

"It's celebrating our humanity"-A Single Case Study Investigation of the Education Human Values Model and its Relationship to Pupil Wellbeing and Flourishing in a Dublin Primary School

Marino Institute of Education

Christina Caffrey

Word Count: 10, 993

Supervisor: Dr. Aiveen Mullally

Submission Date: 9th May 2022

"Some say that knowledge is power, but it is not true. Character is power."

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme leading to the award of the degree of Professional Master of Education, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others, save to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work. I further declare that this dissertation has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this Institute and any other Institution or University. I agree that the Marino Institute of Education library may lend or copy the thesis, in hard or soft copy, upon request.

Printed name: Christina Caffrey

Signature:

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the author.

Date: 9th May 2020

MIE Thesis Deposit Licence

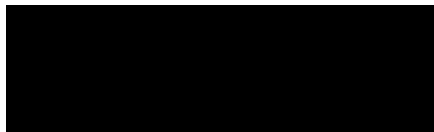
In accordance with the *Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000 and S.I. 427 of 2000* I hereby give permission to the Marino Institute of Education to make available, at their discretion, for consultation, inter-library lending or copying the thesis detailed above. I agree that the Marino Institute of Education may deposit the thesis detailed above in the Institutional Repository managed by the Library and or in *Tara*, the Institutional Repository managed by Trinity College and if appropriate into *Arts and Culture in Education Research Repository* (ACERR). I confirm that the electronic copy consists of one PDF file mirroring the hardbound copy. I understand that the metadata (title, author, abstract, key words) pertaining to all theses, including those under embargo, will be made available in the MIE Institutional Repository and *Tara*, and on the Library catalogue and in any list of theses published by the Institute or to which the Institute may decide to contribute.

De réir an *Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000 agus Ionstraim Reachtúil 427 de 2000*, tugaim leis seo cead d'Institiúid Oideachais Marino an tráchtas thuasluaite a chur ar fáil, faoina rogha féin, don bhreathnú, d'iasachtaí idir-leabharlainne nó do chóipeáil. Aontaím gur féidir le hInstitiúid Oideachais Marino an tráchtas thuasluaite a chur sa Stór Institiúideach a ndéanann an Leabharlann bainistíocht air, nó i gCartlann Taighde Choláiste na Tríonóide (TARA), an Stór Institiúideach a ndéanann Coláiste na Tríonóide bainistíocht air, agus más cuí, an tráchtas a chur i Stór an Taighde ar na hEalaíona agus ar an gCultúr san oideachas, nó ACERR mar is fearr aithne air sa Bhéarla. Deimhním gur comhad PDF amháin atá sa chóip leictreonach macasamhail na cóipe faoi chumhdach crua. Tuigim go mbeidh na meiteashonraí (teideal, údar, achoimre, eochairfhocail) a bhaineann leis na tráchtas ar fad, lena n-áirítear

cinn faoi lánchosc, go mbeidh na meiteashonraí sin ar fáil sa Stór Institiúideach de chuid Institiúid Oideachais Marino agus TARA, ar chatalóg na Leabharlainne, agus in aon liosta tráchtas a fhoilsíonn an Institiúid nó ar liosta a gcuireann an Institiúid leis.

http://www.achtanna.ie/result.html?q_phrase=Copyright+and+Related+Rights+Act%2C+2000+&hits_per_page=25&button=Search

Signature:



Abstract

The *NCCA Draft Primary Curriculum Framework* proposes a designated curriculum area for Wellbeing in the upcoming revisions to the Irish Primary Curriculum. To address this provision, the inclusion of a subject entitled Social, Personal, and Values Education is under consideration (NCCA, 2020). Values education encompasses, “a national movement creating schools that foster ethical, responsible, and caring young people, by modelling and teaching good character through emphasis on universal values that we all share” (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005, p.2). This study examines the efficacy of Education in Human Values (EHV), a values education model originating from the teachings of the Indian spiritual leader, Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Underscored by the philosophy of Educare, the EHV approach is proposed to draw out the inherently latent human values of love, truth, peace, right conduct, and non-violence (SSIO, 2018). This study examines the potential of the EHV model to effectively deliver the Wellbeing Curriculum area of the revised Irish Primary Curriculum. A social constructivist paradigm was adopted for this study in order to examine the lived reality of pupils and educators with respect to the implementation of EHV in a Dublin primary school. A single case study investigation, incorporating one-to-one semi-structured interviews with three educators, and a single focus group interview with five 6th class pupils was completed. Data analysis yielded a perceived positive correlation between EHV and the enhancement of pupil social and emotional learning and associated psychological wellbeing, across both educator and pupil interviews. Other pertinent findings concerning the universal applicability of this model with respect to whole-school implementation, cross curricular integration, and ethos, were also revealed. These findings coupled with the model’s alignment with a flourishing paradigm of success, highlight EHV as a serious contender for leading wellbeing promotion in the new curriculum.

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to my supervisor Dr. Aiveen Mullally, whose kindness, guidance, support, and invaluable expertise was so appreciated. Her belief in this research and the unique insights that she provided, were truly influential in shaping this project.

To the wonderful educators who participated in this research. This project would not have been possible without you; the giving of your time, particularly during such a challenging year for teachers, is a kindness that has meant so much to me. Thank you also for the privilege of allowing me to tell the story of Education Human Values at your school.

To the pupils who gave their valuable time to this research, thank you so much. This research would not have been the same without your voice, and it was an absolute pleasure to listen to you all. I wish you all the best of luck as you move on to secondary school, which I am confident you will face with the utmost character.

To my amazing family who have always been in my corner, I am so thankful and I will forever appreciate all you do for me.

To Alan, for being a true partner in life, who has taken this journey with me with nothing but love, encouragement, and patience. For putting up with many late nights with the lights on and the sound of banging keyboard keys, I am forever grateful. Love you always.

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Pupil SEL competencies referenced in interviews with Educator 1, 2, and 3.

Figure 1: Pupil contributions with respect to EHV and the development of Self-Awareness.

Figure 2: Mia's* drawing representing what EHV has taught her about psychological wellbeing; she has included a number of her positive character strengths in the drawing.

Figure 3: Pupil contributions with respect to EHV and the development of Self-Management.

Figure 4: Pupil contributions with respect to EHV and the development of Social Awareness.

Figure 5: Pupil contributions with respect to EHV and the development of Relationship skills.

Figure 6: Pupil contributions with respect to EHV and the development of Responsible Decision-Making.

Figure 7: Zoe's* drawing representing what EHV has taught her about psychological wellbeing.

List of Abbreviations

BERA	British Educational Research Association
CASEL	Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DES	Department of Education and Skills
EHV	Education in Human Values
JCCV	The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning
SSIO	Sathya Sai International Organisation
WHO	World Health Organisation

List of Appendices

Appendix A:	Letter of Invitation-Educators
Appendix B:	Letter of Invitation-Parents/Guardians of Pupils
Appendix C:	Project Information Leaflet-Educators and Parents/Guardians
Appendix D:	Consent Form-Educators
Appendix E:	Consent Form-Parents re Pupil Participation in Focus Group
Appendix F:	Assent Form for Pupils
Appendix G:	Plain Language Statement-Educators and Parents/Guardians
Appendix H:	Plain Language Statement-Power Point presentation for Pupils
Appendix I:	Interview Schedules
Appendix J:	Categorisation Process for Thematic Analysis

Table of Contents

Declaration.....	3
MIE Thesis Deposit Licence.....	4
Abstract.....	6
Acknowledgements	7
List of Tables and Figures.....	8
List of Abbreviations	9
List of Appendices.....	10
Chapter 1: Introduction	13
Introduction	13
Research Context.....	13
Research Rationale.....	14
Research Scope, Aims, and Question.....	15
Thesis Outline	16
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	17
Introduction	17
The Flourishing Perspective-A Humanist Philosophy of Education	17
Values Education-A Compatible Approach?	19
The Education in Human Values (EHV) model.....	21
Social and Emotional Learning, Wellbeing, and Flourishing-Where do values fit in?	22
Empirical evidence for EHV	25
Conclusion.....	26
Chapter 3: Research Methodology.....	28
Research paradigm	28
Positionality.....	28
Research Methodology.....	29
<i>Case study</i>	29
Research Method.....	29
<i>Interviews</i>	30
<i>Focus groups</i>	30
Research Context.....	30
Research Participants	31
<i>Participant groups</i>	31
<i>Sampling</i>	31
Ethical considerations	32

<i>Beneficence</i>	32
<i>Adult participants and consent</i>	32
<i>Research with children</i>	32
<i>Confidentiality and anonymity</i>	33
Data analysis	33
Reliability and Validity	34
Limitations	35
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Interpretation	36
The Universal Nature of EHV	36
<i>The Formative Years and EHV</i>	38
<i>Cross-Curricular Integration and EHV</i>	38
<i>Answering the Ethos Question with EHV</i>	39
Fostering Wellbeing with EHV	41
<i>“Building up a solid base”-Developing SEL competencies with EHV</i>	42
Nurturing Children’s Innate Potential with EHV	51
<i>“I am good as I AM!”-EHV and Redefining Success as Possibility for All</i>	52
Conclusion.....	53
Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations	55
Introduction	55
Response to Research Question and Aims	55
Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research.....	56
Recommendations	57
Final thoughts.....	58
References	59
Appendices	65
Appendix A: Letter of Invitation-Educators	65
Appendix B: Letter of Invitation-Parents/Guardians of Pupils.....	66
Appendix C: Project Information Leaflet-Educators and Parents/Guardians	67
Appendix D: Consent Form-Educators	69
Appendix E: Consent Form-Parents re Pupil Participation in Focus Group.....	70
Appendix F: Assent Form for Pupils	71
Appendix G: Plain Language Statement-Educators and Parents/Guardians Plain	72
Appendix H: Language Statement-Power Point presentation for Pupils	74
Appendix I: Interview Schedules	78
Appendix J: Categorisation Process for Thematic Analysis	80

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

This single case study investigation explores the experiences of pupils and educators with respect to the implementation of the *Education Human Values (EHV)* model in a Dublin primary school. This introductory chapter provides an overview of the contextual background and rationale for this research, reflecting upon the upcoming Revised Irish Primary Curriculum, and an initial appraisal of values education. Finally, this chapter includes a description of the research scope and the associated aims and research question, and concludes with an outline of the thesis structure.

Research Context

It is not a mere romanticism to say that the upcoming Revised Irish Primary Curriculum represents policymakers exploring new frontiers for holistic education. The Ireland of today has changed dramatically since the development of the 1999 curriculum, with the hail of globalisation resulting in a collective mental shift towards all matters economic and technological (Irwin, 2018; Kaliannan & Devi Chandran, 2010). Children exist in a new world of unparallel connectivity where information can be accessed with a click of a button, however, does knowledge always mean power?

Children's internet use has doubled in recent years (Smahel et al., 2020), and with this rise exists a growing recognition that, "The virtual environment is made up of digital social spaces where habits, values and attitudes are formed" (Núñez-Gómez, Larrañaga, Rangel, & Ortega-Mohedano, 2021, p.7). The modern world thus seems to call upon children to look outwards for their answers, the clamour of these external voices perhaps silencing their own internal compass. The hail of the technology age has coincided with globalisation, resulting

in classrooms too often focused on information acquisition, exam performance, and qualifications (Kaliannan & Devi Chandran, 2010). Furthermore, the resulting increase in international connectivity, has positioned children as audience members to the world stage, now bearing witness to a vast number of competing value systems (Irwin, 2018). Reflecting upon the challenges faced by children navigating this increasingly complex world, the need to safeguard the wellbeing of pupils is perhaps more vital than ever.

If education functions to prepare pupils for life outside the classroom (Ackoff and Greenberg, 2008), there now exists both a privilege and challenge in supporting pupils to grow and thrive in a diverse Ireland (Irwin, 2018). With those of all faiths and none, a society must now be created to provide a reflection of the identity of all of its citizens (Irwin, 2018). With 96% of Ireland's primary schools being denominational, and of mostly Catholic patronage, the 2014 *Report of the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector* notes its recommendation for measures to cater for diversity within existing schools, whilst working towards increasing the availability of schools with greater choice of ethos (Coolahan, Hussey, & Kilfeather, 2012). With a current shortage of the latter, it is pertinent that the education system provides a tangible means of affording a sense of shared identity whilst celebrating our differences (Irwin, 2018). One might ask how this challenge can be fundamentally addressed at a curriculum level?

Research Rationale

Although the philosophical vision for Irish primary education has remained largely unchanged in the past 30 years, planned revisions to the curriculum reflect a conscious awareness of this new Ireland. This is strikingly evident in the NCCA's proposal to designate a specific curriculum area to Wellbeing. The inclusion of social and emotional wellbeing in particular (NCCA, 2020), illustrates a growing recognition of the need to support pupils in

navigating the increased complexities of the human experience. To achieve this, the draft curriculum framework proposes to include Social, Personal, and Values Education as a subject for this curriculum area (NCCA, 2020). *Values or character education* is not a new concept and can be found worldwide in countless iterations. These various programmes aim to instil in children a knowledge and appreciation of universal human values, leading to the development of moral citizens who are ready to take their place in society with a respect for self and others (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005).

EHV is a values education model based on the teachings of the Indian spiritual guru, Sri Sathya Sai Baba (Sathya Sai International Organisation [SSIO], 2018). Based on the philosophy of *Educare*, this programme is designed to draw out the core human values of love, truth, peace, right conduct, and non-violence, which are proposed to be innate (SSIO, 2018). The reflective pedagogical approaches of quote, story-telling, silent sitting, group activity, and values songs, are designed to support an inside-out process of the manifestation of the human potential (SSIO, 2018). Possessing a strong conceptual alignment with wellbeing which will later be explored, this approach also presents with documented evidence of its efficacy with respect to fostering wellbeing and emotional intelligence (Raine, 2006; SSIO, 2007; Taplin, 2011, 2014). However, with an acknowledgement of some of the shortcomings of this existing research, and an absence of research related to the application of EHV in Irish primary schools, the need for this research has thus been identified.

Research Scope, Aims, and Question

This research examines the subjective experience of EHV in the case study school via qualitative interviews with pupils and educators. It focuses on the applicability of EHV to teaching and learning, its interaction with the school's ethos, and most predominately, its perceived impact on pupil wellbeing. As a Level 9 dissertation, it is beyond the scope of this

research to supplement data collection with objective measures such as quantitative analysis of wellbeing performance indicators (e.g. school attendance), or the completion of observational checklists of behaviour related to social and emotional learning competencies. This research is limited to a single case study site, and does not include a comparative analysis with a control group.

This research aims to (i) Explore the relevance of values education in Irish society, (ii) Provide insights with respect to the compatibility of the international EHV model and the Irish Primary Curriculum, with an emphasis on ethos and pedagogy, and (iii) Examine pupil and educator perspectives of how the EHV model interacts with wellbeing promotion in an Irish primary school. These research aims have emerged from the broader research question- Does the Education Human Values model have the potential to effectively deliver the Wellbeing Curriculum area in the revised Irish Primary Curriculum? In addressing this question, this timely research hopes to contribute insights to contemporary discussions regarding the potential merit of values education in the Revised Irish Primary Curriculum.

Thesis Outline

This chapter has provided an overview of the background pertaining to this single case study investigation. Chapter 2 will provide a review and analysis of the existing literature pertinent to the examination of the phenomenon under scrutiny. Chapter 3 will outline the research methodology, associated ethical considerations, and the data analysis process underpinning this study. Chapter 4 will present a summary of the findings which emerged from the data analysis process, including a critical appraisal of how these findings relate to existing literature. Finally, the implications of the research findings, associated recommendations, and suggestions for future research, will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter details a critical appraisal of existing literature pertinent to the examination of a relationship between values education and the promotion of psychological wellbeing. This literature review will begin with further examination of the changing priorities in the Irish education system, with a particular focus on the philosophical viewpoint of flourishing. This will then lead to a specific exploration of the Education in Human Values (EHV) model, with respect to its origins, theoretical and ideological underpinnings, and pedagogy. The latter component of this literature review will examine the relationship between social and emotional learning (SEL) and wellbeing, and will explore the potential of values education to advance this relationship. Finally, this chapter will conclude with an examination of the current international evidence base for values education, including research specifically examining the efficacy of the EHV model.

The Flourishing Perspective-A Humanist Philosophy of Education

As discussed in Chapter 1, a shift in priorities dominates the proposed developments for the Revised Irish Primary Curriculum. A desire for curriculum time reallocations, as well as appeals for new curriculum areas such as Wellbeing (NCCA, 2020), represent the modern needs of a pluralistic society in which there exists a desire to reconsider the educational outcomes currently afforded superiority. It is with this educational renaissance, that a return to a more holistic vision for education has occurred in Irish educational policy (Irwin, 2018; NCCA, 2020). The sentiment underlying such visions for education appear to represent an undeniable return to an age-old, but evidently enduring, educational philosophy.

A humanist philosophy of education views education as a developmental process of humanising or developing the personhood of the pupil (Firdaus & Mariyat, 2017). Firdaus

and Mariyat (2017) extend this explanation further to include consideration of humanism from a psychological standpoint, explaining that this approach conceptualises the human personality on the basis of higher order cognitive functions, such as self-awareness and decision-making, that are known to set humans apart from other animals. Furthermore, human behaviour is proposed to be driven by an innate drive to grow and meet one's individual potential (Firdaus & Mariyat, 2017); a desired level of achievement which can be seen to permeate various Irish Primary Curriculum documents (DES 1999; NCCA 2020).

References to notions such as meeting one's potential, and of human personality being characterised by our species' unique mental capabilities, form key components of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (Kraut, 2015). From his study of biology, Aristotle adopted a *teleological perspective*, believing that living things have the potential to live well on the basis of fulfilling the unique functions of their particular organism (Kristjánsson, 2013; Kraut, 2015). In relation to human beings and the unique mental functions that are fundamental to what it means to be human, Aristotle purported the view that it is this set of higher order emotional and cognitive functions which give humans the potential to exalt themselves above other living organisms (Kraut, 2015). Furthermore, Aristotle believed that this exaltation is driven by the ability of human beings to use these emotional and cognitive capabilities to engage in conduct of a morally commendable or virtuous manner (Kristjánsson, 2013). From an Aristotelian perspective, the act of humanising pupils by supporting their access to core virtues or values, is deemed fundamental to enabling pupils to meet their unique potential. Thus, if the end goal of education is supporting each pupil to meet their unique potential and to enter adulthood as a well-rounded and virtuous being, how can educators counter the shortcomings of a reductionist view of education that the modern world appears to champion?

Values Education-A Compatible Approach?

Values or character education is proposed to answer this call for holistic education, and is concerned with the development of “a set of personal traits or dispositions that produce specific moral emotions, inform motivation and guide conduct” (The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues [JCCV] 2017, p.2). Berkowitz and Bier (2005) provide a similar definition, however, they place emphasis on the universal nature of these fundamental values, describing values education as a, “a national movement creating schools that foster ethical, responsible, and caring young people...through emphasis on universal values that *we all share* [emphasis added]” (p.2). Specifically, what the various models or iterations of values education offer is a framework for the explicit teaching of human values. Furthermore, the various proponents of values education acknowledge the need to address the multiple facets of values development, recognising the importance of focusing on outcomes of the *head*, *heart*, and *hand* (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). In other words, they strive to develop the *components of virtue*, which include the individual’s ability to understand and recognise the value, their desire to embody such principles, and the individual’s actual use of the value to effect behavioural change (JCCV, 2017).

The need for such approaches has been contested by those who believe that education should be values neutral, however, with recognition of the fact that teaching is a highly relational profession whereby educators occupy the role of *in loco parentis* (Schonert-Reichl & Hymel, 2007; Lovat & Hawkes, 2013), it is argued that if values are not taught they will be caught (Kristjánsson, 2013). Even at a purely pragmatic level, this process of social osmosis occurring in the school environment must be recognised as an all but guaranteed source of values assimilation. Kristjánsson (2013) thus calls on educators to consider what will bear more fruit for pupils-inescapable values education that is carefully planned and implemented, or that which occurs in a random and non-reflective manner?

The answer to this question is perhaps an obvious one, but is complicated by persisting misconceptions with respect to what values education is and is not. A common misconception is that values education is exclusively religious (JCCV, 2017), and on the basis of same, a reasonable argument could be made with respect to what can be offered by values education that is not already offered by Ireland's existing religious education or ethical curricula. However, a more thorough examination of the historical basis of values education, reveals that the values underlying these approaches are not exclusively religious (JCCV, 2017), but represent a "shareable experience" which spans "all areas of human concern like ethics, religion, art, science, social, science, law etc..." (Krishna Prabhu, 2011, p. 1729). Furthermore, in considering competing ethical curricula in the Irish education system, it is noteworthy that these curricula have their origins in local policy change (Coolahan et al., 2012). Conversely, an appraisal of the literature examining values education as a broader concept, reveals that the values underpinning such approaches have been chosen as prototypical values shared across a variety of religions and cultures worldwide (JCCV, 2017). These humanist values thus present as a feasible and exciting opportunity, for meeting the recommendations of the ODIHR's *Toledo Guiding Principles On Teaching About Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools*, by furthering efforts to avoid a sense of othering for pupils opting out of faith formation, and providing said pupils with meaningful learning alternatives (ODIHR, 2007).

Another key argument put forward by those who criticise values education, is that it is a paternalistic notion representing a sense of interference or threat to familial autonomy posed by educators (Kristjánsson, 2013). This view has been refuted by empirical data demonstrating a desire for school involvement in values education on behalf of both pupils and parents (Kristjánsson, 2013). An initial exploration of the EHV model will be followed

with a later examination of its links to modern conceptions of wellbeing, with the latter serving to mediate further concerns with respect to paternalism.

The Education in Human Values (EHV) model

EHV, the values education model at the centre of this case study investigation, originated in 1960s India from the teachings of the spiritual leader, Sri Sathya Sai Baba. EHV now boasts international reach, travelling from its home country and across the continents to serve as a model of values education for a diverse spectrum of educational institutions (SSIO, 2018). An examination of the key philosophical underpinnings and pedagogy of EHV, reveals that this model comprehensively meets the brief of the ideals set out by a humanist perspective of education.

EHV is based on the philosophy of *Educare*, which encourages a process of self-enquiry to rouse core human values which are proposedly inherently latent (SSIO, 2018). This emphasis on introspection is at the core of the *Educare* philosophy, which views the growth of human potential as an inside-out process (SSIO, 2018), thus prompting children to confidently look inwards for guidance. Here, clear parallels can be seen with Aristotle's view that it is a unique capacity for introspection that allows human beings to access the higher order cognitive and emotional capabilities which permit a life of living with virtue; allowing an individual's unique function or potential as a human to be realised. The model provides specific values or virtues that it aims for its participants to discover during this process of self-enquiry; these include love, truth, peace, right conduct, and non-violence (SSIO, 2018).

The focus on these five particular values is a deliberate choice that is intended to result in a holistic educational experience for the pupil, with these core values stated to be aligned with the intellectual, physical, emotional, psyche, and spiritual aspects of the human personality (Kaliannan & Devi Chandran, 2010). An examination of values education

literature, highlights an overlap between EHV's values and the aforementioned prototypical values common to numerous world religions and cultures (JCCV, 2017). It is noteworthy that the intellect is recognisable in this description of the totality of the human personality. An examination of humanist perspectives of education may prompt the view that it is the intention of such philosophies to disregard the important place of academia. Conversely, as per the 1999 Irish Primary Curriculum, it is evident that EHV presents with a shared goal of aiming to nurture the child's development in all aspects of life, including the cognitive (DES, 1999). *Integral Education*, the pedagogical approach of the EHV model, explicitly states that its methods aim to promote inner transformation for both personal and academic excellence (SSIO, 2018). This abates any well-founded concern that values education means a sole focus on humanising pupils without due consideration of academics, as it is clear that the EHV model does not suggest a dichotomous separation (Kaliannan & Devi Chandran, 2010). Furthermore, Integral Education's five characteristic teaching methodologies of quote, story-telling, silent sitting, group activity, and values songs (SSIO, 2018) are recognisably underscored by active learning and reflective practice teaching methodologies. Thus, numerous potential compatibilities of the EHV model for the Irish education system are abundantly clear. With this understanding of the vision and scope of the EHV model, one must now consider what is the niche role that it has to offer the Irish education system. Indeed, what value is in values education?

Social and Emotional Learning, Wellbeing, and Flourishing-Where do values fit in?

The term *SEL* is synonymous with emotional intelligence (Schonert-Reichl & Hymel, 2007), and is defined as, "the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve personal goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (Collaborative for

Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2020). Even an isolated examination of *Self-Awareness*-the understanding and recognition of one's emotions, thoughts, and values, personal strengths, and limitations (CASEL, 2020)-reveals an arguably Aristotelian perspective of the virtuous human being. These competencies are not unique to CASEL, but are commonly incorporated into various lists pertaining to characteristics of emotional intelligence (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Serrat, 2017) *Emotional intelligence*, or the capacity to reflect on the emotions of others as well as one's self (Serrat, 2017), is receiving growing traction in the educational sector. With respect to the Irish primary curriculum's intention to enable pupils to meet current and future demands in life (DES, 1999), a consideration of the existing research examining the benefits of emotional intelligence in the workplace, is particularly prudent. With respect to the impact of emotional intelligence in the modern workplace, Serrat (2017) notes numerous benefits including reduced stress via improved conflict resolution, supported relationships, stability, etc., better recruitment and retention, and more effective leadership. Research by Carmeli, Yitzhak-Halevy, and Weisberg (2009) has also revealed that heightened emotional intelligence is positively associated with the psychological wellbeing of employees. But how does all of this relate to values education?

An understanding of SEL is pertinent to an understanding of the potential place of values education in the Irish education system. Although, presenting with differences in parameters, the link between SEL and values education is evident when one understands SEL to be the process of skills development for good character (Schonert-Reichl & Hymel, 2007). An examination of the conceptual understanding of both SEL and values education, reveals clear links to *wellbeing*, which is defined as being, "present when a person realises their potential, is resilient in dealing with the normal stresses of their life, takes care of their physical wellbeing and has a sense of purpose, connection, and belonging to a wider

community” (WHO, 2001, as cited in DES 2018). To understand this alignment, it is worthwhile to examine the concept of flourishing as the ultimate goal of education.

The term *flourishing* commonly manifests itself in curricular documents as notions of the child meeting their unique potential, possessing a sense of meaning and purpose, and living a good life (Kristjánsson, 2017). Kristjánsson (2017) reflects on how this particular perspective of wellbeing differs from traditional therapeutic models, in that it is a strengths-based approach which emphasises the individual capitalising on internal qualities or assets; thus highlighting the notion that an awareness of one’s own innate human qualities is essential in living a fulfilled life. Therefore, it is logical to infer that values education models, such as EHV, which align themselves with this concept of inward-outward transformation (Kaliannan & Devi Chandran, 2010), may present as a fitting solution for promoting the flourishing or wellbeing of pupils, whilst avoiding paternalism.

Looking beyond mere conceptual alignments, existing empirical evidence and government policy prompt consideration of values education as a serious contender for fostering wellbeing in the Irish Primary Education System. In the Irish government’s *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice* that has been devised for national rollout in 2023 (DES, 2018), both risk and protective factors for wellbeing have been noted. The policy references research conducted by the WHO in 2014, which identified societal values such as justice and equality, and the individual’s personal skills and competencies as key protective factors for wellbeing (DES, 2018). The policy authors further state that these protective factors have been shown to promote positive wellbeing outcomes for children, even when they have been exposed to wellbeing risk factors (Cooper & Jacobs, 2011, as cited in DES, 2018). Thus, the need for proactive endeavours targeting SEL competency development is unquestionable.

A review of the policy also yields numerous references to the instrumental function of a whole-school wellbeing approach, fostering partnerships, and creating opportunities for explicit teaching of wellbeing competencies (DES, 2018). Returning to the EHV model, the educator is provided with the following key principles of implementation: i) an environment or school culture with values-infused conduct, ii) adherence to the *Triple Partnership for Education*, which recognises the partnership existing between pupils, parents, and educators, and iii) direct and indirect teaching methods so that values are both taught and caught (Kaliannan & Devi Chandran, 2010; SSIO, 2018). Thus, an examination of EHV's pedagogy reveals a clear alignment with the recommendations of key governmental policy concerning wellbeing promotion.

Empirical evidence for EHV

With a call for evidence-informed wellbeing approaches (DES, 2018), an appraisal of the existing evidence-base for the EHV model is warranted. Since its genesis in the 1960s, evidence in the form of anecdotal data, research reports completed by the Sri Sathya Sai organisation and independent bodies, and inspections by external agencies, have been collected in relation to the impact of the EHV model worldwide (SSIO, 2007). For example, reported benefits of a year of study at the EHV school in Bengkulu, Indonesia, included higher self-confidence as a component of the observed positive behavioural change (Seshadri & Harihar, 2004, cited in SSIO, 2007). The dissertation work of Raine (2006), provides qualitative interview data which indicates a positive enhancement of the resilience qualities of former pupils of EHV primary schools in Australia. The work of Dr. Margaret Taplin examining the impact of EHV's implementation in China, also yields encouraging evidence of the impact of EHV on both academic performance and SEL (Taplin, 2011, 2014). What is evident from the current researcher's review of the literature in relation to the EHV model specifically, is that it is often challenging to distinguish between anecdotal and empirical

data, with publications from the Sathya Sai International Organisation often featuring a narrative, personalised style of writing. However, where gaps can be argued to exist with respect to research related specifically to EHV, promising evidence can be found from other studies examining values education more broadly.

Berkowitz and Bier's (2005) documentary analysis of 33 character education programmes, yielded significant evidence that such programmes contribute positively to outcomes related to the *head, heart, and hand* with respect to SEL. The identification of key characteristics shared by efficacious programmes, including professional development, family and/or community involvement, explicit agendas, and integration (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005), lends support to EHV for which these characteristics are similarly associated (SSIO, 2018). Similarly, Lovat and Hawkes (2013) appraise the findings of an Ofsted 2007 review of a UK values school, in which a myriad of benefits including wellbeing, were attributed to the implicit, as well as explicit, teaching of values. This evidence to support the beneficial nature of a whole-school approach was also coupled with the authors' mention of positive social and academic outcomes, which were wholly or partially attributed to the presence of a germane or shared values language at two values schools (Lovat & Hawkes, 2013).

Conclusion

With due acknowledgement of some of the shortcomings of existing EHV research, the fact remains that both EHV's conceptual underpinning, and the evidential support for values education more generally, prove indication of the potential merit of EHV for supporting the wellbeing movement occurring in the Irish education system. Thus, the aim of this study is to complete an empirical investigation of the impact of the EHV programme on primary school children attending Ireland's pilot values school. It is the hope of this

researcher that addressing the current gap in evidence-base related to the Irish context, will yield hard data regarding the efficacy of this promising programme for holistic education.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter details the research methodology utilised to examine the pupil and educator experience of EHV in the case study school. The chapter outlines the research paradigm underpinning the study, positionality considerations, key data collection methods, the research context, participant recruitment measures, ethical considerations, and finally the data analysis process.

Research paradigm

A social constructivist paradigm was adopted due to its philosophical compatibility with this study's exploration of the lived reality of EHV. Cresswell and Poth (2018) note that with this paradigm, the meaning derived from the phenomenon under scrutiny is considered to reflect multiple subjective realities. Lee (2012) furthers this, explaining that the social in social constructivism qualifies meaning-making as a collective rather than individual experience. Thus, this paradigm appropriately recognises that EHV is experienced by a school community and assigned meaning through the social processes of community members (Lee, 2012).

Positionality

Social constructivism recognises the subjective reality of the researcher, and thus acknowledges this potential influence with respect to data interpretation (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). Consequently, the identification of positionality is vital in ensuring that standards of confirmability are met during data analysis (Poni, 2014). Potential sources of confirmation bias for this study, included the researcher's past pupil status concerning the case study school, and the possession of a personal inclination towards humanist educational philosophies. To mitigate such bias, the neutrality of the language used in interview schedules was reviewed by the research supervisor prior to interviews, and interview

transcripts were compiled for the purpose of independent third-party review post data collection (Campus Labs, 2020).

Research Methodology

“The research method chosen to study a problem should be compatible with the questions being asked. The method should service the kind of knowledge being sought rather than the other way around.” (Bloland, 1992, 3). For the purpose of this study, subjective data of a descriptive nature was sought with respect to the application of EHV in an Irish primary school, and key stakeholder perspectives of its impact, or lack thereof, on pupil wellbeing. Thus, a qualitative methodology was deemed most compatible.

Case study

Specifically, this research took the form of a single case study investigation. A case study is defined as, “an empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context” (Yin, 2018, p.15). The real-world context is particularly pertinent to this research, as a separation of the EHV model from the specific context of an Irish primary school, would have resulted in the study failing to address the current research gap which exists with respect to EHV in the Irish primary education context.

Research Method

A multi-method approach, incorporating semi-structured interviews and a focus group interview was adopted. The decision for multiple qualitative methods was guided by an understanding of the need to incorporate an array of data collection methods to form an in-depth picture of the case (Cresswell & Poth, 2018).

Interviews

As per Wellington (2000) interviews can provide unique insights regarding the perceptions, views, and feelings of participants, and thus were deemed the most compatible research method. One-to-one interviews were completed with the participating educators, and possessed a semi-structured design to afford greater flexibility than that offered by a structured approach (Wellington, 2000). Unstructured interviews were deemed unsuitable, as they require a high level of interview expertise that was beyond the researcher as a novice interviewer; data collection was thus better served by an interview schedule (Wellington, 2000). Open-ended questions were chosen due to their recognised utility in gathering maximal data which optimally reflects the knowledge and experiences of interviewees (Turner, 2010).

Focus groups

A focus group was purposefully chosen for participating pupils, in recognition of the increased comfort afforded by a group dynamic with respect to volunteering contributions (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). Open-ended questions were again utilised, with appropriate child-friendly language to ensure accessibility (Lundy, 2007). The pupils also produced drawings to represent what EHV has taught them about wellbeing. This non-verbal task was a deliberate measure to promote inclusivity and recognise participant diversity (Lundy, 2007).

Research Context

Participants were recruited from a Dublin primary school. It is a single-sex girls national school, with predominately middle-class pupils. The school also operates under Catholic Patronage. The site was selected via purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling involves the intentional selection of people or sites that are believed to be able to best inform the research investigation (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). As Ireland's pilot school for the

implementation of EHV, this site thus boasted participants who could provide a unique insight into the initial adaptation of the model in Ireland.

Research Participants

Core aspects of the participant recruitment process have been outlined.

Participant groups

At the outset of this study, the researcher intended to recruit participants from 3 distinct groupings-pupils, teachers, and parents-in recognition of the Triple Partnership Approach of the EHV model (Kaliannann & Devi Chandran, 2010). However, due to the constraints of a Level 9 research dissertation, data collection from pupils and teaching staff was prioritised. The inclusion of pupils was a key priority, as an investigation of the impact of the EHV model without due consideration of pupil voice was deemed futile by the researcher. As reflected upon by Poni (2014), “The social reality of school where educational research is conducted is the reality of teachers and learners therefore the research has to be conducted with them” (p.408). Poni’s (2014) advocacy for the inclusion of key educational actors, thus places pupils and teachers centerstage.

Sampling

Interviews were conducted with three staff members. Two staff members, from the teaching faculty and management respectively, were purposefully sampled due to their active involvement with the model’s introduction into the school. An additional class teacher was recruited via a voluntary sampling method (Cresswell & Poth, 2018), for a more removed staff perspective. Seven 6th class pupils were recruited via voluntary sampling to participate in a single focus group interview. However, only five pupils were ultimately available due to Covid-related absences.

Ethical considerations

This study received level 2 SERC approval on the basis of the ethical considerations outlined below (Reference: SERC-10-03-21-12-PME-1-21).

Beneficence

Preparatory work for this dissertation incorporated due consideration of the British Educational Research Association's (BERA) *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research*. Beneficence, or the avoidance of harm, was pertinent to this study which examined values, character, and wellbeing (BERA, 2011). These topics were deemed potentially sensitive, therefore, explicit reference was made to these topics in the Project Information Leaflet (Appendix C), and an associated rationale provided with respect to the link between these areas and the research intentions.

Adult participants and consent

The Project Information Leaflet also served as a measure for obtaining voluntary informed consent, a principle pertinent to studies involving data collection from human participants (BERA, 2011). Voluntary participation with the absence of coercion and the continuous option for withdrawal, also ensured voluntary consent (BERA, 2011). Adult participants were also required to sign a written consent form (Appendix D).

Research with children

Pertinent to child research, considerations of assent, parental consent, power dynamics, and unexpected disclosures of sensitive data were appropriately addressed (BERA, 2011). A child-friendly assent form (Appendix F) was provided via a gatekeeper, following the researcher's delivery of an information session with an age-appropriate PowerPoint presentation (Appendix H). Written parental consent (Appendix E) was also obtained.

Unintentional power dynamics were tempered via the researcher's occupation of the least adult role (Mandell, 1988). The information session and focus group interview were completed in the school with a teacher present, to ensure adherence to *Children First Guidelines*. The researcher was also familiar with all relevant child safeguarding policies, and requested the identity of the school's Designated Liaison Person prior to engaging the children.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Participant data has been stored securely in line with GDPR guidelines. Pseudonyms have been used to maintain participant confidentiality, in order to protect participants from any unintended psychological or social harm as a consequence of the views expressed by them (BERA, 2011). Participating pupils were provided with nametags, so that they could refer to each other by their designated pseudonym.

Data analysis

Data was analysed via a thematic analysis approach, a method which allows the researcher to systematically identify patterns of meaning across qualitative data sets (Braun & Clarke, 2012). This data analysis method involves the application of codes to data sets. A code refers to a, "Word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language based or visual data" (Saldana, 2016, p. 4). The use of the descriptors salient and essence capturing refers to the fact that thematic analysis aims to identify patterns in the data that are meaningful and which assist in answering the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Thematic analysis was chosen for the purpose of this research, as it is a flexible method which allows a unitary form of analysis across a variety of qualitative data sets (Braun & Clarke, 2012), and thus was compatible with a multi-method research design. A combination of deductive and inductive approaches to

coding were used to permit the researcher to bring a theoretical understanding of the EHV model to data analysis, whilst also having the flexibility to capture emerging themes that arose from the semantic content of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Coding followed the six step process of Braun and Clarke (2012):

1. Familiarise yourself with the data.
2. Generate initial codes.
3. Search for themes.
4. Review potential themes.
5. Define and name themes.
6. Produce Report.

Reliability and Validity

A number of measures were implemented to promote the reliability and validity of data collection and analysis. As previously mentioned, appropriate counter measures for researcher positionality were employed. During educator interviews and the focus group, safeguards were employed to ensure the integrity of the interview schedule. Research questions were worded in a clear and neutral manner (Turner, 2010) for the purpose of gathering clear and unbiased data. Neutral probing was also used as required to encourage interviewees to elaborate on points of interest (Wellington, 2000). Special considerations were also afforded to data collection with child participants. In order to ensure the reliability of data gathered via the focus group, child-friendly language was used to ensure that pupils fully understood the questions posed. Finally, data source triangulation or the use of multiple data sources, was also a deliberate research choice from the perspective of enhancing the reliability of research data (Denzin 1978).

Limitations

The most significant limitation of this study was the restriction of the case study to one site, and therefore, there is limited generalisability of research findings. It was not within the scope of this study to include additional sites, and therefore, future research of the implementation of the EHV model in various school settings would be beneficial. The current research investigated the application of the model in a mainstream school with students from a middle class background. Further investigation of how this model has been applied in special educational and behavioural reform schools would enrich this research. Finally, the lack of a pre and post measure for the case study site and/or a control school affects the ability of the researcher to draw comparisons between schools in which the EHV model is present vs absent.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter provides an outline and interpretation of data related to three key themes, which became salient in the course of a thematic analysis of interview and focus group data. The findings are interpreted and appraised in relation to existing educational theory, empirical data, and Irish education policy. The three themes, and associated subthemes, that emerged are:

- The Universal Nature of EHV
 - The Formative Years and EHV
 - Cross-Curricular Integration and EHV
 - Answering the Ethos Question with EHV
- Fostering Wellbeing with EHV.
 - “Building up a solid base”: Developing SEL competencies with EHV
- Nurturing Children’s Innate Potential with EHV
 - “I am good as I AM!”-EHV and Redefining Success as a Possibility for All

Other notable themes emerged from the data analysis process, including findings related to the efficacy of EHV’s active learning pedagogies, its capacity to foster successful home-school partnerships, and its potential to cultivate teacher wellbeing through meaningful human connections with pupils. The discussion of these, however, is beyond the scope of the current research study.

The Universal Nature of EHV

Data analysis yielded strong pupil and educator sentiment that EHV is a defining feature of the whole-school experience at the case study school. This universal reach of EHV was strongly evidenced by references to the school as a “values school”, in both the focus group interview and two of the three educator interviews. Examining this particular linguistic

application of the term, it is evident that a sense of being defined by values has prompted its adoption as an identity label for the school. The coinage of this term by key stakeholders provides evidence that EHV has presented with universal application in the case study school, not only existing as a classroom teaching tool, but permeating all aspects of school community life.

A related finding, of perhaps greater significance, is that four of the five focus group participants expressed the sense that EHV is integral to the positive pupil experience at their school. This sentiment was epitomised by one participant's consideration of the feelings of a hypothetical pupil at the point of school completion.

Maybe like a little hopeful, but a little bit disappointed as well. Because after coming from a place where you learn about it, like even the bits of it that you won't love as much as the other bits...it would be a big change to go somewhere where you don't have the values assembly and even the bits you wouldn't like, I feel like you might start to miss. (Zoe*)

The other four focus group participants focused on providing a character description of this pupil, describing her as “positive”, “funny”, “tolerant”, “generous”, “confident”, etc. Significantly, 50% of these respondents explicitly accredited these exclusively positive attributes to the universal application of EHV, remarking upon the access it has permitted to teacher and peer models of values-infused behaviour. As stated by Laura*, “I think they become that person because of the teachers that are around them, and the people, like the students.”

The data analysis process yielded further evidence with respect to the multiple facets of EHV's universal application; these findings are discussed in accordance with the following subthemes.

The Formative Years and EHV

100% of participants identified early childhood as an optimal period for values development. One pupil rationalised this viewpoint noting that if children learn values at a younger age, “they get like a hang of it” (Laura*). This sentiment was similarly shared by Zoe* who identified the ages of “five to eight” as a time “when you’re still very impressionable”. All three educators similarly expressed this view, with two of the three explicitly using the term “formative” to refer to this optimal stage of development, “So from the age of four to the age of twelve or thirteen, as they go through their formative years, literally formative, it's informing the character that they're becoming” (Educator 3).

An important related finding, is the educators’ consensus view that EHV can actually be effectively implemented at this formative stage. A sense of how the programme can be adapted to younger age groups is aptly captured by the following participant response:

If we’re talking about the value of tolerance and even though it might be a difficult concept for Junior Infants to understand, you can still explain it...you know, in the context of children playing games in the yard, and, you know, one child might not want to play the game that somebody else is playing, but because we are tolerant, and show tolerance, we all take turns at choosing the games to play (Educator 1).

This finding indicates an adaptability of the EHV approach, which allows for values concepts to be appropriately adjusted and aligned to the lived reality of children, irrespective of their age. Current research thus points to the potential of EHV to transition alongside the child as he or she progress through primary school.

Cross-Curricular Integration and EHV

All three educators expressed the belief that EHV possesses an inherent potential for integration, and can thus be incorporated with ease into daily teaching and learning. This

experience of successful intradisciplinary and interdisciplinary integration was aptly conveyed in the following examples.

...for me, the main part is the copy and the conversation and the reading out of that, so I mean that's your English writing, it's your reading, it's your listening, it's your oral language (Educator 2).

So you know, if you're talking about respecting diversity, you know, you might be talking about that in Religion, you might be doing a recount in English, you know, you might be talking about it in Drama, so you can just, I suppose, seamlessly integrate it so it's not an appendage onto the curriculum (Educator 1).

Both planned and ad hoc cross-curricular links were noted to present themselves due to the natural manner by which EHV permeates other subject disciplines; a finding perhaps accounting for the consensus view that EHV does not contribute significantly to teacher workload at the case study school. These findings provide an encouraging indication of the feasibility of applying this approach to the Irish primary sector.

Answering the Ethos Question with EHV

Findings from the case study also attest to EHV's potential to be implemented into primary schools nationwide, as a consequence of its humanist underpinnings. All three educators made explicit use of the term "universal" to refer to the inclusive nature of the core values of EHV, with Educator 2 noting that, "there's no exclusion of anybody by doing them. Or nobody feels outside of them". Educator 3 provided further clarification on this point, explaining that because the values "are common to all the major world religions, but they're not religious", they are applicable to the ethos of all denominations and none—"whatever the ethos of the school is, that will support it, because again, they're the universal values."

Strikingly, 100% of participating educators stated that the universal nature of EHV has permitted it to not only align with their school's Catholic ethos, but to enhance it, albeit the former being spiritual as opposed to religious. The following participant response illustrates how this has manifested practically in the school's values assemblies:

I have introduced at the end of it, what I say is, 'Here's a little thought or a prayer'.

And I might look at that and think that's a prayer to God, and you perhaps maybe as a non-practising Catholic might look at it and say, 'That's a nice-that's a nice thought to focus on'. And I say a thought or a prayer. So I don't make a particular reference to God...that prayer might be a wish, or it might be an actual prayer, depending on how it lands for people (Educator 1).

One of the educators also explicitly expressed the view that EHV has aided with the provision of appropriately stimulating learning content for children who opt-out of faith formation. Perhaps more poignantly, this educator also expressed the sentiment that EHV provides an additional support in furthering non-Catholic pupils' sense of belonging in the school community.

So, I think it has helped em just connect the children who aren't Catholic a little bit more with the community of the school, you know, because as I said the values piece transcends all that, rises above all of that really (Educator 1).

The current research findings thus corroborate those of existing empirical data and educational policy. As per the *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice*, a whole-school or universal approach is the recommended gold standard for any wellbeing initiative in Irish educational settings, due to proven benefits in behaviour, inclusion, social cohesion, and mental health (Weare & Gray, 2003, as cited in DES, 2018). Findings related to the perceived applicability of the programme for the junior pupils of the case study school,

are also in line with the aforementioned policy's emphasis on the promotion of wellbeing for all ages, across all sectors of Irish education (DES, 2018). Furthermore, EHV's potential for cross-curricular learning is highly promising, given that previous research has identified integrated learning as one of the key characteristics shared by values programmes with proven efficacy for developing emotional intelligence (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). Finally, this research yields encouraging evidence of EHV's potential to function in an increasingly pluralistic education sector. The potential of these values to be enjoyed by all faiths and none meets existing literature recommendations, which prompt schools to engage in active prevention of an unintentional sense of othering for pupils choosing to opt out of religious instruction, and an associated provision of meaningful alternative learning opportunities (Faas, Foster, & Smith, 2018; ODIHR, 2007).

Fostering Wellbeing with EHV

With respect to questioning exploring the manner in which EHV and wellbeing promotion interact in the case study school, there was striking evidence from both pupils and educators of a perceived positive correlation. A notable finding of the educator interviews, was the consensus view that the whole-school implementation of EHV is instrumental to how this approach fosters pupil wellbeing. A deliberate characterisation of EHV as a continuous "approach" rather than a "programme" with a finite period of learning, was repeatedly made throughout two of the three educator interviews. Educator 3's comments were particularly noteworthy, "it's not just a programme you do with someone when they're seven, they go and it's still with them, it forms-it becomes part of the formation of their character, and then they have that forever."

There was also 100% concurrence with respect to the educators' view that EHV's provision of an explicit focus on values is essential to the development of values "language" or "vocabulary". This view was exemplified by the following participant:

But I think that, in order to give pupil's language around values, you have to be using that language explicitly. You know, it's like if you want a child to be able to read, you have to teach them the skills of reading, if you want them to be able to comprehend, you have to teach them the skills of comprehension (Educator 1).

A variety of perspectives were presented in relation to the function of this values language, including that it facilitates understanding of specific values and sub-values, mediates values-related discussions, and provides a shared language for reinforcing pupils' demonstration of values. Although presenting with elements of difference, these views are inarguably demonstrative of the perceived impact of EHV on the emotional literacy of pupils attending the case study school.

"Building up a solid base"-Developing SEL competencies with EHV

The aforementioned emotional literacy skills, were acutely evident in the participating pupils' accounts of how EHV has positively impacted their SEL. Robust evidence of the presence of the CASEL SEL Competencies (CASEL, 2020) was obtained in response to questioning designed to establish the presence, or indeed absence, of these competencies amongst pupils attending the case study school.

In reviewing participant responses to questions related to self-appraised strengths and limitations, self-concept, reactions to setbacks, etc., significant evidence was found of a perceived link between EHV and the development of pupils' self-awareness (CASEL, 2020). Specifically, the current research indicates that pupils at the case study school are connected to and respect the spectrum of human emotions, can experience confidence, and strive to

adopt a growth mindset and demonstrate perseverance when challenged. Furthermore, four of the five pupils interviewed were able to effectively employ self-awareness skills to identify and discuss their personal strengths and limitations in response to open-ended questioning from the interviewer. Figures 1 and 2 provide samples of both verbal and non-verbal responses which were particularly illustrative of these findings.

Figure 1

Pupil contributions with respect to EHV and the development of Self-Awareness.

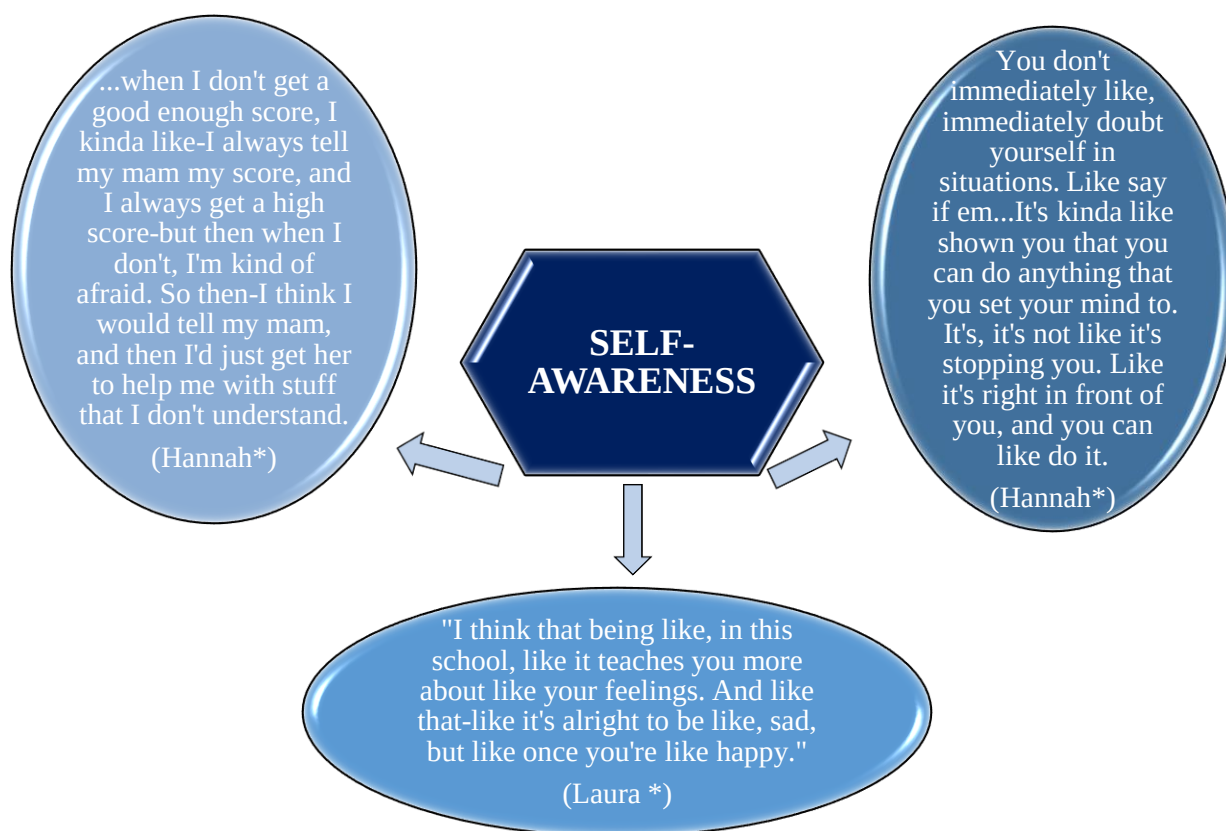


Figure 2

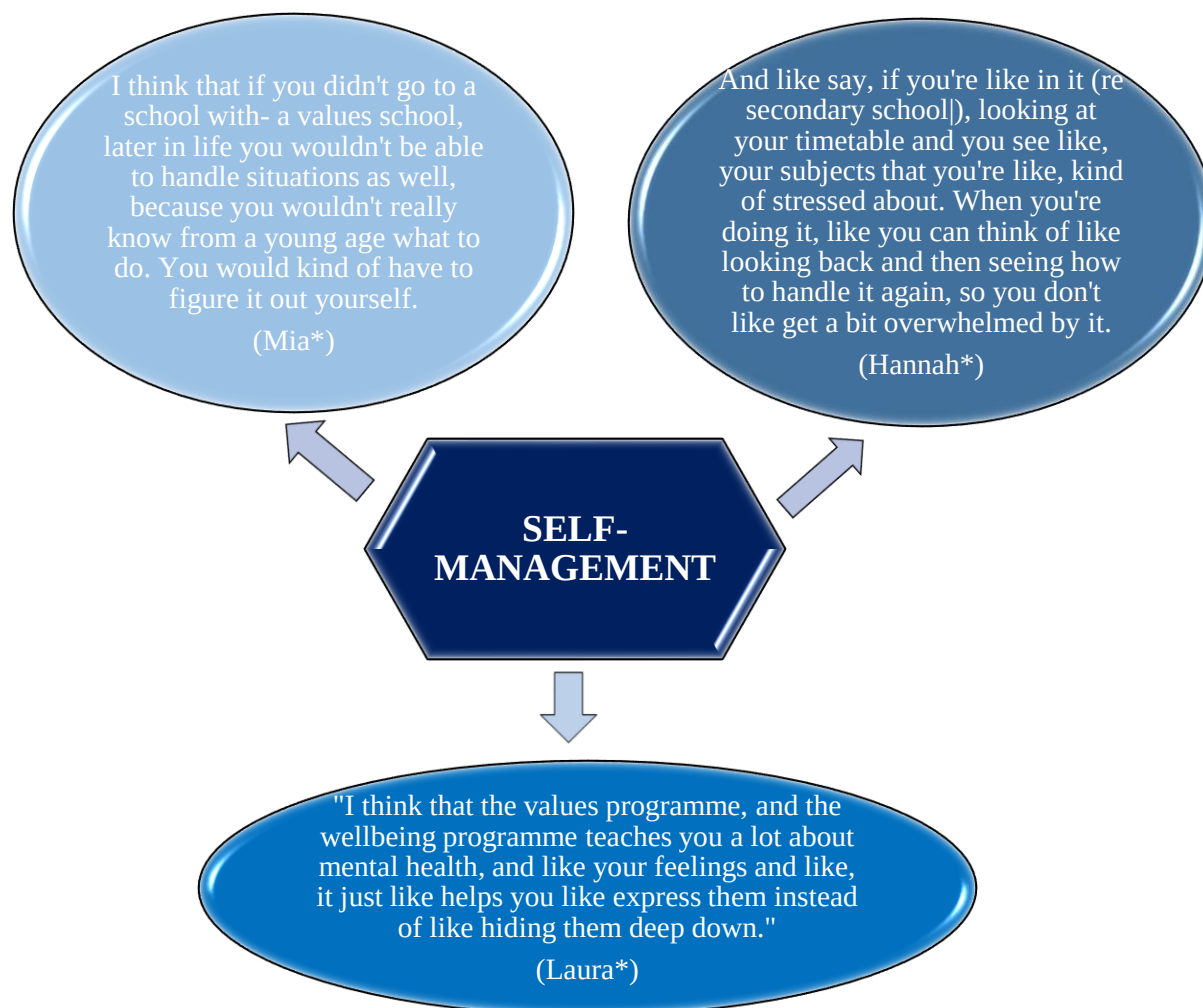
Mia's drawing representing what EHV has taught her about psychological wellbeing; she has included a number of her positive character strengths in the drawing.*



The aforementioned testimony referencing pupil resilience and their endeavours to avoid fixed thinking, also lends support to the current study's findings with respect to evidence of a link between EHV and self-management skills (CASEL, 2020). Pupils also identified further attitudes, dispositions, and skills inherent to self-management; noting the restorative benefits of voicing one's emotions, the role of their internal values in navigating difficult situations, using reflective learning to manage future stress and overwhelm, and engaging in self-compassion. The views articulated by pupils in Figure 3, provide a particularly fascinating insight into the perceived impact of EHV on the pupils' self-management skills.

Figure 3

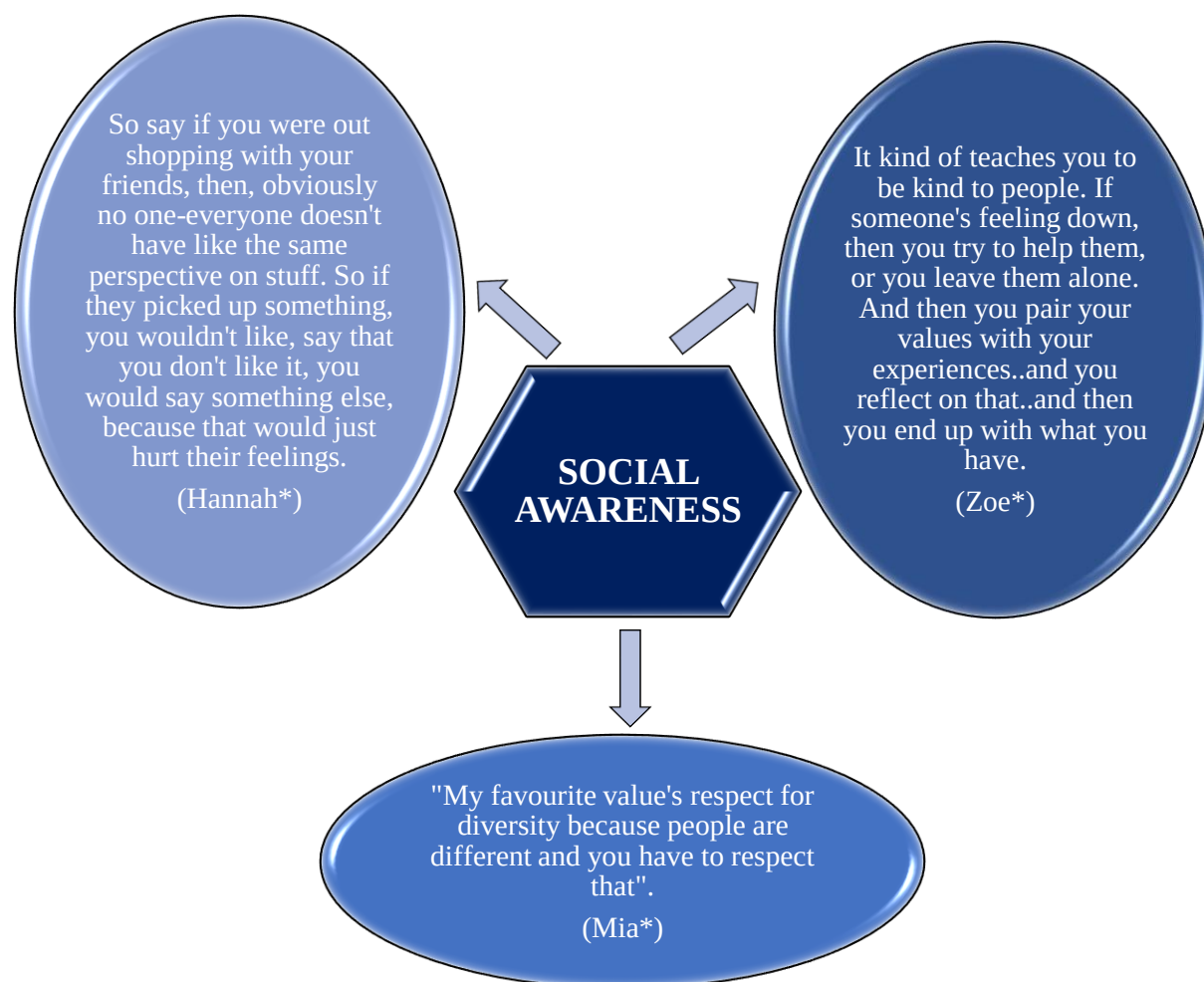
Pupil contributions with respect to EHV and the development of Self-Management



The empathy, respect, and ethical conduct associated with the SEL competency of social awareness (CASEL, 2020), were also evident from the inspection of focus group data. In response to questions about their favourite values, the impact of values education, managing conflict, and navigating friendships, repeated references were made to the importance of being cognisant of others' perspectives, and considering how one's behaviour can impact another person's feelings. Participants also expressed the view that hypothetical school leavers would present with a "kind", "caring", "tolerant", and "generous" disposition. The participant responses in Figure 4 exemplify these particular findings.

Figure 4

Pupil contributions with respect to EHV and the development of Social Awareness

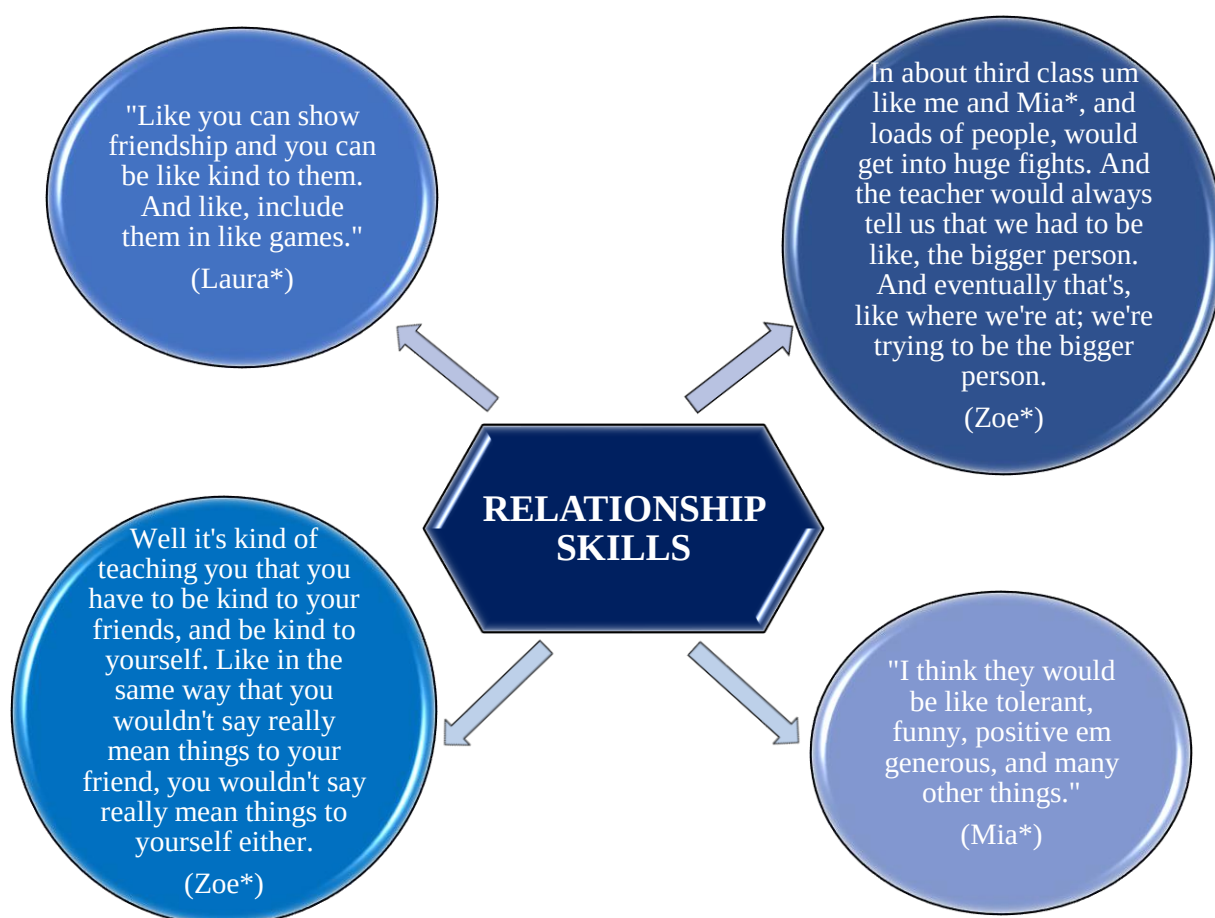


The aforementioned findings pertaining to social awareness, present with a significant degree of overlap with the salient features associated with the development of healthy relationship skills (CASEL, 2020). With respect to the previously discussed line of questioning, the participants' mention of perspective-taking and prosocial tendencies such as kindness, respect, and diversity, support the assertion that pupils attending the case study school are equipped to engage in constructive relationship building (CASEL, 2020). In response to the explicit probing of conflict resolution skills, yard-time disputes were a recurrent situational example provided by participants. In managing such disputes, 60% of the respondents referenced the need to step back from the conflict or "be the bigger person".

A less significant, but nonetheless compelling finding, was recognition of the lessons that friendships provide with respect to self-compassion, with two of the five participants remarking upon the need to treat themselves as they would a friend. Figure 5 effectively showcases a sample of the participants thoughts on relationships.

Figure 5

Pupil contributions with respect to EHV and the development of Relationship Skills



With respect to making constructive, well-grounded choices characteristic of responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2020), an analysis of the current research data yielded evidence of a number of compatible attitudes, dispositions, and skills. In relation to problem-solving or an ability to handle different situations, 60% of the pupils either explicitly or implicitly referenced a sense of intuition derived from their values education experience. Two

of the participants who expressed this sentiment, specifically noted how intuition serves to protect one's personal wellbeing by ensuring that negative external pressures do not drive decision-making. Reflecting again upon yard-time disputes, 60% of the pupils noted that they would make the choice of reaching out to a trusted adult in order to seek advice and/or avoid escalations that can occur with the inclusion of more of their peer group. Significant evidence was also found with regards the influence of ethical considerations on the pupils' decision-making, with 60% noting that they consider how their decisions will impact others. The pupil contributions in Figure 6 illustrate the compelling evidence from which a positive association between EHV and the development of responsible decision-making was deduced.

Figure 6

Pupil contributions with respect to EHV and the development of Responsible Decision-Making



For the purpose of data source triangulation, participating educators were similarly questioned with respect to pupil SEL. An analysis of these interviews yielded findings which corroborated the pupils' evidence of a positive correlation between EHV and the 5 CASEL SEL Competencies. This evidence has been summarised in Table 1.

Table 1

*Pupil SEL competencies referenced in interviews with Educator 1, 2, and 3.
(Direct quotations are appropriately indicated)*

Self-awareness	Self-management	Social Awareness	Relationship Skills	Responsible decision-making
Exploring one's self. Desire to reach one's potential. "Single-minded" "Self-respect" "Ability to reflect on themselves". Knowledge of a "potential for happiness and success".	"Self-reliant". "Self-confident". Accessing one's internal calm. "Resilient". "Well-adjusted" "Well-regulated". "Strong". "Passionate". "Self-control".	"Tolerance". "Respect for diversity". "Deeper understanding of people". "Compassionate". "Kind". "Caring".	Negotiation skills. Conflict resolution skills. "Tolerance"	"Strong inner moral compass"/doing the "right thing". Problem-solving. "Responsibilities as well as rights".

Reflecting upon the merits of EHV for pupils attending the case study school, Educator 3 was particularly impassioned in summarising her appraisal of the emotional growth of pupils attending the case study school.

So I think they're going out ready to be valuable for society. And strong. You know, strong inside, strong in themselves. They have that inner moral compass and strong sense of self. And they know their importance. You know, they kind of have a strength and a resilience, but also with humility (Educator 3).

A final point of convergence across the pupil and educator data sets, was the recognition of the contribution of SEL to psychological wellbeing. That EHV had contributed positively to their pupils' wellbeing, was agreed upon by all educators, with Educator 1 expressing the view that values are "the essence" and "fundamental basis" of wellbeing. Reflecting upon the significance of these positive wellbeing outcomes, one focus group participant made a particularly poignant contribution.

Because like, you can't be negative to yourself, because you have to live with yourself 24/7. You always have to be there, and you have to kind of be positive, because if you're not positive, then your life will just become bad. And you need to know like, you need to keep going (Mia*).

The findings related to this specific theme provide an exciting insight into the prospective compatibility between EHV and the delivery of a new Wellbeing curriculum area. The research participants' accounts of the fundamental contribution of EHV's whole-school approach to pupil SEL, is in line with the aforementioned Ofsted 2007 review findings of a UK values school, in which a myriad of benefits including wellbeing were attributed to the implicit, as well as explicit, teaching of values (Lovat & Hawkes, 2013). The present investigation's findings concerning the perceived benefits of EHV's explicit teaching of a

values language, are not far removed from the findings of Lovat and Hawkes (2013), whereby positive social and academic outcomes were wholly or partially attributed to the presence of a common values language at two values schools. With respect to this study's considerable support for the existence of a positive link between EHV and SEL at the case study school, a corroboration with previous research findings aligning values education and emotional intelligence is evident (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Taplin 2011; Taplin 2014). Furthermore, pupil and educator opinion that SEL associated with the EHV approach contributes to psychological wellbeing, aligns with existing empirical evidence which supports a positive correlation between increased emotional intelligence and positive subjective wellbeing (Carmeli et al, 2009).

Nurturing Children's Innate Potential with EHV

The perception of the child as the values source, was strikingly apparent in the participants' repeated references to the concept of "showing" or "unearthing" values which are already innately present in human beings. The three educators interviewed agreed that the EHV approach does not involve a prescriptive teaching of values, but rather, involves providing pupils with opportunities for inherent values to become "self-revealing" (Educator 3). The power of adopting such a philosophy was aptly captured by Educator 2, who remarked, "I'm talking to them and listening to them, and listening to their own experiences. It just shows them that these values are inside them. And that-with that comes kind of amazing potential or amazing responsibility".

The impact of reflecting on "their own experiences" was corroborated by the focus group participants, 80% of whom referenced their enjoyment of reflective practices occurring within the context of their values homework copies and values assemblies. The following

pupil contribution was particularly insightful with respect to the learning associated with these practices.

So every week, we have to write like a different value, like how we showed it before.

And that kind of helps us to show it again, because you kind of remember what you did. And you do it again” (Mia*).

In addition to prompting behavioural change, this focus on introspection and pupil autonomy, was considered central to EHV’s strengths-based approach by Educator 3, who noted that, “it’s coming from the positives, building the strengths that might be less vulnerable to being susceptible to anxiety and different things”. This is in line with existing literature in relation to the flourishing paradigm of wellbeing, whereby there is recognition of the child’s pre-existing assets, as opposed to the former deficit view of the child who requires externally mediated intervention (Kristjánsson, 2017).

“I am good as I AM!”-EHV and Redefining Success as Possibility for All

Findings of a related nature, were yielded with respect to evidence that EHV allows for different types of pupil success to be recognised at the case study school. Adopting a holistic lens to pupil achievement was evident in all three educator interviews, and was also expressed in the focus group interview. This particular attitudinal outcome of the EHV approach was aptly captured by Educator 1 who reflected, “that’s what perhaps the human values programme does, it-it allows a little bit of success for every child”. This sense of being recognised for one’s individual worth, was also poignantly captured in the voice of the child, with Zoe’s* assertion, “I am good as I AM!”, in her drawing below.

Figure 7

Zoe's drawing representing what EHV has taught her about psychological wellbeing.*



This pupil statement could almost be likened to a health promotion slogan, and is aligned with the modern perspective on wellbeing-or the flourishing paradigm-which is concerned with the prospect of individuals meeting their unique potential, possessing a sense of meaning and purpose, and living a good life (Kristjánsson, 2017).

Conclusion

The data yielded from the current research thus presents promising evidence of the potential efficacy of EHV as an approach for fostering Wellbeing in the revised Irish Primary Curriculum. An analysis of the data in accordance with the aforementioned themes and subthemes, permitted the identification of salient research findings deemed compatible with answering the research question. The data shows that EHV has the potential for universal applicability across an increasingly diverse Irish Primary Education sector. Participants praised the feasibility of implementing this approach at whole-school level, and provided

evidence of associated benefits for pupils' school experience and their access to models of good character with respect to their peers and teachers. The current research yielded support for the commencement of values education during the formative years, and also shed light on how EHV can be effectively implemented throughout the primary years with appropriate adaptation to the children's cognitive level and life experience. With respect to school ethos, the current study provides evidence of the compatibility of EHV for all denominations and none, due to the universal nature of its humanist values. Furthermore, the present research indicates that EHV can offer schools under Catholic Patronage further supports with respect to the learning needs and inclusion of non-Catholic pupils.

Of greatest importance, this study highlights that EHV has fostered the development of the CASEL SEL competencies amongst pupils attending the case study school, and this development has been correlated with a perceived enhancement of pupil psychological wellbeing. Related to this key finding, this study also highlights the potential of EHV as a strengths-based approach to fostering wellbeing, due to its focus on pupils' innate potential and its alignment with a flourishing paradigm of success. The implications of these findings will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter presents concluding remarks with respect to the implications of the research findings, acknowledges study limitations, provides suggestions for future research, outlines key recommendations, and concludes with the researcher's final thoughts.

Response to Research Question and Aims

The overall goal of this research was to examine the perceived impact of the EHV model on pupil wellbeing, on the backdrop of the ongoing NCCA curriculum redevelopment consultation. It was thus the intention of this study to answer the following research question- Does the Education Human Values model have the potential to effectively deliver the Wellbeing Curriculum area in the revised Irish Primary Curriculum?

The researcher aimed to: (i) Explore the relevance of values education in Irish society, (ii) Provide insights with respect to the compatibility of the international EHV model and the Irish Primary Curriculum, with an emphasis on ethos and pedagogy, and (iii) Examine pupil and educator perspectives of how the EHV model interacts with wellbeing promotion in an Irish primary school. Data analysis yielded a number of fascinating findings which proved significant in addressing these queries.

This study support the notion of the formative years as an optimal stage for values education, and highlights the efficacy of the EHV model from as early as Junior Infants. Evidence of EHV's potential for cross-curricular integration provides an enticing prospect of an educational initiative that is actually feasible to implement with respect to current curriculum overload (NCCA, 2019). Examining EHV's universal application further, strong evidence of a characteristic whole-school approach aligns EHV with a widely accepted gold standard for wellbeing promotion (DES, 2018). This research also attests to the transferability

of EHV's humanist values, which serve all denominations and none, and thus possess the potential to complement and enhance any school ethos.

Most significantly, this research yielded strong evidence of a positive correlation between the EHV approach and the enhancement of SEL and psychological wellbeing for pupils at the case study school. The identification of the child as the values source, is an additional research outcome that is not to be underestimated, as this central belief of nurturing latent potential elevates and celebrates the child's autonomy. As per the *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice*, the enhancement of competence and pupil autonomy is a characteristic feature of school environments associated with wellbeing protective factors (DES, 2018), and thus this finding is highly significant. This participant perspective has its likely origins in EHV's child-centred philosophy and pedagogy, which are based upon a fundamental belief in the power of introspective learning (SSIO, 2018). In the case study school, this belief has translated into a number of reflective practice pedagogies, such as the values homework copy, which likely serve as a key catalyst for pupil SEL.

Finally, evidence of EHV's alignment with a flourishing paradigm of success, highlights an essential compatibility with the vision of the Revised Irish Primary Curriculum, which intends for, "every child to thrive and flourish" (NCCA, 2020, p.5). This timely study thus provides compelling evidence which highlights EHV as a serious contender for leading wellbeing promotion in the new curriculum. In doing so, this study has commenced the closing of the evidence gap for EHV in the Irish context.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

- It was beyond the scope of the researcher to investigate the application of the EHV model in multiple school settings. The limited generalisability of findings from single case study research is thus the most significant study limitation (Yin, 2018). Future research

would be enriched with exploration of this model's application in other school settings, including special educational and behavioural reform schools.

- The absence of pre and post measures for the study site meant that a comparative analysis examining the presence vs absence of EHV could not be completed. Future research would benefit from inclusion of a control site for comparative analysis.
- The challenge of assessing wellbeing is widely recognised, as it a non-static phenomenon that is subject to fluctuation (DES, 2018). The present study thus provides a mere snapshot of the perceived positive correlation between EHV and pupil wellbeing at the case study school. A longitudinal study examining the maintenance effects of this approach at 2nd and 3rd level, would present as an intriguing piece of future research.
- Qualitative interviews successfully yielded research evidence with respect to *head* and *heart* outcomes for SEL development. However, the absence of additional data collection methods meant that outcomes of the *hand* (i.e. behavioural modification) could not be adequately captured (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). Future research would benefit from the inclusion of additional wellbeing measures, such as behaviour observation checklists, and/or an analysis of wellbeing performance indicators e.g. school attendance (DES, 2018).

Recommendations

In line with the scope of this research, and associated limitations, a number of brief recommendations have been made with respect to policy and practice.

- Values education approaches such as EHV warrant ongoing consideration from the NCCA as a core tool for the delivery of the upcoming Wellbeing curriculum area. As an innovative approach capable of developing skills and competencies as well as

knowledge, and with a rich potential for integration, it is highly reflective of existing educator suggestions presented at the 2018/19 School's Forum (NCCA, 2019).

- Implementation of values education approaches should reflect the following key principles:
 - Whole-school approach with purposefully selected implicit and explicit learning opportunities.
 - Child-centred rather than prescriptive.
 - Emphasis on developing emotional literacy via germane “values language”.
 - Home-school partnership.
 - Reflective learning pedagogy.
 - Cross-curricular integration.
 - CPD for all school personnel.

Final thoughts

Educators are now faced with the prospect of an exciting curriculum endeavour to nurture wellbeing in Irish primary schools. Values education presents with the potential to unearth the humanity of the hidden curriculum. With a reawakened commitment to fulfilling the ideals of humanist educational philosophies, flourishing appears to have again found its day in education.

References

- Ackoff, R., & Greenberg, D. (2008). *Turning Learning Right Side Up: Putting Education Back on Track*. Prentice Hall.
- Berkowitz, M. W., & Bier, M. C. (2005). *What Works In Character Education: A research-driven guide for educators*. Character Education Partnership.
<http://c001af38d1d46a976912-b99970780ce78ebdd694d83e551ef810.r48.cf1.rackcdn.com/orgheaders/2523/what%20works%20in%20character%20education.pdf>
- Bloiland, P.A. (1992) Qualitative Research in Student Affairs. ERIC Digest
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. *APA Handbook of Research Methods in Psychology, Vol 2: Research Designs: Quantitative, Qualitative, Neuropsychological, and Biological.*, 2, 57–71. <https://doi.org/10.1037/13620-004>
- British Educational Research Association. (2011). *ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH* (No. 3). <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2011>
- Campus Labs. (2020). *Avoiding bias in qualitative data analysis*. Baseline Support Campus Labs. Retrieved September 21, 2021, from <https://baselinesupport.campuslabs.com/hc/en-us/articles/204305695-Avoiding-bias-in-qualitative-data-analysis>
- Carmeli, A., Yitzhak-Halevy, M., & Weisberg, J. (2009). The relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 24(1), 66–78. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940910922546>

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (2020). *SEL: What Are the Core Competence Areas and Where are they Promoted?* [Https://Casel.Org](https://casel.org).

<https://casel.org/sel-framework/>

Coolahan, J., Hussey, C., & Kilfeather, F. (2012). *The Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary Sector Report of the Forum's Advisory Group*. April, 174.

Cresswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). Chapter 7 Data Collection. In *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (4th ed., pp. 117–145). SAGE Publications.

Denzin, N. (1978). *Sociological Methods: A Sourcebook*. McGraw Hill.

Department of Education and Skills. (2018). *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice. 2018–2023*. Government of Ireland.

<https://assets.gov.ie/24725/07cc07626f6a426eb6eab4c523fb2ee2.pdf>

DES. (1999). *Primary School Curriculum: Introduction*. Government of Ireland.

<https://curriculumonline.ie/Primary/>

Devine, D. (2003). *Children, Power and Schooling: How Childhood is Structured in the Primary School*. Trentham Books.

Faas, D., Foster, N., & Smith, A. (2018). Accommodating religious diversity in denominational and multi-belief settings: a cross-sectoral study of the role of ethos and leadership in Irish primary schools. *Educational Review*, 72(5), 601–616.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2018.1520689>

Firdaus, F. A., & Mariyat, A. (2017). Humanistic Approach In Education According To Paulo Freire. *At-Ta'dib*, 12(2), 25–48. <https://doi.org/10.21111/at-tadib.v12i2.1264>

- Irwin, J. (2018). *Towards a Values-Led Redevelopment of the Primary Curriculum*. National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. <https://ncca.ie/en/resources/towards-a-values-led-redevelopment-of-the-primary-curriculum/>
- Kaliannan, M., & Devi Chandran, S. (2010). Education in human values (EHV): Alternative approach for a holistic teaching. *Educational Research and Review*, 5(12), 802–807. <http://www.academicjournals.org/ERR>
- Kraut, R. (2015). Aristotle on well-being. In G. Fletcher (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook Of Philosophy Of Well-Being* (pp. 20–28). Routledge. <https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315682266.ch2>
- Krishna Prabhu, N. (2011). Human values in education: Reflecting on the core. *Educational Research*, 2(12), 1727–1732. <https://www.interestjournals.org/articles/human-values-in-education-reflecting-on-the-core.pdf>
- Kristjánsson, K. (2013). Ten Myths About Character, Virtue and Virtue Education – Plus Three Well-Founded Misgivings. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 61(3), 269–287. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2013.778386>
- Kristjánsson, K. (2017). Recent Work on Flourishing as the Aim of Education: A Critical Review. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 65(1), 87–107. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2016.1182115>
- Lee, C. G. (2012). Reconsidering Constructivism in Qualitative Research. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 44(4), 403–412. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-5812.2010.00720.x>
- Lovat, T., & Hawkes, N. (2013). Values Education: A Pedagogical Imperative For Student Wellbeing. *Educational Research International*, 2(2), 1–6.

- Lundy, L. (2007). ‘Voice’ is not enough: conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. *British Educational Research Journal*, 33(6), 927–942. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01411920701657033>
- Mandell, N. (1988). The Least-Adult Role in Studying Children. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 16(4), 433–467. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241688164002>
- NCCA. (2019). *Primary Curriculum Review and Redevelopment: Information for Schools*. <https://ncca.ie/media/3963/pbm-english-final.pdf>
- NCCA. (2020). *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework. Primary Curriculum Review and Development*. Government of Ireland. <https://ncca.ie/media/4870/en-primary-curriculum-framework-dec-2020.pdf>
- Núñez-Gómez, P., Larrañaga, K. P., Rangel, C., & Ortega-Mohedano, F. (2021). Critical Analysis of the Risks in the Use of the Internet and Social Networks in Childhood and Adolescence. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.683384>
- ODIHR Advisory Council of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief. (2007). *Toledo guiding principles on teaching about religions and beliefs in public schools*. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. <https://www.osce.org/odihr/29154>
- Poni, M. (2014). Research Paradigms in Education. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 4(1), 407–413. <https://doi.org/10.5901/jesr.2014.v4n1p407>
- Raine, L. (2006). ‘Love, Truth, Right-action, Peace, & Non-violence’ *An Exploratory Study: Young People’s Perspectives after an Education in Human Values (EHV)* Linda Raine

- (Thesis). Southern Cross University, Lismore. <https://issea.org.au/research/higher-degree-dissertation/>
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Sathya Sai International Organisation. (2007). Chapter 8 Achievements of Sathya Sai Education. In *Global Overview of Sri Sathya Sai Education* (pp. 133–148). Sathya Sai International Organisation.
- Sathya Sai International Organisation. (2018). *The Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSSEHV) Global Compendium*. <https://www.sathyasai.org/education/ssehv-compendium>
- Schonert-Reichl, K. A., & Hymel, S. (2007). EDUCATING THE HEART AS WELL AS THE MIND Social and Emotional Learning for School and Life Success. *Education Canada*, 47, 20–25. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ771005>
- Serrat, O. (2017). *Knowledge Solutions*. Springer Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-0983-9_37
- Smahel, D., Machackova, H., Mascheroni, G., Dedkova, L., Staksrud, E., Ólafsson, K., Livingstone, S., & Hasebrink, U. (2020). . *EU Kids Online 2020: Survey results from 19 countries*. The EU Kids Online Network. <https://doi.org/10.21953/lse.47fdeqj01ofo>
- Taplin, M. (2011). Silent sitting: a cross-curricular tool to promote resilience. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 16(2), 75–96. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1364436x.2011.580730>

Taplin, M. (2014). A model for integrating spiritual education into secular curricula.

International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 19(1), 4–16.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/1364436x.2013.873860>

The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues. (2017). *A Framework for Character Education in Schools*. Jubilee Centre. <https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/527/character-education/framework>

Turner, D. (2010). Qualitative Interview Design: A Practical Guide for Novice Investigators.

The Qualitative Report, 15(3). <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2010.1178>

Wellington, J. (2015). Chapter 5 Interviewing. In *Educational research: Contemporary issues and practical approaches*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case Study Research and Applications, Design and Methods* (6th ed.).

SAGE Publications.

Appendices

Appendix A: Letter of Invitation-Educators



A case study of a Dublin primary school's whole-school implementation of an Education in Human Values approach (adapted from the Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values model in India)

Letter of Invitation

[Date]

Dear Principal/Teacher,

I would like to invite you to participate in a study that I am conducting on pupil and teacher perceptions regarding the impact on **pupils** of attending a school implementing the Education in Human Values model as a whole school approach. I will present the findings in my research dissertation (titled above), and I hope that the findings of the study will inform the wider Irish primary education system about values education.

Your participation would involve taking part in a single interview which will last from 30-45 minutes, at a time of your convenience. The week beginning 7th February 2022 is a proposed week for interviews, but I am happy to discuss and facilitate additional date options.

To capture pupil perceptions of the values education model in your school, I hope to complete a single focus group interview with 6-7 pupils from your 5th/6th class year group in March 2022. Staff participation would involve the provision of supervision during this interview, in compliance with Children's First Guidelines.

This research is being supervised by Dr. Aiveen Mullally, lecturer in Religious Education at Marino Institute of Education.

Please take your time to read through the details of the study in the Project Information Leaflet and Plain Language Statement (attached), and if you agree to participate, please sign and return the attached Consent Form by email or in-person on the day of the researcher's site visit.

Your input would be very valuable to this study. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,

Christina Caffrey
Professional Master in Primary Education
ccaffreypme20@momail.mie.ie/0879096969

Appendix B: Letter of Invitation-Parents/Guardians of Pupils



A case study of a Dublin primary school's whole-school implementation of an Education in Human Values approach (adapted from the Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values model in India)

Letter of Invitation

[Date]

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I would like to invite your child to participate in a study that I am conducting on pupil and teacher perceptions regarding the impact on **pupils** of attending a school implementing the Education in Human Values (EHV) model as a whole school approach. I will be investigating the EHV model that has been implemented in your child's school, and I will present my findings in my research dissertation (named above). I hope that the findings of the study will inform the wider Irish primary education system about values education.

My research will consist of 2 parts: 1) one-to-one interviews with members of the teaching staff, and 2) a focus group (group interview) with 6-7 pupils from 5th or 6th class. Your child's participation would involve firstly attending a short PowerPoint presentation (approx. 15 minutes) about the research project. If your child is happy to participate, they will then take part in a single focus group interview which will last 30-45 minutes during school hours, at a time of convenience for pupils and supervising teaching staff. I am hoping to complete this presentation and focus group during the **week beginning 28th March 2022**, but I am happy to discuss and facilitate additional date options.

Note: if there is an over-subscription for the focus group, a raffle system will be used to select the 6/7 pupil participants.

This research is being supervised by Dr. Aiveen Mullally, lecturer in Religious Education at Marino Institute of Education.

Please take your time to read through the details of the study in the **Project Information Leaflet** and **Plain Language Statement** (attached), and if you are happy for your child to participate, please sign and return the attached consent form to your child's teacher. Your child will also complete an **assent form** after the presentation if interested in participating (**attached for your information**).

Your child's input would be very valuable to this study. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,

Christina Caffrey
Professional Master in Primary Education
ccaffrey@mie.ie

Appendix C: Project Information Leaflet-Educators and Parents/Guardians



A case study of a Dublin primary school's whole-school implementation of an Education in Human Values approach (adapted from the Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values model in India)

Project Information Leaflet

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

My name is Christina Caffrey. I am a final year student completing the Professional Masters in Primary Education programme at Marino Institute of Education. I am completing the above named research dissertation as part of my teacher training.

This research will explore both pupil and teacher perceptions of the impact of attending a school implementing EHV for pupils. Specifically, this research aims to explore:

- 1) The place of values education in Irish society.
- 2) How the international Education in Human Values model has been adapted to the Irish curriculum.
- 3) The potential impact of the Education in Human Values model on pupils' social and emotional learning and psychological wellbeing.

I have always been extremely passionate about wellbeing promotion and supporting the character development of primary school children, and I hope that this research will improve my practice and the practice of others by using evidence to better understand values education. This research is particularly timely in light of the upcoming revisions to the Irish primary curriculum, for which policy makers are considering a designated curriculum area for wellbeing.

This dissertation research is being supervised by Dr. Aiveen Mullally, lecturer in Religious Education at Marino Institute of Education. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the personal data provided by pupils and teachers. You are free to contact Dr. Mullally should you have any questions or concerns about the study: aiveen.mullally@mie.ie.

PARTICIPATING IN THIS RESEARCH

Teachers: Participation in this research involves engaging in an interview lasting 30-45 minutes. The interview will explore themes including the place of values education in our society, how values education should occur, the impact of values education in your school, etc. Participants have the option for this interview to be completed in-person during school hours, or after school with the Zoom video conferencing platform, in order to facilitate convenience. If you allow, the interview will be audio recorded via the record function on Zoom (or my mobile device and dictaphone for in-person interviews) and will be stored on a password protected laptop. Audio recordings are for the purpose of data analysis.

Pupils: Participation in this research involves engaging in a face-to-face focus group interview with approximately 6 peers from 5th or 6th class. This interview will last 30-45 minutes. The children will contribute to discussion regarding themes including thoughts on the importance of values, how values education should occur including preferred teaching methods, the impact of values education on their self-concept, resilience, etc. Children will also be asked to draw a picture representing their experience of attending a school implementing a values education programme. The once-off interview will take place during school hours, and a member of teaching staff will be present for the duration of the interview. With parental/guardian consent, the focus group interview will be audio recorded on my mobile phone and a dictaphone, and this recording will be immediately transferred to a password protected laptop. Audio recordings are for the purpose of data analysis.

Prior to the formation of the focus group, I will complete a Power Point presentation about the nature of the research project with the relevant class group. Prior to this presentation, parental consent will be obtained. A written consent form will indicate consent to attend the presentation, and possible later participation in the pupil focus group interview should the pupil indicate a desire to participate. In the presentation, project information will be communicated in accessible, child-friendly language, so that children can make an informed choice regarding whether they would like to participate in this study. Children who wish to participate will then sign an assent form, and if the focus group is over-subscribed, there will be a raffle to select participants at random.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW AND DATA PROTECTION

Participation is voluntary, and participants have the right to withdraw from this research for any or no reason, and at any time. Participants also have the right to not answer any questions that they may perceive as too personal or with which they are not fully comfortable. The information that participants provide will only be used for the purpose of exploring the research question set out above and will not be reused.

In line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) legislation, only essential personal data will be collected and all identifiers will be disaggregated from the data as soon as possible after collection. Marino Institute of Education will be the Data Controller for GDPR purposes. With consent, participants personal data will be shared with my research supervisor but not with any other third party. Personal data will be destroyed upon completion of the research dissertation.

When reporting on the information provided by participants, data (audio and pictorial) will be presented using numeric identifiers and/or pseudonyms. Participants' anonymised data will be aggregated with information from other participants and documentary sources. Anonymised data will be shared in my dissertation and potentially in other research related activities e.g. presentations, journals, conferences.

Appendix D: Consent Form-Educators



A case study of a Dublin primary school's whole-school implementation of an Education in Human Values approach (adapted from the Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values model in India)

Consent Form

If you are happy to participate in this study, please complete the following consent form and return it to me by email: ccaffrey@mie.ie

I understand and agree that:

- I am over 18 years of age.
- The Project Information has been communicated to me.
- I am aware that I can withdraw from this project at any time up to when my data has been anonymised and amalgamated.
- I will participate voluntarily without incentive.
- My data being treated with confidentiality and anonymity.
- I will take part in a single interview lasting approximately 30-45 minutes.
- My interview will be audio recorded using the Zoom Video Conferencing Platform, or the researchers mobile phone and dictaphone if completed face-to-face.
- My personal data may be shared with the research supervisor.
- My anonymised data may be shared in this dissertation and via other research activities as they arise.

Name (PRINTED): _____

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

Appendix E: Consent Form-Parents re Pupil Participation in Focus Group



A case study of a Dublin primary school's whole-school implementation of an Education in Human Values approach (adapted from the Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values model in India)

Consent Form

If you are happy for your child to participate in this study, please complete the following consent form and return it to your child's teacher.

I understand and agree that:

- I am providing consent for my child's participation in this research as their parent/legal guardian. This includes my consent for my child to attend a PowerPoint presentation which explains the research in a child-friendly manner, and my child's potential participation in a face-to-face focus group interview.
- The Project Information has been communicated to me.
- I am aware that my child can withdraw from this project at any time up to when my child's data has been anonymised and amalgamated.
- My child will participate voluntarily without incentive.
- My child's data will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity.
- My child will take part in a single focus group interview lasting approximately 30-45 minutes, with interview questions including wellbeing themes such as self-concept, resilience, etc. My child will also complete a drawing to represent the experience of attending a school implementing the Education in Human Values approach.
- My child's interview will be audio recorded on the researcher's personal mobile device and dictaphone, for immediate transfer to a password protected laptop.
- My child's personal data may be shared with the research supervisor.
- My child's anonymised data may be shared in this dissertation and via other research activities as they arise.

Name of child
(PRINTED):

Name of
parent/guardian
(PRINTED):

Signature of
parent/guardian:

Date:

Appendix F: Assent Form for Pupils



A case study of a Dublin primary school's whole-school implementation of an Education in Human Values approach (adapted from the Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values model in India)

Pupil assent form (for your information)

Dear Pupil,

My name is Christina Caffrey. I go to college in Marino Institute of Education, where I am **training to be a primary school teacher**. As part of my training, my college has asked me to complete a **research project**-this means I have to investigate a topic or subject so that I can find out more information about it. I am really interested in **learning about values taught in schools**, and so I have decided to carry out my research in your school. I will be speaking to **pupils and teachers** to gather information about what school is like for the pupils at School X.



I am very interested in children's **wellbeing**. Wellbeing means being **healthy, happy, and comfortable**, and when we talk about wellbeing we can mean feeling this way in our **body (physical wellbeing)** or our **mind (mental wellbeing)**. In my research, I will be looking at **whether a school with a values programme affects (this means changes in any way) pupils' mental wellbeing**.

To gather information from pupils, I will meet with **6-7 pupils from 5th/6th class** to complete a **focus group interview**-this means an interview where pupils discuss and answer questions **as a group** rather than by themselves. If **lots of pupils are interested** in taking part, **there will be a raffle to randomly choose the 6/7 pupils**. **Questions** will be about topics such as: what you think about values education, the ways you learn about values, the ways you use what you learn about values, and **questions about your mental wellbeing** e.g. how you feel about yourself, what you do when you have a problem, how you make decisions or choices, etc. Pupils in the group will also be asked to **draw a picture about what it is like to go to a school with a values programme**. All of your **information will be kept private and your real name will not be used**. I will use my phone and another recording device called a dictaphone to **record** us talking during the interview (**only sound, no video**) to help me write about what we discussed, and I will delete this when I have written up my



project. I will keep your drawings for my project and will use a **pretend name for your drawing**. You can change your mind about taking part at any time.

I **agree** to take part in this research ☐ I **do not agree** to take part in this research ☐

Name: _____

Appendix G: Plain Language Statement-Educators and Parents/Guardians



Plain Language Statement

Research Project Title: A case study of a Dublin primary school's whole-school implementation of an Education in Human Values approach (adapted from the Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values model in India)

Researcher: Ms. Christina Caffrey

Supervisor: Dr. Aiveen Mullally

Research Institution: Marino Institute of Education

What is being studied: The researcher is completing a case study investigation of how the Education in Human Values (EHV) model has been applied to School X. Research will explore the place of values education in modern-day society, the means by which the EHV model has been adapted to the Irish curriculum by school X, and will finally examine the potential impact of the model on pupils' social and emotional learning and psychological wellbeing.

Purpose of study: Wellbeing promotion is receiving a growing emphasis from Irish education policy makers. The current Irish primary curriculum is undergoing a process of review with a view of restructuring the curriculum. As part of this restructuring, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) is considering designating an entire curriculum area to wellbeing. The aim of this study is to explore the potential benefits of a values education model as a framework for delivering this proposed area of the curriculum.

How the study is being conducted: This study will involve one-to-one interviews with members of the teaching staff, and a focus group interview with 6-7 pupils from 5th/6th class.

When the research will be conducted: Teacher interviews will take place in February 2022 after school hours. The focus group interview with pupils will take place during school hours in March 2022.

Where the research will be conducted: Teacher interviews will be completed over the Zoom Video Conferencing Platform, or in person if preferred. The pupil focus group interview will be completed onsite in School X.

Anonymity and confidentiality: When reporting on the information provided by participants, data

(audio and pictorial) will be presented using numeric identifiers and/or pseudonyms. Participants' anonymised data will be aggregated with information from other participants and documentary sources. Anonymised data will be shared in my dissertation and potentially in other research related activities e.g. presentations, journals, conferences.

GDPR: In line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) legislation, only essential personal data will be collected and all identifiers will be disaggregated from the data as soon as possible after collection. Marino Institute of Education will be the Data Controller for GDPR purposes. With consent, participants personal data will be shared with my research supervisor but not with any other third party. Personal data will be destroyed upon completion of the research dissertation.

Consent and Assent: Teachers who agree to take part in one-to-one interviews will indicate their consent via completion of a written consent form. Parents/guardians will complete a written consent form to indicate that they agree for their child to participate. Pupils will also complete a written assent form, presented in accessible, child-friendly language, to indicate that they are happy to participate in this study. All participants have the right to withdraw their consent at any stage of the research up to when their data has been anonymised and amalgamated.

Please keep this information sheet for your own records.

Appendix H: Plain Language Statement-Power Point presentation for Pupils



BEING A STUDENT AT A VALUES SCHOOL



Hello!

- My name is Christina Caffrey.
- I am training to be a Primary School Teacher.
- I am also a researcher.



WHAT am I researching?



- I am here to learn about **what it is like for pupils** to go to a school with a **values programme** like yours.
- I am interested in **wellbeing**. Wellbeing means **being healthy, happy, and comfortable** and when we talk about wellbeing we can mean feeling this way in our **body (physical wellbeing)** or our **mind (mental wellbeing)**.
- I am interested in mental wellbeing and I want to find out **if going to a school with a values programme affects** (this means changes in any way) **pupils' mental wellbeing**.



WHY am I researching this?



- Wellbeing is something that primary schools are very interested in at the moment.
- The **government wants to do more for children's wellbeing in school**, and they are trying to think of ideas for schools.
- One idea is **getting schools to focus on values** like your school. I want to get information to **see if values education works well in your school**, so that other schools can get ideas.



WHO is doing this research?



TEACHERS

3 teachers in your school will speak to me about your school as a values school.



PUPILS

6-7 girls from 5th/6th class will speak to me about their experience of going to a values school



HOW will I get this information?



TEACHERS:

Your teachers will see me for a **one-to-one interview**-this means me and one teacher at a time.

PUPILS:

Pupils who want to take part will see me for a **focus group interview**-this means that **those pupils will talk to me in a group** rather than on their own.

QUESTIONS: You will be asked what you think about...

- Learning about values
- The ways you learn about values
- The ways you use what you learn about values
- **Your mental wellbeing** e.g. how you feel about yourself, what you do when you have a problem, how you make decisions or choices, etc.

DRAWING: You will also draw a **picture of what it's like to go to a school with a values programme.**



WHEN and WHERE will the research be happening?

WHEN?



The focus group for pupils will take place this **Thursday, 27th March 2021 at 1:10pm.**

It will take place **during school hours** and will be about **30-45 minutes long.**



WHERE?



The focus group will be held in a **private room** e.g. the computer room.

There will be a teacher in the room with our group.



Keeping things private....



ANONYMOUS

I will use a **number or fake name** when talking about what you said in my project, and to **label your drawing**. Your **real name** will not be written in my project.



CONFIDENTIAL

I **will not tell anyone** that you took part in the focus group.



Getting permission....

CONSENT: The parent or grown up who looks after must sign a consent form before you participate.



ASSENT: If you would like to participate, you will also sign a form to give your permission. Remember, it is your choice and you do not have to participate!



Any questions?



Appendix I: Interview Schedules

ADULT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The need for values

- Can you explain what the term values means to you?
- Can you tell me about your thoughts on the role of values in our lives?

The “how” of values education

- Can you tell me about your views of when children need to receive values education?
- In what way does a partnership operate between the home and school environment when it comes to values education?

Curriculum and pedagogy

- It can be argued that values are already inherently present in the “hidden curriculum” of schools. Do you think that values should be “caught”, “taught” or both in Irish primary schools?
- What would you say to an educator who questions the relevance or merit of this school’s specific programme-*Education in Human Values*- when other values programmes, for example, Goodness Me! Goodness You!, are already available in the Irish education system?
- Tell me about your experience of the EHV model being introduced into your school.

Characteristic pupil

- Tell me about the kind of child you think will leave this school after 8 years of this programme.
- Why do you believe that this person who you describe as.....leaves school X?

Humanistic values in a school with Catholic ethos

- How are the secular and religious married with the implementation of this programme in a school with a Catholic ethos?
- Do you feel that these values enhance, hinder, or have no effect on your school’s ethos?

Impact on teacher experience

- What is it like for you as a teacher working in a school with a whole-school human values approach?

Impact on pupil experience

- In what way has human values education impacted pupil experience in your school? OR
In your view, how does human values education and wellbeing promotion interact in your school?
- What is your understanding of the term “flourishing” in education?
- In your view, how can we help pupils to flourish?

CHILD INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The need for values

- Your school has a values programme, can you tell me about what “values” are?
- Can we use what we learn about values in school in our own lives?
- Tell me about your favourite value.
- How have you used this week’s value?
- Give me an example of how you might use your values when you leave your school?

The “how” of values education

- Tell me about the best ways for young people to learn about values?

Curriculum and pedagogy

- Your teachers have lots of different ways of teaching you about values. Tell me about your favourite way to learn about values.

Characteristic pupil

- Can you describe the type of pupil who leaves this school after 8 years?
- Why do you believe that this person who you describe as.....leaves this school?

Impact on pupil experience

- Has being in a school with a values programme changed how you think or feel about yourself?
- If I asked your friend to describe you, what would they say are your strengths and your shortcomings?
- Describe how you respond when you are less successful than you would like in a situation?
- What has your school’s values programme taught you about solving problems?
- How has this programme affected how you make decisions for yourself?
- What has this programme taught you about managing relationships with others?

Drawing

- Can you draw a picture of what the programme has taught you about mental wellbeing.

Appendix J: Categorisation Process for Thematic Analysis

Interviewer 05:19

Yeah. And you touched a little bit there on the idea that a lot of those values are inherent to world religions. But they're not exclusively religious. And I was just wondering, because then with this specific programme, the Education Human Values programme, it is known as-not to be associated with a specific doctrine. So in that sense, it's secular. In a school that follows a Catholic religious ethos, how do you marry the secular and the religious together?

Educator 3 05:50

Well, they-they marry perfectly like, it's because they're the same values that are in the Catholic religion. So it just supports our Catholic ethos. Em, so we would be teaching a lot of the Alive-O-programmes we'd use to teach Catholic religion-they're all about love and peace, so it just marries it together. But I think it also enhances our Catholic ethos. Because, the way-I wouldn't even call it a programme, I suppose it's more of an approach. So because of the approach, the human values approach that we use in the school, it enhances our Catholic ethos, because it's, it makes it experiential. So they marry together well. So let's say in a religion lesson, if we're talking about the life of Jesus, or about love, or peace, or during the preparing for the sacraments, or whatever, when we're talking about those values. Both alongside that talking about peace and love, we'd be doing the weekly experiential part with the child. So they're thinking of when did you show-feel peace, or show love this week, write it down, talk to your family at home about it, come back to school, tell the class, and the teacher acknowledges it. So it makes it very real for the children. They're-it's it's experiential, when you're taking a values approach, and it absolutely supports the Catholic ethos that we have. And likewise, if we didn't have a Catholic ethos, whatever the ethos, that's kind of why they're I suppose the universe values-whatever the ethos of the school is, that will support it, because again, they're the universal values you know.

Interviewer 07:23

Ok. And you mentioned there, like you use in-in-interesting language as it being an approach rather than a programme. Are you just referring to the experiential learning there? Or is there other reasons for which you would choose that particular turn of phrase to describe how it is-I suppose how it is used in your school?

Educator 3 07:44

Em, well, I suppose that-we'd also em-well I suppose like a programme I'd see really as something that would have a certain amount of set lessons that you'd come and implement, and they would have a certain effect on the child for that amount of time, and maybe stay with them for a certain amount of time as well. But it's- it's eh-I'd see it as a kind of a short term implementation of a programme. Whereas the approach-the human values approach-means that from that first week in junior infants right through to the last week in sixth class, it's a weekly approach with an experiential element every week of the innate human values that are in the child. So from the age of four to the age of 12 or 13, as they go through their formative years, literally formative, it's informing the character that they're becoming. So they're becoming able to know themselves as a person who's tolerant and kind and patient. And as you go through the endless, hundreds of different values, and then repeat them as well. So every week, they're getting to show how they have this value within them. We're not teaching them anything. Th-their values are self-revealing. So it's providing that opportunity every week.

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>

Christina Caffrey

Theme 1: The Universal Nature of EHV
 Compatibility with patronage-shared values.
 Enhances Catholic ethos.

Reply

Christina Caffrey

Theme 3: Nurturing Children's Innate Potential with EHV
 Impact of reflective practice: relating the values

Reply

Christina Caffrey

Theme 1: The Universal Nature of EHV
 Applicable in any school context; universal-support all denominations and none

Reply

Christina Caffrey

Theme 2: Fostering Wellbeing with EHV. An overall approach rather than a programme-1) whole school nature, 2) not finite; greater

Reply

Christina Caffrey

Theme 1: The Universal Nature of EHV
 Formative learning period; age-span covering the primary school years

Reply

Christina Caffrey

Theme 3: Nurturing Children's Innate Potential with EHV
 Not prescriptive; encouraging children to reveal

Reply