke Park hours

Appendix G: Excerpt of generating themes

Code	Theme
• Set boundaries • Inappropriate times to send emails • Acknowledgement • More formal structures to wellbeing • A simple' thank you' • Recognition • Support teachers as they support students • Better use of Croke park hours • Better planning of timetable and school calendar • Reduce how accessible teachers are • Clearly defined roles and responsibilities • Initiative overload • Better link/relationship with management bodies • An effective wellbeing policy • A top down approach from management • Structure needed • Effective CPD • Teacher and not student focused	Supporting teachers' wellbeing
• Holistic • Safe • Fulfilled • Personal meaning • Relationships • Connections with other staff members • Feeling valued • Listed to • Acknowledged • Appreciated • Content with school life • Supported from management • Belonging • A definition needed suitable foe school context • Wellbeing can mean different things to different people • Collaboration needed with all key stakeholder groups to define wellbeing	What does wellbeing mean to you?/Defining wellbeing
• Needs to be inclusive • Top down approach • All school members involved • All key stakeholders involved • Improved communication between management and teachers	Wellbeing culture

• Improved communication between management and governing bodies • Improved communication between management bodies and the department • Community approach involving all members, not just students • Collaboration needed • Common goal • Making wellbeing visible • School culture is changing, therefore so should our approach to wellbeing	Wellbeing culture
• Personal responsibility • Top-down approach required • Leadership needed • Board of management role in terms of responsibility • Blurred lines of responsibility • What does responsibility mean in schools for wellbeing? • What does it entail? • Unofficial role for principal and/or deputy principal • Deputy principals take on role unofficially • Department responsibility or box ticking exercise? • Everyone's responsibility, yet no one official responsibility • Passing the book in terms of acceptance of responsibility • Legal requirement in schools? • Differencing between wellbeing and welfare in terms of responsibility? Is there a difference in legal terms for schools? • Fear of acceptance of responsibility in legal terms • Board of management made up of essentially volunteers with little or no legal background.	Responsibility?
• Top-down approach • Specific wellbeing policy • Specific wellbeing CPD	Collaboration

Appendix H: Final themes

Themes	Subthemes
1. Accountability	1. A statutory requirement 2. Responsibility 3. Creating a culture
2. Perceptions	1. Collaboration 2. Defining wellbeing
3. Visibility	1. Supports available 2. Whole school approach