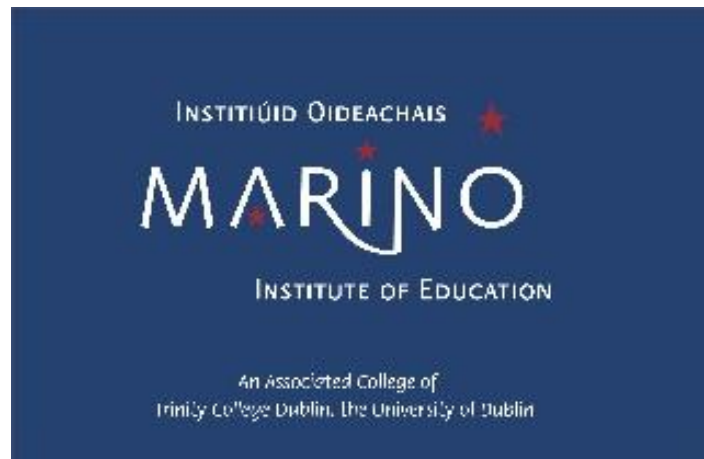




A content analysis of Irish primary school anti-bullying policies.

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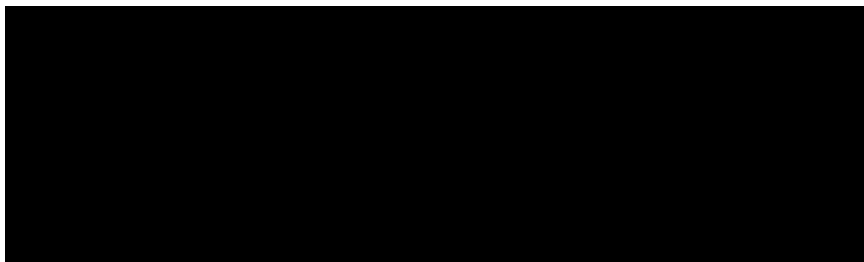
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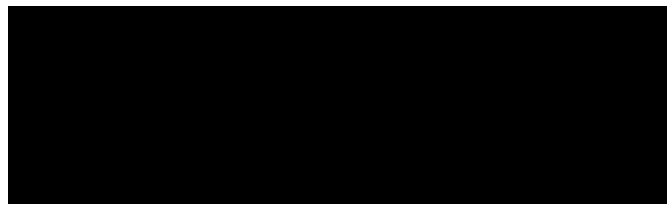


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Abstract

The introduction of the 'Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools' (Department of Education and Skills, 2013) marked a significant development in relation to tackling bullying in Irish schools. All schools in Ireland were mandated to create an anti-bullying policy that was compliant with these guidelines. However, the Irish Government have yet to investigate its implementation since its introduction. A content analysis of primary school anti-bullying policies in the Republic of Ireland was therefore conducted to inspect the extent to which schools have implemented the guidelines. 321 schools were selected by random-sampling procedures, and their anti-bullying policy was analysed using a 34-item coding frame. 87% of the sample was compliant with the guidelines, and overall, schools included about 85% of the items from the coding frame in their policies which is a very positive result. However, it was concerning that 13% of schools were non-compliant, and up to 15% excluded various types of identity-based bullying from their bullying definition. Although 89% of the policies did include supports for "pupils affected by bullying", specific supports for victims and perpetrators of bullying were only provided in 69% and 66% respectively, despite schools being required to include specific supports for both. The total scores were substantially higher than earlier studies conducted in England and Northern Ireland, showing the power that a centralised set of procedures can have to ensure policies are of a very high standard. Findings are discussed in terms of what schools and the Irish Government could do to ensure compliance, and guarantee all policies are of the highest standard to protect the entire school community. Recommendations for further research and implications for policy and practice are also provided.

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Abbreviations

ABP - The Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Department of Education and Skills, 2013)

DES – Department of Education and Skills

Statistical Glossary

Average / Mean – “The mean is the measure of central tendency that is simply the average score... To calculate the mean we simply add up all of the scores and then divide by the total number of scores we have.” (Field, 2013, p. 144).

Central tendency – “A generic term describing the centre of a frequency distribution of observations as measured by the mean, mode and median” (Field, 2013, p. 2,469)

Confidence interval – “For a given statistic calculated for a sample of observations (e.g., the mean), the confidence interval is a range of values around that statistic that are believed to contain, with a certain probability (e.g., 95%), the true value of that statistic (i.e., the population value).” (Field, 2013, p. 2,471)

Content analysis – A “research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorp , 2004, p.30)

Correlation coefficient – “A measure of the strength of association or relationship between two variables.” (Field, 2013, p. 2,472).

Correlational research – “A form of research in which you observe what naturally goes on in the world without directly interfering with it. This term implies that data will be analysed so as to look at relationships between naturally occurring variables rather than making statements about cause and effect.” (Field, 2013, p. 2,472).

Cronbach’s alpha – “Indicates the overall reliability of a questionnaire, and values around .8 are good (or .7 for ability tests and the like”; Field, 2013, p. 2,055). “The most common measure of scale reliability” (Field, 2013, p. 2,036).

Descriptive statistics: They “summarize and organize characteristics of a data set” (Bhandari, 2022).

Hypothesis: “A prediction about the state of the world” (Field, 2013, p. 2483).

Inter-rater reliability - “The extent to which two or more individuals agree” (Fink, 2010, p. 158)

Kurtosis – “There are two main ways in which a distribution can deviate from normal: (1) lack of symmetry (called skew) and (1) pointyness (called kurtosis). ...kurtosis refers to the degree to which scores cluster at the ends of the distribution (known as the tails) and this tends to express itself in how pointy a distribution is (but there are other factors that can affect how pointy the distribution looks). A distribution with positive kurtosis has many scores in the tails (a so-called heavy-tailed distribution) and is pointy... In contrast, a distribution with negative kurtosis is relatively thin in the tails (has light tails) and tends to be flatter than normal... In a normal distribution the values of skew and kurtosis are 0 (i.e., the tails of the distribution are as they should be). If a distribution has values of skew or kurtosis above or below 0 then this indicates a deviation from normal” (Field, 2013, pp. 135-136).

Longitudinal research: “A form of research in which you observe what naturally goes on in the world without directly interfering with it by measuring several variables at multiple time points” (Field, 2013, p. 2,488).

M: The mean.

Margin of Error: “A margin of error tells you how many percentage points your results will differ from the real population value. For example, a 95% confidence interval with

a 4 percent margin of error means that your statistic will be within 4 percentage points of the real population value 95% of the time. However, there's a little more to the formal definition. The margin of error is defined as the range of values below and above the sample statistic in a confidence interval. The confidence interval is a way to show what the uncertainty is with a certain statistic (i.e., from a poll or survey)." (Glen, n.d.)

Mode – "The score that occurs most frequently in the data set" (Field, 2013, p. 139).

N: "The sample size. *N* usually denotes the total sample size, whereas *n* usually denotes the size of a particular group" (Field, 2013, p. 81).

Negatively-skewed distribution – "There are two main ways in which a distribution can deviate from normal: (1) lack of symmetry (called skew) and (1) pointyness (called kurtosis). Skewed distributions are not symmetrical and instead the most frequent scores (the tall bars on the graph) are clustered at one end of the scale. So, the typical pattern is a cluster of frequent scores at one end of the scale and the frequency of scores tailing off towards the other end of the scale. A skewed distribution can be either positively skewed (the frequent scores are clustered at the lower end and the tail points towards the higher or more positive scores) or negatively skewed (the frequent scores are clustered at the higher end and the tail points towards the lower or more negative scores)... In a normal distribution the values of skew and kurtosis are 0 (i.e., the tails of the distribution are as they should be). If a distribution has values of skew or kurtosis above or below 0 then this indicates a deviation from normal" (Field, 2013, pp. 135-136).

Non-parametric tests: “A family of statistical procedures that do not rely on the restrictive assumptions of parametric tests. In particular, they do not assume that the sampling distribution is normally distributed” (Field, 2013, p. 2,493).

Normal distribution: “A probability distribution of a random variable that is known to have certain properties. It is perfectly symmetrical (has a skew of 0), and has a kurtosis of 0.” (Field, 2013, p. 2,493).

Outlier – “An outlier is a score very different from the rest of the data” (Field, 2013, p. 543). “Outliers can bias estimates of parameters (such as the mean), and also dramatically affect the sum of squared errors. This latter point is important because the sum of squared errors is used compute the standard deviation, which in turn is used to estimate the standard error, which itself is used to calculate confidence intervals around the parameter estimate. Therefore, if the sum of squared errors is biased, so are the standard error and the confidence intervals associated with the parameter estimate. In addition, most test statistics are based on sums of squares so these will be biased too by outliers.” (Field, 2013, p. 549)

p : “The probability value, p-value or significance of a test are usually denoted by p ” (Field, 2013, p. 81).

Parametric test – “A test that requires data from one of the large catalogues of distributions that statisticians have described. Normally this term is used for parametric tests based on the normal distribution, which require four basic assumptions that must be met for the test to be accurate: a normally distributed sampling distribution (see normal distribution), homogeneity of variance, interval or ratio data, and independence” (Field, 2013, p. 2,494)

Population: “In statistical terms this usually refers to the collection of units (be they people, plankton, plants, cities, suicidal authors, etc.) to which we want to generalize a set of findings or a statistical model” (Field, 2013, p. 2,497).

Qualitative methods: “Extrapolating evidence for a theory from what people say or write” (Field, 2013, p. 2,498).

Quantitative methods: “Inferring evidence for a theory through measurement of variables that produce numeric outcomes” (Field, 2013, p. 2,497).

Random-sampling procedures: “Every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected. Your sampling frame should include the whole population. To conduct this type of sampling, you can use tools like random number generators or other techniques that are based entirely on chance” (McCombes, 2022).

Range – The range quantifies “the spread, or dispersion, of scores in the data. The easiest way to look at dispersion is to take the largest score and subtract from it the smallest score” (Field, 2013, p.147).

Reliability: “The ability of a measure to produce consistent results when the same entities are measured under different conditions.” (Field, 2013, p. 2,500)

r_s : Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient (Field, 2013, p. 81)

Sample: “A smaller (but hopefully representative) collection of units from a population used to determine truths about that population (e.g., how a given population behaves in certain conditions).” (Field, 2013, p. 2,501).

SD: Standard deviation.

Shapiro-Wilk test: “A test of whether a distribution of scores is significantly different from a normal distribution. A significant value indicates a deviation from normality.” (Field, 2013, p. 2,502).

Spearman’s correlation coefficient – “A standardized measure of the strength of relationship between two variables that does not rely on the assumptions of a parametric test.” (Field, 2013, p. 2,503).

Standard deviation – It is a “measure of the dispersion or spread of data around the mean. A small standard deviation (relative to the value of the mean itself) indicates that the data points are close to the mean. A large standard deviation (relative to the mean) indicates that the data points are distant from the mean. A standard deviation of 0 would mean that all of the scores were the same.” (Field, 2013, p. 154)

Statistical significance: “Statistical significance helps quantify whether a result is likely due to chance or to some factor of interest... When a finding is significant, it simply means you can feel confident that’s it real, not that you just got lucky (or unlucky) in choosing the sample.... The significance level is an expression of how rare your results are, under the assumption that the null hypothesis is true. It is usually expressed as a “*p*-value,” and the lower the *p*-value, the less likely the results are due purely to chance.” (Gallo, 2016). A statistically significant test result is often measured at $p \leq 0.05$ (Field, 2013).

Two-tailed test: “A test of a non-directional hypothesis.” (Field, 2013, p. 2,507).

Variables: “Anything that can be measured and can differ across entities or across time.” (Field, 2013, p. 2,508)

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief overview about the research to set it in context, and outlines the research questions, objectives and the design of the study. The motivation for investigating the chosen topic is discussed, and an outline of the study is provided.

In 2013, 'The Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools' (ABP) was published (Department of Education and Skills [DES], 2013). In accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act (Government of Ireland, 2000), and guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (2008), all schools are required to have an anti-bullying policy within the framework of their overall code of behaviour. This policy *must* be compliant with the ABP guidelines. The introduction of the ABP represented the most significant development in relation to tackling bullying in Irish schools in twenty years (Foody et al., 2018). However, no official follow-up investigation has been conducted by the DES to assess the implementation of the ABP (initially reported by Foody et al. (2018)), despite the Action Plan for Education (DES, 2017a, 2018, 2019) promising to review it on three separate occasions. This is still true today.

Research has shown that individuals involved in bullying in any way (e.g., as a bully, victim, or both) are at an elevated risk of developing mental health and/or disciplinary problems that may endure into adulthood (e.g., Ttofi et al., 2012; Wolke et al., 2013). It is therefore crucial, and recognised by the ABP, for schools to have specific supports in place for those who are bullied and also for those who engage in bullying behaviour. This research will investigate whether or not this is the case in Irish primary school anti-bullying policies.

1.2 Research Questions

Defining clear and specific research questions is an integral element of research studies. The research questions that this dissertation will seek to answer are as follows.

1. To what extent have primary schools in the Republic of Ireland implemented the ABP (Department of Education and Skills, 2013) guidelines in their anti-bullying policies?
2. Do the anti-bullying policies have specific supports in place for children who engage in bullying behaviour as well as victims of bullying?
3. Is there a relationship between the length and the quality of the anti-bullying policies?

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of the research are:

1. To obtain and analyse 321 Irish primary school-anti-bullying policies using Smith et al.'s (2012) content analysis coding frame.
2. To identify and report on the nature and content of these policies (as per Autumn 2021), to assess if the ABP guidelines have been followed.
3. To examine the extent to which primary schools have specific supports in place for children who engage in bullying behaviour within their anti-bullying policies, compared to victims of bullying.

1.4 Research Design

A quantitative content analysis of Irish primary school anti-bullying policies was the method of investigation in this research (as recommended by Foody et al., 2018; Hall, 2017). 321 policies were selected by random sampling procedures from primary schools across the Republic of Ireland, and analysed using a coding frame designed by Smith et al. (2012). Explicit information on the design and methodology is provided in Chapter 3.

1.5 Motivation

This topic was chosen because of the researcher's interest in bullying as a psychological phenomenon. The researcher completed an undergraduate degree in Psychology before commencing the Professional Masters of Education, and had a particular interest in child development and behaviour. Bullying was studied in depth as part of the undergraduate degree, and the researcher was surprised to learn about the significant long-term negative outcomes for children who engage in bullying behaviour as well as for children who are victims of bullying. This sparked an interest to learn more about supporting children who bully as well as the victims.

While on school placement and during temporary teaching experiences, it was noted that often the emphasis is placed on supporting the victim, whereas sanctions were placed on the bully rather than helping them to change their behaviours. Upon discovery of the ABP, it was evident that supports *should* be in place for the child who engages in bullying within anti-bullying policies, as well as the victim. The researcher wondered whether this really was the case. Due to the highly sensitive nature of

childhood bullying, it was decided to investigate this by analysing primary school anti-bullying policies rather than trying to interview teachers or pupils on the matter.

1.6 Outline of the study and Conclusion

This chapter has identified the research questions, objectives, and design of the current study. The researcher's personal motivation for conducting the research was also discussed. Chapter 2 reviews existing literature on bullying and anti-bullying policies within an Irish and global context. Chapter 3 outlines the methodological approaches of the study and provides a rationale for the research design. It also details the data collection process, how the data was analysed, researcher positionality, ethical considerations and the limitations of this study. Chapter 4 analyses and discusses the data for each of the research questions in turn. Finally, Chapter 5 summarises and draws conclusions from the findings of the research, explores some implications for policy and practice, and provides recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will review the current pertinent literature on bullying and anti-bullying policies within an Irish and more global context. It will commence by providing a clear and succinct definition on bullying, and proceed to elaborate on the prevalence of bullying in Ireland and the challenges related to trying to measure that. Reasons as to why it is important to prevent and react to instances of bullying will be explored, leading to an explanation on how anti-bullying policies are one such way schools can do that. The impact the governmental ABP guidelines have had on anti-bullying policies in Ireland will then be evaluated. The literature review will conclude with an explanation on the utility of the content analytic methodology as a means to investigate the nature of anti-bullying policies.

2.2 What is bullying?

The 'Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools' (ABP; DES, 2013) defines bullying as:

Unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person or persons and which is repeated over time. The following types of bullying behaviour are included in this non-exhaustive definition:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying
- cyberbullying

- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

(DES, 2013, p.9)

This is the mandatory definition for use in all school anti-bullying policies in Ireland (DES, 2013). Bullying is a significant problem in schools globally (Arsenault 2018; Foody et al., 2017a), as it poses risks for pupils' current and future psychosocial wellbeing (Copeland et al., 2013; Kärnä et al., 2011; Wolke et al., 2013).

2.3 Prevalence of bullying in Ireland

Bullying is prevalent amongst the young people of Ireland. A recent meta-analysis of all bullying studies in Ireland found that nearly a quarter of pupils in primary schools, and 11.8% in post-primary had been victims of bullying (Foody et al., 2017b). A slightly higher statistic was provided by the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children Irish survey (Department of Health, 2014), which reported that a quarter of 10-17-year-old children experienced bullying during the months prior to participating in the study. The survey also found that children of immigrant status, Traveller children, children with a chronic illness or disability, and children from a more socio-economically disadvantaged background were more likely to be victims of bullying (Department of Health, 2014). Recently, an Irish study conducted during the Covid-19 lockdown in 2020, found that 28% of the 10-18-year-old children surveyed reported being victims of cyberbullying during lockdown, and half reported witnessing the cyberbullying of others (Milosevic et al., 2020). Evidence from these studies shows the

importance of schools including the entire ABP bullying definition in their anti-bullying policy, to ensure that cyberbullying and identity-based bullying are covered within it.

However, the prevalence of bullying and victimisation is challenging to assess as results vary depending on methodological differences across studies (i.e., definitions of bullying used, time-frames, or whether the child, caregiver, teacher or principal is asked to report on the levels of bullying). For example, data from the Growing Up in Ireland study (Williams et al., 2009) showed that a quarter of caregivers and 40% of children reported experiences of bullying over the previous year. However, for the 40% of children who had been bullied, 61% of their caregivers were unaware of their child's victimisation. Similarly, Milosevic et al. (2020) found that less than half of the children who reported being victims of cyberbullying during the Covid-19 Irish lockdown told a parent or caregiver, and less than a tenth told a school counsellor, teacher or principal. Eight per cent of children surveyed did nothing, told nobody, and ignored the problem (Milosevic et al., 2020). It is concerning that a significant proportion of children and young people are not telling people they are being and/ or witnessing bullying and cyberbullying.

Data from the Growing Up in Ireland study also showed that while the prevalence of perpetration and victimisation was similar across genders and socioeconomic status, bullying type differed across genders (Williams et al., 2009). Boys were more likely to engage in and experience overt forms bullying, (i.e., physical, verbal), whereas girls were more likely to exclude others and engage in indirect or relational forms of bullying. Relational aggression can be defined as "harming others through purposeful manipulation and damage of peer relationship" (Crick &

Grotepeter, 1995, p.711). These results were replicated internationally in a meta-analysis on gender and types of aggression (Card et al., 2008). This again supports the argument that schools must include the entirety of the ABP definition on bullying in their policy to ensure all elements of bullying are covered within it.

2.4 Why it is important to prevent and react to bullying

It is critical to prevent and react to bullying, as it can have detrimental long-term outcomes for all involved. The seminal “Great Smokey Mountain Study” (Wolke et al., 2013) explored the longitudinal effects of childhood bullying on early-adult outcomes, including health, engagement in risky or illegal behaviour, wealth and social factors. Children were categorised as Bullies, Victims, Bully-Victims, and Not Involved. Victims were at a greater risk for negative outcomes in wealth, health and social factors than Not Involved children. However, Bullies and Bully-Victims were at a statistically significant elevated risk for negative outcomes across all domains, and these results held for the Bully-Victims even after variables such as family hardship and childhood psychiatric disorders were controlled for (Wolke et al., 2013). The impact of being bullied is enduring, direct, and pleiotropic, with the worst consequences for Bully-Victims (Copeland et al., 2013). It must thus be concluded that bullying is not simply a harmless rite of passage and an inevitable part of growing up (Copeland et al., 2013). The results from these studies show that it is crucial that children who engage in bullying behaviour, victims of bullying, and children who are Bully-Victims, are all supported to try mitigate these risks for potential negative outcomes that last into adulthood.

Returning to the Irish context, studies conducted in Ireland have connected bullying involvement to poorer self-esteem (O'Moore & Kirkham, 2001), lower life satisfaction (Callaghan et al., 2015) and elevated levels of depression and anxiety (McMahon et al., 2010). Therefore, from a global to a local context, this selection of studies show that it is critical for schools to play an active role in preventing and reacting to bullying, and also to support children involved in or affected by bullying in any capacity, to try to limit the lasting effect it can have on a child's life.

2.5 Anti-bullying policy and procedures in Ireland

One such way to prevent and react to bullying in schools is through an anti-bullying policy. Anti-bullying policies are a framework for signalling a school's commitment to anti-bullying work, organising its response (including both proactive and reactive strategies), and communicating this to all stakeholders in the school community (Smith et al., 2012). They can be viewed as preventative, in that they declare the institutions' directives that oversee the conduct within or relating to the institution or its constituents (Faucher et al., 2015b). They can also be seen as an intervention strategy, as they contain imperative information for intervention (i.e., support services, who to talk to about a bullying incident, and how to report an incident; Faucher et al., 2015a). Anti-bullying policies are crucial for schools because they provide direction and guidance to school authorities and personnel in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour amongst pupils, and in responding to any negative impact arising from it (DES, 2013).

The ABP provides guidance to schools and outlines the requirements that their anti-bullying policies and procedures must meet. Circular 0045/2013 (DES, 2013) declared that all Boards of Management had to immediately prepare

“the necessary arrangements for developing and formally adopting an anti-bullying policy which fully complies with the requirements of these procedures. It is expected that this will be completed by each school ... by no later than the end of the second term of the 2013/14 school year” (p.2).

There are some specific elements that are mandatory and required across all schools (e.g., a unified definition on bullying) and other areas within the policy where schools are responsible for and have freedom to complete themselves (e.g., choosing school-specific education and prevention strategies, intervention strategies for dealing with bullying, and programs of support for working with pupils affected by bullying).

A significant strength of the ABP is the recognition that the school’s Board of Management must formulate the policy utilising the best practice method for effective policy implementation, the ‘collaborative approach’ (Campbell 2018; Cross et al. 2011; Minton et al., 2013). A ‘collaborative approach’ is implemented through cooperation between all stakeholders when developing a policy (Vaill et al., 2020a). In relation to primary schools, these stakeholders include the Board of Management, the school principal, both the teaching and non-teaching staff (i.e., SNAs, secretary, etc.), pupils and caregivers. The development of school-wide strategies for dealing with bullying is thus shared by all concerned.

2.6 Does the presence of an anti-bullying policy have an impact on levels of bullying?

The presence of an anti-bullying policy in schools is strongly supported by a literature review exploring the implications of childhood bullying on policy and practice (Arseneault, 2018). Similarly, associations between having an anti-bullying policy and reductions in bullying behaviour have been found (Rigby & Smith, 2011). A whole-school policy was among the most important program elements associated with a decrease in bullying in Ttofi and Farrington's (2011) systematic and meta-analytic review of the effectiveness of school-based programs to reduce bullying. Studies from Australia, Canada, England, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Spain and Norway were included in the research, which also acknowledged that implementation of a policy is just as important as the quality of it (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011).

In contrast however, after completing a detailed content analysis of 34 UK schools' anti-bullying policies, alongside interviewing children in the schools about their experiences of bullying, Woods and Wolke (2003) found no relationship between the content and quality of the policies and the prevalence of bullying behaviour. Instead, higher incidence of relational bullying and victimisation behaviour was found in schools with more detailed and comprehensive anti-bullying policies.

In response, Smith et al. (2008) argued that there were many issues with Woods and Wolke's (2003) study. Smith et al. (2008) contended that the pessimistic slant on the effectiveness of policies provided by Woods and Wolke (2003) must be questioned due to the limited nature of the content analysis they employed (i.e., lack of inclusion within the coding frame of items such (a) as what victims or pupil bystanders should do if bullying occurs, (b) whether there are graded sanctions

depending on the severity of the bullying, (c) how recording of incidents would occur, (d) whether the policy will be reviewed, and (e) a lack of additional issues regularly featured in policies such as proactive strategies, and issues of inclusiveness). It was also argued that the potential reasons provided by Woods and Wolke (2003) for the higher incidence of relational bullying in schools with comprehensive policies was missing one crucial explanation; they neglected the hypothesis that a good anti-bullying policy would help pupils feel confident in reporting incidents of bullying.

Hall's (2017) systematic review of school anti-bullying policies from countries all around the world concluded with the assertion that policies are necessary but not sufficient to reduce levels of bullying; their content must be based on research and theoretical evidence, and they must also be implemented effectively and with a high level of fidelity. Hall (2017) also contended that the content of policies must be investigated to develop a clearer understanding of policy efficacy, and to ensure that they are evidence-based.

2.7 Impact of the ABP on Ireland and the limited evaluation of it

In Ireland, the DES Inspectorate is a statutory body that completes whole-school evaluations, and parents, caregivers and pupils are all surveyed as part of this process (DES, 2017b). After the publication of the ABP, the Inspectorate began investigating caregivers' and pupils' perceptions of bullying in their school, including how it is prevented and tackled (DES, 2017b). Survey results showed pupils believed schools were succeeding in the implementation of effective anti-bullying measures, and the majority of children knew who they could talk to should they need support

(McNamara et al., 2019). This data provides some reassurance that Irish schools have a number of measures in place to prevent and respond to bullying (DES, 2017b).

The Action Plan for Education (DES, 2017a, 2018, 2019) has consistently promised to officially review the implementation of the ABP, but has yet to do so. Therefore, an independent team of researchers from the National Anti-Bullying Research and Resource Centre conducted the first and only piece of research evaluating the implementation of the ABP since its introduction (Foody et al., 2018; Murphy et al., 2017). All principals of primary and post-primary schools in Ireland were sent an online survey including questions on the frequency and impact of bullying in their school, and the preventative measures and supports in place for dealing with bullying (e.g., *My school provides specific supports to those who have been bullied? Agree / Disagree*).

Foody et al. (2018) found concerning results regarding the anti-bullying policies in Irish schools. Worryingly, only 63.7% of Irish primary schools reported having specific supports in place to help those who have bullied others, compared to 81% having supports for victims (Foody et al., 2018; Murphy et al., 2017), despite both being mandatory in ABP. School principals reported wanting more training for staff, more access to counsellors for children involved in bullying, and guidance from the DES on the development and provision of a national anti-bullying program (Foody et al., 2018; Murphy et al., 2017).

A major limitation of Foody et al.'s (2018) study was that just under a quarter of all the principals in the Republic of Ireland self-selected to respond. One must query if the respondents that chose to participate were those already taking affirmative

action against bullying in their schools. Another limitation was that specific information on the content of the policies was not gathered, and thus, recommendations were made for further research to investigate the nature and content of anti-bullying policies in Ireland (Foody et al., 2018).

2.8 Content Analyses

Content analysis is one such methodology that allows for the systematic analysis of written data to investigate what it contains (Cohen et al., 2007). Using a content analysis to explore anti-bullying policies in Ireland would fill the gap in the literature, as suggested by Foody et al. (2018). Content analyses have been conducted on anti-bullying policies in schools in the UK (Smith et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2008) and Northern Ireland (Purdy & Smith, 2016), and also in universities in the UK (Harrison et al., 2020; Vaill et al., 2020a) and Australia (Vaill et al., 2020b). All the above studies used adaptations of the same coding frame (Smith et al., 2008) to conduct their content analyses, with the changes making it applicable to the particular context (i.e., schools vs. universities). The coding frame explored bullying definitions, strategies for preventing bullying, how incidents of bullying is reported, recorded and responded to, and how the effectiveness of the policy is evaluated.

Considerable variation in the adequacy and coverage of the policies have been found across all the aforementioned studies, including infrequent mentioning of homophobic and cyberbullying, and a lacking of specific preventative and reactive measures, such as playground work and peer support, amongst other limitations. Across all the content analytic studies mentioned above, the average total anti-

bullying scores of policies ranged from 40% (Vaill et al., 2020b) to 62% (Vaill et al., 2020a), indicating that the policies studied had not included a significant proportion of the items on the coding frame.

The Irish context is different to that of the UK, Northern Ireland and Australia when these studies were conducted however, due to the fact that the Irish government has published the ABP guidelines that schools should be following and building their anti-bullying policies from. None of the other jurisdictions had such specific guidance, and all schools and universities had to create their own policies independently.

2.9 Conclusion and current study

This literature review endeavoured to give a brief synopsis on types of bullying and the prevalence of it, both within the Irish context and globally. It proceeded to discuss why it is important to prevent and react to bullying, and how anti-bullying policies are one such tool that can be utilised to work towards that goal. A critical analysis on the only study to investigate Irish anti-bullying policies was given, and concluded with a review of a selection of studies that used a content analysis method to explore the composition of anti-bullying policies internationally. The current study will utilise Smith et al.'s (2012) coding frame within the Irish context to explore the content of anti-bullying policies in Ireland. Chapter 3 will now discuss the research methods utilised in this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A quantitative content analysis of Irish primary school anti-bullying policies was the method of investigation in this research (as recommended by Foody et al., 2018; Hall, 2017). Krippendorp (2004) defines content analysis as a “research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use” (p.30). It is a strict and systematic set of procedures for the rigorous analysis, examination and verification of the contents of written data (Cohen et al., 2007), and can be quantitative, qualitative or mixed-methods in nature. Content analysis can be used to analyse large quantities of text, facilitated by the systematic and rule-governed nature of the technique to reduce it into workable data (Weber, 1990).

A content analysis was the best methodology for this research because it allows for an in-depth analysis of a large quantity of anti-bullying policies to examine what they contain. The policies were selected by random-sampling procedures, whereby the sample of school policies were randomly selected from the entire population (i.e., every primary school in the Republic of Ireland), and all schools had an equal chance of being chosen (McCombes, 2022). Random-sampling removes the potential of a self-selection bias like with surveys (as utilised by Foody et al., 2018), where potentially only those taking affirmative action against bullying in schools may respond. This sample is large enough to be generalisable for the entire country, allowing for the generation of meaningful and representative results.

3.2 Research Rationale

A paradigm is a belief system that guides and formally establishes a set of practices that are characterised through ontology, epistemology and methodology. Ontology refers to the nature of reality. Epistemology relates to the perceived relationship with knowledge that is being uncovered. The methodology is the strategic approach to how you investigate the knowledge. This research is based on the philosophical assumptions of Positivism, whereby it is assumed that one single reality or truth exists that can be measured (Cohen et al., 2007). Creswell (2003) argues that knowledge that develops through a positivist lens is based on careful observation and measurement of the objective reality that exists “out there” in the world. Taking the view that ‘knowledge is hard, objective and tangible’ (Cohen et al., 2007, p.7) forces the researcher to take on an observer role and an allegiance to the methods of natural science. Therefore, this research will take a quantitative approach. As the positivist approach to research holds that all genuine knowledge can only be advanced by means of observation and experiment (Cohen et al., 2007), data in anti-bullying policies will be observed, and statistical analyses will be used to generate the knowledge and truth about the research questions.

3.3 Positionality

The motivation for completing this piece of research was discussed in Chapter 1. However, Smith and Noble (2014) argue that bias can be present in all research due to a researcher’s positionality, and Sikes (2004) believes that this positionality can be influenced by the researcher’s morals and beliefs. Steps therefore have been taken with the methodology chosen to reduce the extent to which bias may be present in

this research. Firstly, by choosing a content analysis methodology where policies are coded for either having or not having particular elements, the chance of bias influencing results is minimised. Secondly, no bias can influence the selection of policies as a random-sampling procedures was utilised. These methodological choices should limit the chance bias may influence the research process.

3.4 Sample

As of September 2021 when data collection commenced, there were 3,106 primary schools in Ireland (Lawlor & Burke, 2020), which will be defined as the total population of this sample. 321 schools were therefore needed in order to analyse sufficient policies from a representative sample of schools across the country, to allow for Confidence Levels to be set at 95% and the Margin of Error at 5% (Field, 2013). A random-sampling procedure was utilised to gather a representative sample of anti-bullying policies in Ireland, to eliminate the potential self-selection bias of survey responses (e.g., Foody et al., 2018). Inclusion was dependent on the school having a website and the policy available for download on it.

482 schools were selected by the random number generator. Of this, 39 schools were excluded as the school did not have a website. A further 121 schools were excluded as their anti-bullying policy was not available for download on their website. The remaining 321 schools had their anti-bullying policy analysed for this research. Demographic details of the selected schools can be seen in Table 1 below. The random-sampling procedure selected at least three schools from every county in the Republic of Ireland. Figure 1 depicts the geographic layout of the sample below.

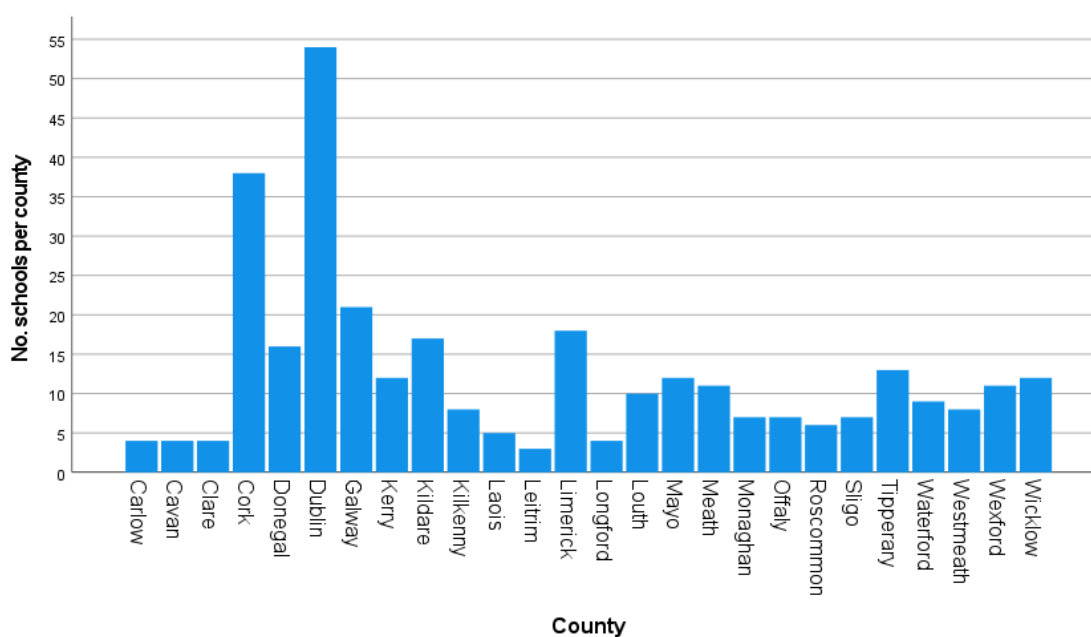
Table 1

Demographics of Selected Schools (collated by the researcher).

Average number of pupils (range)	Female 114.38 (0-544)	Male 118.47 (0-741)	Total 232.85 (15-1114)	
Ethos	Catholic	Multi- Denominational	Church of Ireland	Presbyterian
	285 (88.8%)	21 (6.5%)	13 (4%)	2 (0.6%)
DEIS Indicator	Yes	No		
	52 (16.2%)	269 (83.8%)		
Gaeltacht Indicator	Yes	No		
	6 (1.9%)	315 (98.1%)		

Figure 1

*Graphic Representation of the Number of Schools Whose Policy was Analysed by
County (created by the researcher).*



3.5 Materials

A content analysis coding frame developed by Smith et al. (2012) was selected for analysing the anti-bullying policies. This coding frame included minor revisions and enhancements from the original publication (Smith et al., 2008). The items in the coding frame were all included in the ABP (DES, 2013) recommendations bar one (B11; adult/teacher – pupil bullying or vice versa), making it a useful tool to evaluate whether schools have implemented the ABP requirements appropriately in their own policies.

Reliability analyses are utilised to assess the consistency of a tool or measure (Field, 2013). The internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the coding frame was reasonably high (.76; see Coolican, 2004; Field, 2013), and yielded strong inter-rater reliability scores ranging from 80 - 100% across categories (Smith et al., 2008). This provides further support for its use in the current research (see Appendix B for a copy of the coding frame).

3.6 Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis

A list of all the primary schools in Ireland was downloaded from the DES website in Excel format (DES, 2021). This data set included data on school roll number, location, number of pupils by gender, ethos, and DEIS status of school, among other variables. A random number generator was utilised to identify 321 schools (i.e., number 54 corresponded to the school on line 54 of the Excel spreadsheet). The school roll number was used as a Google search to ensure the correct school was identified, as many schools have similar names. If the school did not have a website, it

was excluded from the analysis. Where websites existed, the policy was sought and downloaded from it in pdf format. If the policy was not available for download on the website, the school was excluded from the analysis.

Each policy was analysed using the Smith et al. (2012) coding frame. The coding frame included four sections; (a) definition of bullying; (b) reporting and responding to bullying; (c) recording bullying and evaluating the policy; and (d) strategies for preventing bullying, totalling to 34 items (Smith et al., 2012; see Appendix B). Schools scored either one for meeting the criterion (i.e., including a particular aspect in the policy), or zero for not meeting it. In every policy, the scores were added for each of the four sections, and all together to create a Total Policy Score. A higher score reflected policies that were inclusive of more of the criteria, meaning the school provided a high level of information and support to their community.

The policy length was measured in number of words. It was computed in this way to make it as comparable as possible within the sample (i.e., to limit the effect of font size, page spacings, etc., on the results). Cover sheets, duplicate or extraneous material (e.g., reporting templates, etc.) that were present in some policies were all excluded from the word count. Relevant appendices (e.g., supports for parents) were included. The data from the content analysis was inputted into the Excel spreadsheet, corresponding with each of the 321 selected schools. This raw data was transferred into the computer program IBM SPSS Statistics 28.0 for statistical analyses.

3.7 Statistics

Descriptive statistics were conducted on the subtotal score of each of the four sections of the content analysis, and the Total Policy Score for each school, to examine variations between schools' policy content. As per Smith et al. (2012), the scores were described as 'high' when at least two-thirds of schools satisfied a criterion; 'moderate' when the response was between one-third and two-thirds; and 'low' when less than one-third of schools satisfied it. A non-parametric Spearman correlation was calculated between the total anti-bullying content score and the length of the policy (in words), to ascertain if there was a relationship between policy length and quality of content.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

'When working with secondary or documentary data, the sensitivity of the data, who created it, the intended audience of its creators, its original purpose and its intended uses in the research are all important considerations' (British Educational Research Association, 2018, p.10). Anti-bullying policies are official institutional documents that are publicly published. They are created by the Board of Management of each school following the legal guidelines from the ABP. The purpose of an anti-bullying policy is to be a living-document to protect children and staff, and is to be used to prevent and react to incidents of bullying within a school. It is thus important for the researcher to bear in mind that the policy documents were not created with the intention of being used in research.

Anti-bullying policies are public documents which could be downloaded and kept in a file on the researcher's personal computer. To ensure confidentiality, the data extracted from the policies was accumulated in a password-protected Excel Spreadsheet, as the schools were identified within it. This was necessary in case the researcher needed to revisit any policy to gather additional information, and then link the new data with the old. The Excel file will be stored on the researcher's computer until September 2024, at which point the data will be deleted. Although general descriptive statistics on the breakdown of schools (county, ethos, DEIS, single-sex, etc.) have been provided in this report, no reader will be able to ascertain which schools had their policy analysed. SERC approval has been received for this study (see Appendix 1).

3.9 Limitations

The primary limitation of this study is that it is unknown if the policy available for download on a school's website (as of Autumn 2021) is the most up-to-date version of the policy that the school has. Schools may review and update their policy annually, and simply not upload the most recent version to the website. The only way to counter this limitation would have been to email each school individually to request a copy of their most-up-to-date policy. However, that methodology would have included an element of self-selection bias, as schools would have been provided with a choice as to whether or not to respond to the request, therefore limiting the power of the random sample. It was also beyond the scope of an individual piece of research.

Another limitation is that despite the random sampling procedure, it cannot be argued that the sample is totally generalisable; 160 of the schools selected by the

random number generator were excluded from analyses as they either did not have a website, or did not have the policy available for download on it. Conclusions on the content of that missing data cannot be drawn in this study, but it also cannot be assumed that the policy exists and simply was not uploaded. Also, not all faith schools are represented in the sample, as no Muslim or Jewish schools were selected by the random number generator for inclusion in the study.

The final limitation of this study is the lack of inter-rater reliability with the coding of the policy documents, due to the independent nature of the research. Inter-rater reliability can be defined as “the extent to which two or more individuals agree” (Fink, 2010, p. 158). In this instance, if another researcher had independently co-coded a percentage of the data (typically 10-30%), a comparison could have been made to assess the consistency of the coding between both researchers. Highly consistent coding would have made the results more reliable and valid (Cohen et al., 2007). Therefore, the lack of inter-rater coding could impact the reliability of the results as an element of coder bias or human error cannot be ruled out.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the design of the study and explained what a content analysis is. A clear rationale was provided to argue for the use of quantitative analyses. Researcher positionality, in relation to researcher motivation as discussed in Chapter 1, was explained. The sample selected for the study was detailed, along with the materials used to code the data. The procedures for data collection and analysis, and the statistics utilised were then supplied. Ethical considerations regarding analysing

policy documents were considered, and finally, the limitations of the study were discussed. These limitations should be kept in mind when reading the results of the research. Chapter 4 will now present, analyse and discuss the findings from the study.

Chapter 4: Findings, Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine and discuss the results from each of the three research questions in turn. Numerical data, graphical representations of the data, and an explanation of the statistics and results will be provided. A statistical glossary has been supplied before Chapter 1 with definitions and explanations on all technical terms in this chapter.

4.2 Research Question 1

The first research question queried “to what extent have primary schools in the Republic of Ireland implemented the ABP (DES, 2013) guidelines in their anti-bullying policies?”. This question is multi-faceted and analyses are needed at multiple levels to fully answer it; (a) are schools using the mandated ABP definition on bullying? (b) from an individual item perspective, to what extent have schools implemented the different elements of the ABP? and (c) from a total score perspective, to what extent have schools implemented the four major themes of the ABP?

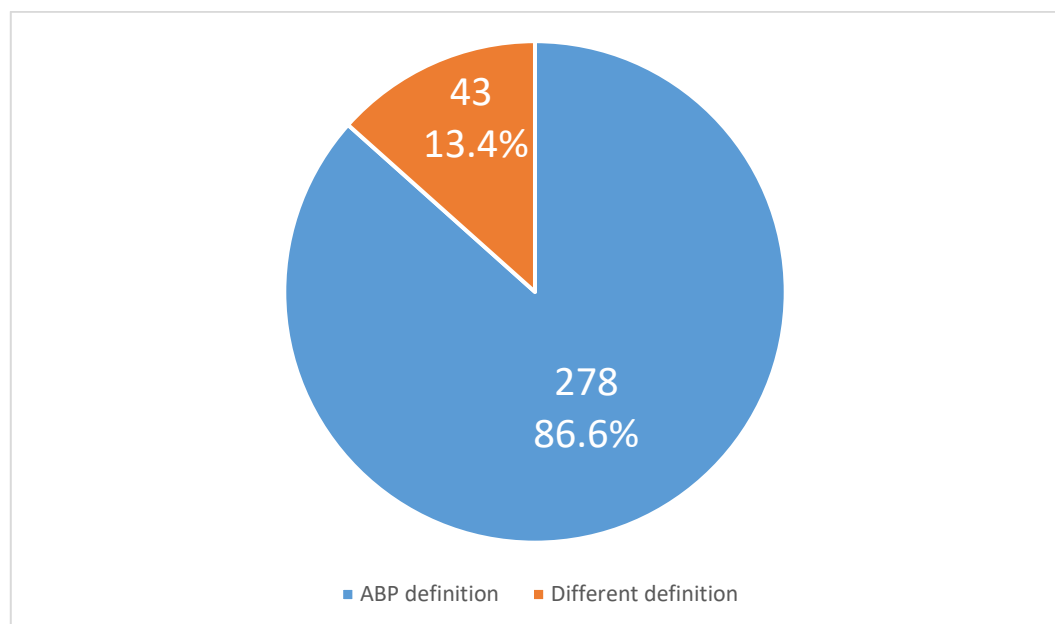
4.2.1 Are Schools Using the Mandated ABP Definition on Bullying?

Of the 321 policies that were analysed, all included a definition of bullying. As displayed in Figure 2 below, 278 (86.6%) of the schools utilised the ABP definition of bullying in their policy, showing compliance and implementation of the guidelines. However, 43 schools (13.4%) were not using the valid definition for bullying in their policy, and therefore are in breach of the ABP mandate.

The unified definition on bullying is an integral element of the ABP, and the fact that 13.4% of the schools investigated did not have it in use in their policy is of concern. This finding further strengthens the argument made in the literature review that the DES needs to officially investigate the implementation of the ABP as they claimed they would (DES, 2017a, 2018, 2019).

Figure 2

The Number and Percentage of Schools Using Either the ABP Definition on Bullying or a Different Definition (created by researcher).



4.2.2 From an Individual Item Perspective, To What Extent Have Schools Implemented the Different Elements of the ABP?

The results of the content analysis can be seen in Table 2 below. Looking at 'Section A' which investigated the nature of the bullying definitions in use, even

though 86.6% of the schools were using the official ABP definition (as displayed in section 4.2.1 above), the vast majority of schools (98%+) did include physical, verbal and relational bullying in their definition. However, amongst the 43 schools not using the official definition, there was variation regarding the inclusion of cyberbullying, material, homophobic, racial and sexual bullying, bullying due to disabilities, and bullying because of faith or religious belief. This finding is of concern because if a child in one of these non-compliant schools experiences homophobic bullying for example, they have no protection in legal terms from their anti-bullying policy. Again, this result calls on the DES to follow through on the promise they made on three separate occasions to investigate the implementation of the ABP (DES, 2017a, 2018, 2019).

Table 2

Smith et al. (2012)'s coding frame including the amount (% in brackets) of schools that did / did not mention an item in their anti-bullying policy (N = 321; created by researcher).

A	Definition of bullying behaviour (13 items)	Definition of bullying behaviour (13 items)		
		Item Present	Item not Present	High / Moderate / Low
1	Have a definition of bullying?	321 (100%)	0 (0%)	High
2	Does the definition make it clear that bullying is different from other kinds of aggressive behaviour?	316 (98.4%)	5 (1.6%)	High
3	Mention physical bullying (hits, kicks)?	321 (100%)	0 (0%)	High
4	Mention direct verbal bullying (threats, insults, nasty teasing)?	321 (100%)	0 (0%)	High
5	Mention relational bullying (rumours, social exclusion)?	316 (98.4%)	5 (1.6%)	High
6	Mention material bullying (damage to belongings, extortion of money)?	306 (95.3%)	15 (4.7%)	High

7	Mention cyberbullying (email, text messages)?	301 (93.8%)	20 (6.2%)	High
8	Mention homophobic bullying?	284 (88.5%)	37 (11.5%)	High
9	Mention racial bullying (or harassment)?	282 (87.9%)	39 (12.1%)	High
10	Mention sexual bullying (or harassment)?	275 (85.7%)	46 (14.3%)	High
11	As well as pupil–pupil bullying, discuss the issue of adult/teacher – pupil bullying or vice versa?	23 (7.2%)	298 (92.8%)	Low
12	Mention bullying due to disabilities?	281 (87.5%)	40 (12.5%)	High
13	Mention bullying because of faith or religious beliefs?	274 (85.4%)	47 (14.6%)	High

B Reporting and responding to bullying incidents (11 items)				
1	State what victims of bullying should do (e.g., tell a teacher; should clearly apply to victims/pupils who experience bullying)?	304 (94.7%)	17 (5.3%)	High
2	Say how teaching staff should respond to a report of bullying (<i>should specifically mention bullying, and be more specific than just “deal promptly”</i>)?	319 (99.4%)	2 (0.6%)	High
3	Clearly mention the responsibilities of other school staff (teaching assistants, lunchtime supervisors, etc.) if they know of bullying? (<i>This should be more specific than simply referring to “all staff”</i>).	292 (91%)	29 (9%)	High
4	Clearly mention the responsibilities of parents if they know of bullying (this can include knowing if their child has a behaviour problem if bullying is included elsewhere)?	308 (96%)	13 (4%)	High
5	Clearly mention the responsibilities of pupil bystanders if they know of bullying?	294 (91.6%)	27 (8.4%)	High
6	State whether sanctions applied for bullying will depend on type or severity of incident? (<i>It should be clear that the sanctions apply to bullying behaviour</i>)	295 (91.9%)	26 (8.1%)	High
7	Mention follow-up to see whether the sanctions were effective?	299 (93.1%)	22 (6.9%)	High
8	Discuss what action will be taken if the bullying persists?	301 (93.8%)	20 (6.2%)	High

9	Suggest how to support the victim? (<i>More than just "we will support victims"</i>)	286 (89.1%)	35 (10.9%)	High
10	Suggest how to help the pupil(s) doing the bullying to change their behaviour (apart from sanctions)? (<i>More than just "we will support ..."</i>)	283 (88.2%)	38 (11.8%)	High
11	Discuss if, when or how parents will be informed? (<i>"parents will be informed" is sufficient if it clearly refers to bullying</i>)	297 (92.5%)	24 (7.5%)	High
C <i>Recording bullying, communicating and evaluating the policy (4 items)</i>				
1	Say reports of bullying will be recorded?	307 (95.6%)	14 (4.4%)	High
2	Say who is responsible for coordinating the recording system?	300 (93.5%)	21 (6.5%)	High
3	Show how records or survey data will be used to know whether the policy is working or not?	1 (0.3%)	320 (99.7%)	Low
4	Mention periodic review and updating of the policy?	287 (89.4%)	34 (10.6%)	High
D <i>Strategies for preventing bullying (6 items)</i>				
1	Mention any of encouraging cooperative behaviour, rewarding good behaviour, improving school climate, or creating a safe environment?	299 (93.1%)	22 (6.9%)	High
2	Discuss general issues of peer support (beyond B5)?	234 (72.9%)	87 (27.1%)	High
3	Discuss advice for parents about bullying (beyond B4)?	236 (73.5%)	85 (26.5%)	High
4	Mention the preventative role of playground activities or lunchtime supervisors?	276 (86%)	45 (14%)	High
5	Discuss issues of inclusiveness (e.g., non-English speakers; pupils with learning difficulties)?	278 (86.6%)	43 (13.4%)	High
6	Mention the issue of bullying on the way to school or happening outside school?	228 (71%)	93 (29%)	High

NOTE. Items are ranked as scoring 'high' when $\frac{2}{3}$ of schools included a criterion,

'moderate' between $\frac{1}{3}$ - $\frac{2}{3}$, and 'low' when less than $\frac{1}{3}$ included it.

* As this coding frame was designed by British researchers (Smith et al., 2012), some of the language is not relevant to the Irish context (i.e., B3; lunchtime supervisors, teaching assistants). The 'other school staff' in the Irish context refers to SNAs, school secretaries, caretakers, etc.

As evident from Table 2 above, Irish anti-bullying policies were ranked as 'high' for all items, bar two that were 'low', on the coding frame (A11 and C3). This is to be expected because the ABP requires schools to meet the criteria on this coding frame in their policies. However, the ABP does not specify that schools must address adult/teacher – pupil bullying and vice versa in their anti-bullying policy, and as can be seen in Table 2, A11, only 7.2% of schools did address this type of bullying within their policy, resulting in the 'low' rank. This finding is important because it shows the value of having a governmental framework to support schools building policies; the data shows that schools include elements that are mandated, and are less likely to include elements that are not. Therefore, there is significant value in creating a national framework like the Irish government did with the ABP to ensure schools include all elements deemed important in their anti-bullying policies.

4.2.3 From a Total Score Perspective, To What Extent Have Schools Implemented the Four Major Themes of the ABP?

Table 3 below provides details on the Total Policy Scores for each of the sections (e.g., A, B, C, and D) from the content analysis.

Table 3

Mean Scores (Standard Deviations in Brackets), Mode, and Range of Scores for Each Section (A, B, C, D), and for Total Policy Score (N= 321; created by researcher).

	Total potential score	Average score (standard deviation)	Mode score	Range
A: Definition of bullying behaviour	13	11.3 (1.9)	12	3-13
B: Reporting and responding to bullying incidents	11	10.2 (2.0)	11	0-11
C: Recording bullying, communicating and evaluating the policy	4	2.8 (0.7)	3	0-4
D: Strategies for preventing bullying	6	4.8 (1.9)	6	0-6
Total Policy Score	34	29.1 (5.8)	32	8-33

When examining the average and mode scores for each section of the coding frame (see Table 3 above), it is evident that the majority of Irish schools have strong anti-bullying policies in place that have scored highly on each of the four themes from the content analysis. For example, the average score for Section B, 'Reporting and responding to bullying incidents' is 10.2, the mode is 11, and the maximum potential score a school could receive is 11. This indicates that the vast majority of schools are receiving nearly full marks on how they report and respond to incidents of bullying in their policies, and strong compliance with the ABP.

However, it is also vital to look at the range of scores. Each section received a full range (Sections B, C, and D) or nearly full range (Section A) of scores (i.e., from the lowest to highest possible score), indicating that the coding frame discriminated

strongly amongst the school policies. One school scored 0 for Section B, twelve scored 0 for Section C, and sixteen scored 0 for Section D. This shows that some schools made no reference to how the school would report and respond to incidents of bullying in their policy, nor any mention as to 'Recording bullying, communicating and evaluating the policy', or 'Strategies for preventing bullying'. Therefore, even though there is overwhelmingly positive evidence of ABP implementation, there are also a selection of schools with very limited to no supports in place in their policies despite being mandated to include them.

The average Total Policy Score in this sample was ($M=29.1$), and the mode was 32 out of a maximum score of 34. This finding shows that most Irish primary schools have anti-bullying policies that contain the vast majority of the criteria from this coding frame, indicating that they have clear and detailed policies in place. The result is exceedingly higher than reported by Smith et al. (2012) with a mean total of ($M=17.9$) out of 34, and Purdy and Smith (2016) with a mean total of ($M=18.7$) out of 36. This again shows the power of having a centralised governmental framework for schools to base their policies off, which is a significant strength of the ABP in the Irish context.

4.3 Research Question 2

The second research question sought to assess whether the anti-bullying policies have specific supports in place for children who engage in bullying behaviour as well as victims of bullying. As can be seen in Table 2 above, B9 and B10 of the coding frame investigated whether schools mentioned *how* they would support

victims and pupils doing the bullying beyond simply saying “we will support them”.

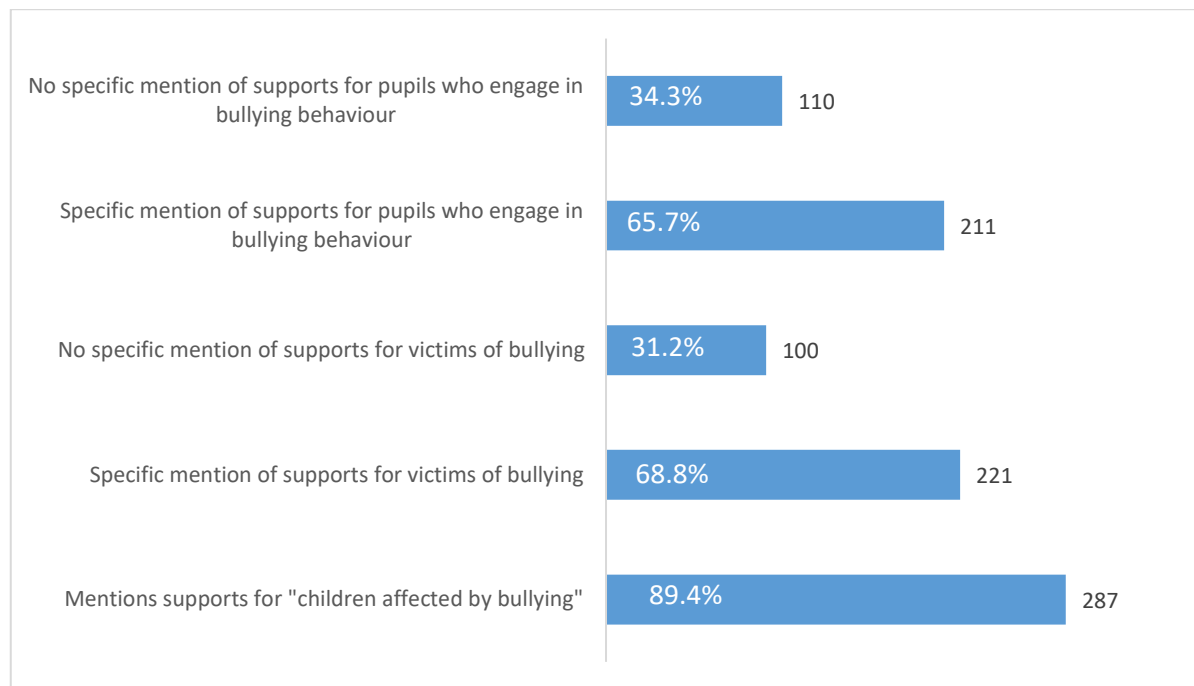
89.1% of the policies mentioned how they would support victims, and 88.2% mentioned how they would help pupils doing the bullying to change their behaviour (outside of sanctions), both of which are very positive results.

However, within the ABP framework, the language “children affected by bullying” is utilised as a broad means of covering all pupils involved in bullying in any capacity (i.e., bully, victim, bystander, bully-victim), which meant that any school that used that language had to score a point for B9 and B10 on Smith et al.’s (2012) coding frame as there was the potential it could refer to the bully and / or the victim. Therefore, three new variables outside the coding frame were computed to investigate firstly, how many schools specifically use the language of “children affected by bullying” to cover all impacted without necessarily having to specify what supports are provided to whom, and then within that, how many *specifically* detailed supports for the victims and *specifically* detailed supports for the child doing the bullying.

As displayed in Figure 3 below, 287 (89.4%) of the school policies analysed used the language of “children affected by bullying” when discussing the supports they had in place. Of them, 221 (68.8%) of schools went a step further and detailed specific supports they put in place for victims of bullying. However, 100 schools (31.2%) did not have any specific supports for victims in their policy, despite the ABP guidelines mandating that schools put them in place (DES, 2013). Similarly, 211 (65.7%) of the schools had specific supports in place for children who engage in bullying behaviour, compared to 110 (34.3%) without. This is only a slightly smaller percentage compared to those with specific supports for victims of bullying, which is a promising result.

Figure 3

The Percentage and Number of School Policies that Mention Bullying-Related Supports in a Variety of Ways (created by researcher).



However, as the ABP states that “a programme of support for pupils who have been bullied must be in place” (DES, 2013, p.35) and “a programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour must also be part of the school’s intervention process” (DES, 2013, p.35), it is evident from the results that some schools have not implemented these requirements, and therefore are in breach of the governmental mandate.

This finding is also important because it corroborates with Foody et al.’s (2018) result that 63.7% of Irish primary schools had included specific supports to help those who have bullied others in their anti-bullying policy. However, Foody et al. (2018) also reported that 81% of their sample had specific supports for victims in their policy, a

finding that was not replicated here. This could be explained by Foody et al.'s (2018) own concern that perhaps only schools already taking affirmative action against bullying responded to their survey. Therefore, the random sampling procedure utilised in this research may be providing a more accurate representation of the result.

Counselling was suggested as a means of support for children affected by bullying in 213 (66.4%) of policies. However, Murphy et al. (2017) reported that only 39% of the Irish school principal respondents in their study could easily access qualified counsellors for children affected by bullying. Therefore, whether schools are actually in a position to act on that element of the policy and provide that support to pupils in times of need is unknown.

4.4 Research Question 3

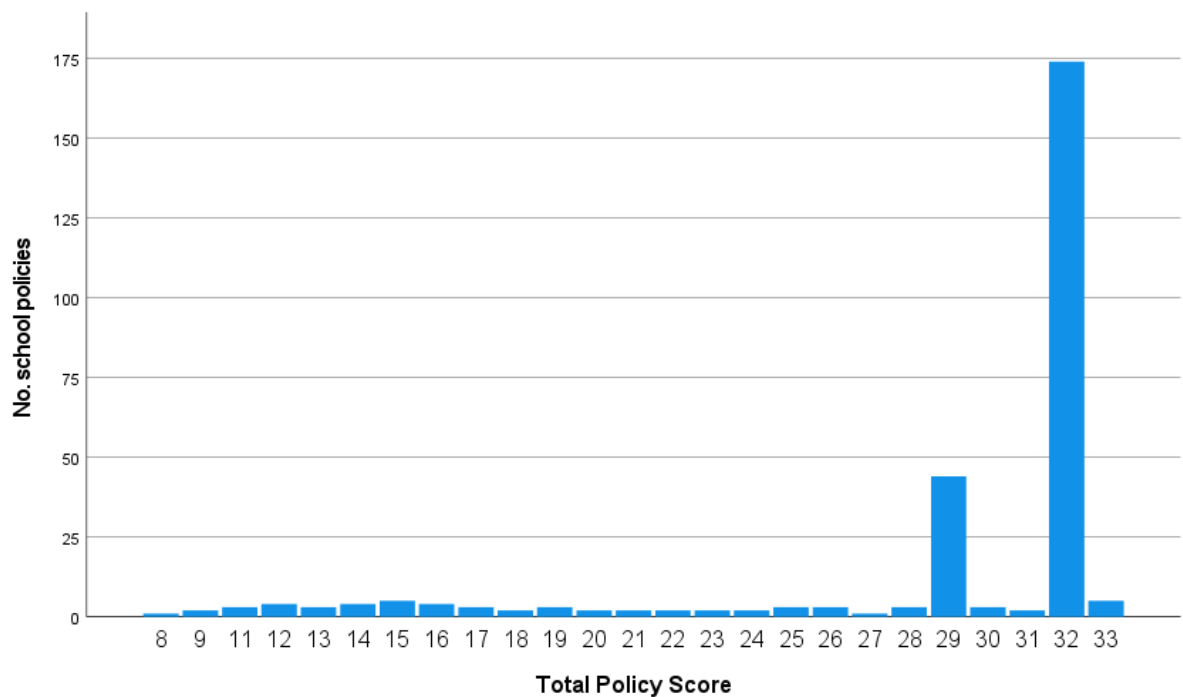
The final research question involved investigating whether there was a relationship between the length and the quality of the anti-bullying policy, as measured by word count and the Total Policy Score from Smith et al.'s (2012) coding frame. The word count could not be calculated for 38 of the policies as they had been uploaded onto their school websites in image form rather than a pdf, meaning computer software was unable to calculate the number of words within them. These 38 policies were thus excluded from the analysis of this research question.

After excluding those policies, descriptive statistics were recomputed on the Total Policy Score for the remaining 282 policies. The average score was $M=28.8$ ($SD=5.9$), and the mode remained the same at 32 (out of a maximum 34 points). 174 schools scored 32 points, as displayed along with the rest of the data distribution in

Figure 4 below. The 'Total Policy Score' variable was not normally distributed (as measured by a strong negatively-skewed distribution [visible in Figure 4 below], kurtosis at 2.69, and a significant Shapiro-Wilk test, $p < .01$), thus violating assumptions for the use of parametric statistics.

Figure 4

The Number of School Policies and Total Policy Score Received (n= 282; created by researcher).

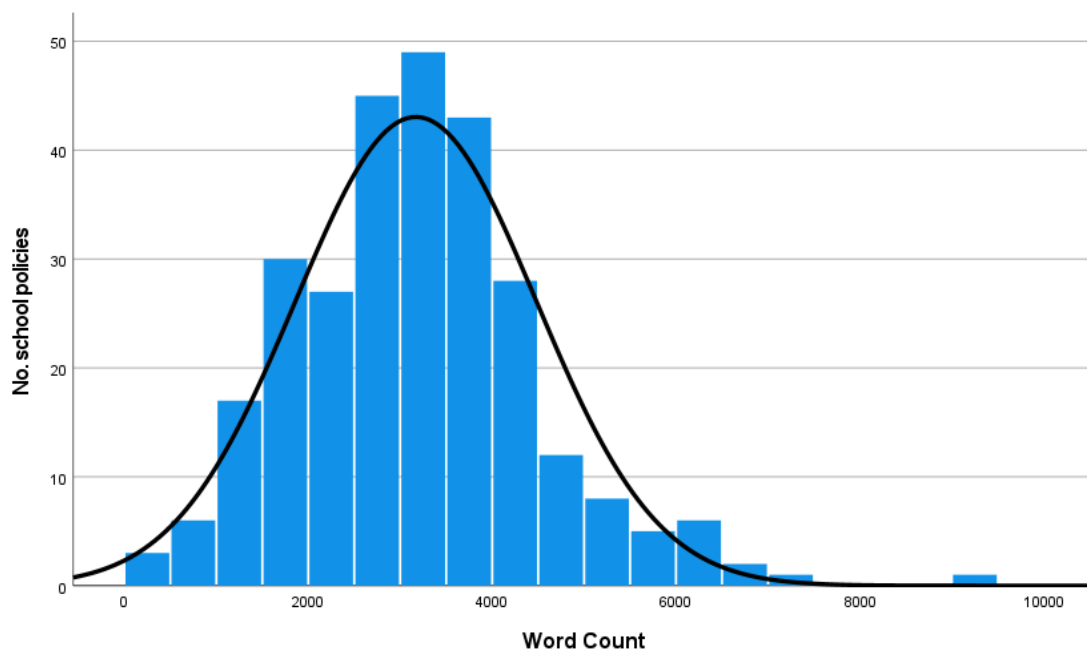


The length of the policies in number of words was then analysed. The average length was $M=3,170$ words ($SD= 1,311.1$) and ranged from 281 - 9,377 words. A graphic representation of the distribution can be seen below in Figure 5. There was one outlier of 9,377 words which was more than two standard deviations away from the mean; this was excluded from further analyses (as recommended by Field, 2013).

The data in the 'Word Count' variable was normally distributed and met all assumptions for parametric analysis.

Figure 5

Distribution of the Length of the Policy (in Words) According to the Number of Policies (created by researcher).

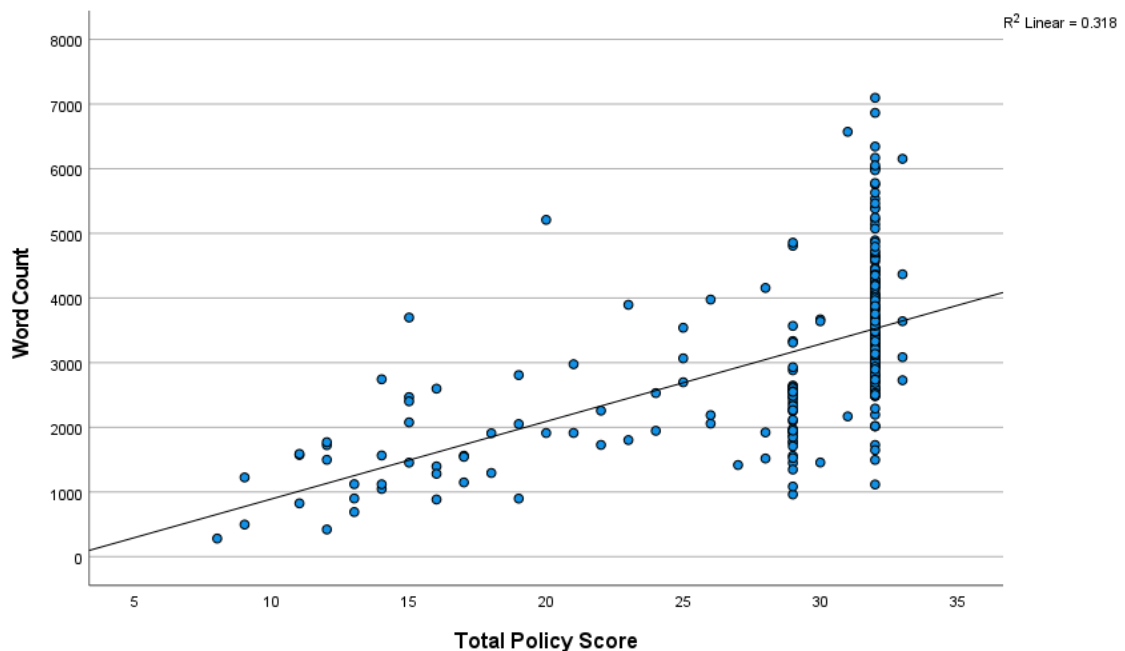


To find the relationship between the two variables, a non-parametric Spearman's correlation was utilised due to the non-normal distribution of the data in the 'Total Policy Score' variable. The two-tailed correlation showed a significant positive relationship between the 'Total Policy Score' and the Length of the Policy (in words), $r_s = .64$, $[\text{.563}, \text{.706}]$, $p < .01$. Figure 6 depicts the finding from this research question below, showing that there was a positive relationship between the number of words in the policy and the score received. Longer policies were more likely to receive a higher 'Total Policy Score', replicating results from other studies using this coding frame in different countries (i.e., Purdy & Smith, 2016; Smith et al., 2012).

Figure 6

The Relationship Between the Total Policy Score and the Policy Length in Words

(created by researcher).



4.5 Conclusion

Through the data analysis conducted in this study, it is evident that the vast majority of Irish primary schools have implemented the ABP guidelines in their anti-bullying policy. Results from Research Question 1 showed general high compliance with the ABP, with the average Total Policy Score being 29 out of a maximum 34 points. However, 13.4% of the sample have not implemented the ABP guidelines at all, despite the deadline for implementation being the end of the 2013/2014 school year (DES, 2013).

Results from Research Question 2 showed that most Irish primary schools do have supports in place for “pupils affected by bullying”, but differentiated *specific* supports for victims compared to children who bully have not been so widely included.

Finally, results from Research Question 3 showed that there was a significant positive relationship between the length and quality of the policy, indicating that longer policies scored higher on the content analysis coding frame.

Based on these findings, Chapter 5 will present overall conclusions on the study, provide recommendations, and make suggestions for further research.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide a brief overview of the research conducted, and summarise the findings and conclusions drawn. Recommendations based on the results will be highlighted, and the implications for practice and policy will be discussed. Two potential avenues for further research will also be suggested, before the chapter culminates with an overall conclusion on the research.

5.2 Overview of the research

By conducting a quantitative content analysis on anti-bullying policies in Irish primary schools, this study aimed to answer three research questions;

1. To what extent have primary schools in the Republic of Ireland implemented the ABP (DES, 2013) guidelines in their anti-bullying policies?
2. Do the anti-bullying policies have specific supports in place for children who engage in bullying behaviour as well as victims of bullying?
3. Is there a relationship between the length and the quality of the anti-bullying policies?

This research is important as no official investigation has been conducted by the Irish Government to assess whether schools have implemented the ABP framework in their anti-bullying policies, despite the Action Plan for Education (DES, 2017a, 2018, 2019) promising to review it on three separate occasions. Schools were mandated to be fully compliant with the ABP by the end of the 2013/2014 school year (DES, 2013), but

principals surveyed in 2017 (Foody et al., 2018) indicated varying levels of compliance. Using a pre-designed and validated coding frame (Smith et al., 2012), a content analysis on primary school anti-bullying policies was thus completed (as urged by Foody et al., 2018; Hall, 2017). A summary of the findings and the recommendations drawn from them will now be provided.

5.3 Conclusions and Recommendations of the Research

The first research question investigated the extent to which primary schools have implemented the ABP in their anti-bullying policies, and was explored from three angles. Firstly, looking at the definition on bullying, the overwhelmingly positive result is that 86.6% of the sample have created policies that are using the definition provided by the ABP, as required. However, 13.4% of the schools were non-compliant, and neglected to include certain elements of the mandated definition including the clauses on material, homophobic, racial and sexual bullying, bullying due to disabilities, and bullying because of faith or religious belief. It is recommended that all schools review their policy and address any shortcomings to ensure pupils are protected against these forms of bullying by their school's policy.

Then, the individual items within the coding frame were explored to assess compliance. Items were ranked as "high" when more than two thirds of the policies included the element in their policy, and all items bar two were ranked as high in this sample. This is important because it shows that the vast majority of schools have included most elements of the coding frame in their policy, and therefore have created strong and detailed anti-bullying policies.

Finally, the average Total Policy Score for this sample was 29 out of a potential 34 points (i.e., 85%), further indicating that Irish schools have created detailed anti-bullying policies that are mostly compliant with the ABP. However, even though there was overwhelmingly positive evidence of ABP implementation, there were also schools with very limited to no mention of supports, of preventative measures, or of recording procedures in their policy. This seriously needs to be addressed.

Based on the findings from the three sections of Research Question 1, it is recommended that the DES follows through on their promise to investigate the implementation of the ABP guidelines (DES, 2017a, 2018, 2019) and enforce it to ensure all pupils are protected by their school's policy.

The findings from the second research question showed that just under 90% of schools have supports in place for "children affected by bullying", a term that encompasses bystanders, victims and perpetrators of bullying. This is a promising result and shows schools are cognisant of the need to provide supports. However, upon closer investigation of the data, less schools included *specific supports* for victims and *specific supports* for perpetrators of bullying (68.8% and 65.7% respectively), despite this being mandated by the ABP (DES, 2013, p. 35).

It is therefore recommended that during the annual review of the anti-bullying policy, schools should research and include specific supports for these pupils. This is vital as previous research has shown the long-term, enduring impact bullying can have on Bullies, Victims, and Bully-Victims, with the worst consequences for children who are both victims and perpetrators of bullying (Copeland et al., 2013; Wolke et al., 2013). They all need and are deserving of support. The Report of the Expert Group on

Mental Health Policy (Government of Ireland, 2006, as cited in Murray et al., 2020) extrapolated that the annual economic costs of poor mental health in the Republic of Ireland were approximately €11 billion. Therefore, a financial incentive as well as a moral and social one exists to tackle incidences of bullying and support those affected by it.

The result from the third research question showed that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between the length and quality of the anti-bullying policies, with longer policies scoring higher on the content analysis coding frame. This replicated results from other studies using this coding frame in different countries (i.e., Purdy & Smith, 2016; Smith et al., 2012). As such, it is recommended that schools include clear and precise procedures in their policy with plenty of detail, examples, and additional information and resources, to create a strong anti-bullying policy that is compliant with the ABP and protects the entire school community.

5.4 Implications for Practice and Policy

As implementation of the ABP was strong amongst schools (i.e., average Total Policy Score of 85%), it is evident that the vast majority of Irish primary schools have detailed anti-bullying policies in place. This result is in contrast to findings from other studies that utilised Smith et al.'s (2012) coding frame on anti-bullying policies in Northern Ireland, England and Australia respectively (e.g., Purdy & Smith, 2016; Smith et al., 2012; Vaill et al., 2020a), with much lower Total Scores (ranging from 40-62%). This is a credit to Ireland for creating the ABP and mandating schools implement it (DES, 2013). These other jurisdictions did not have a document like the ABP to help

schools create their policy at the time of the research, and as such, principals had to build it themselves based on what the individual institution believed to be important. Smith et al. (2008) advocated for more guidance from the UK Government so schools could maximise the effectiveness of their anti-bullying policies, which is precisely what the Irish Government provided. Therefore, the significance of a centralised framework like the ABP with guidelines and templates for building an anti-bullying policy cannot be underrated. It is recommended that other governments create their own guidelines similar to the ABP to support their schools and the entire school community in combatting bullying.

Implementation fidelity refers to the extent to which policies or programs are delivered as planned (Dusenbury et al. 2003), and is a crucial precondition for the success of any policy. Just because a policy includes plenty of detailed elements does not necessarily mean that they will be implemented. It is therefore recommended that implementation fidelity of the anti-bullying policies is assessed during the annual policy review and / or during school inspections, to investigate whether the policies simply play lip service to legal requirements, or if they have a greater active meaning to the whole school community (Hall, 2017; Smith et al., 2008).

Following from this, in order for policies to be implemented effectively, teachers need support on how to do so. Primary school teachers play a significant role in preventing and reacting to bullying (Smith, 2011), however, they often respond ineffectively (Yoon et al., 2016). If teachers are taught about key factors in child development, including the ways that these factors can be impacted by various risk

and protective influences, this can help them to prevent and react to bullying their schools (D'Urso et al., 2020).

Formal pre- and in-service training for teachers in counselling, mediation, and conflict resolution was argued to be a critical issue for countering bullying and victimisation in Ireland (O'Moore, 2000), but anti-bullying training is not yet mandatory in Irish teacher-training courses (Teaching Council of Ireland, 2017). Teachers need additional training on how to effectively deal with bullying (Bradshaw et al., 2011; Smith, 2011), as application of research findings to teacher-training courses has been argued to be "woefully inadequate" (Smith, 2011, p.421). In contrast however, providing support to teachers in training on how to lessen bullying in their classrooms and schools has yielded some positive results in Ireland (James et al., 2008). Therefore, multiple preventative and reactive measures to combat bullying are needed, including further teacher training, to ensure teachers can effectively implement the strong anti-bullying policies that are in place in Ireland.

5.5 Further Research

Two recommendations for further research will be provided, building from the results of this study. Firstly, as this study was quantitative in nature, further research could explore *what* specific supports schools have in their anti-bullying policies for children impacted by or children who engage in bullying behaviour from a qualitative perspective. Such analyses were beyond the scope of this study, but results could provide valuable information on *how* schools plan to support their pupils.

Secondly, as discussed in Chapter 4, 13.4% of the policies analysed were not using the correct definition for bullying, showing incompliance with the mandated ABP. Amongst the elements of the definition that were excluded was mentioning identity-based bullying in the policy (by 11.5% of the sample). Bailey (2017) discusses in depth the incongruity of the demand the ABP made of Catholic schools to incorporate a clause into their anti-bullying policies which would appear to be entirely incompatible with their ethos; i.e., specific reference to identity-based bullying including transphobic and homophobic bullying. Further research could explore whether there was a relationship between the ethos of the school and the exclusion of mentioning identity-based bullying in their bullying definition.

5.6 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the research and discussed the conclusions drawn from each of the three research questions. Recommendations were made based on these findings, and implications for practice and policy were discussed. Two potential avenues for further research were suggested also. To conclude, this research is of vital importance as it marks the first investigation of the implementation of the ABP without relying on principals choosing to participate, and therefore limiting the potential of only having a sample including those already taking affirmative action against bullying in their schools. Overall, the vast majority of the sample was compliant with the ABP and had strong policies in place that scored highly on the coding frame. This is something for Irish schools to be proud of, and is a credit to the Irish

Government for creating a set of procedures that ensure schools have clear policies in place that provide protection for all.

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Appendices**Appendix A****SERC Ethical Approval**

SERC

Maire Nic Dhonnchadha [REDACTED]

Fri 12/03/2021 12:31

To: Nessa Lahert [REDACTED]

Ms. Lahert

12.03.2021

Ref# SERC-10-03-21-20-PME-1-21

Research Focus/ Title: Academic Year 2020/2021

PME1

Dear Nessa,

Thank you for your submission to the Student Ethics in Research Committee. Your application was reviewed 10.03.2021 at the SERC Committee meeting and has been approved. Please note, your approval is conditional on your research instrument(s) being approved by your allocated supervisor prior to commencing data collection.

Please note for all future correspondence (including emails) that your Research Ethics Reference Number (RERN) is: 20-PME-1-21

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

Dr. Maja Haals Brosnan

Chair of Student Ethics in Research Committee

.....

On Behalf of SERC Committee

Appendix B

Content Analysis from Smith et al. (2012)

Section A: Definition of bullying behaviour		
1	Have a definition of bullying?	
2	Does the definition make it clear that bullying is different from other kinds of aggressive behaviour?	
3	Mention physical bullying (hits, kicks)?	
4	Mention direct verbal bullying (threats, insults, nasty teasing)?	
5	Mention relational bullying (rumours, social exclusion)?	
6	Mention material bullying (damage to belongings, extortion of money)?	
7	Mention cyberbullying (email, text messages)?	
8	Mention homophobic bullying?	
9	Mention racial bullying (or harassment)?	
10	Mention sexual bullying (or harassment)?	
11	As well as pupil– pupil bullying, discuss the issue of adult/teacher – pupil bullying or vice versa?	
12	Mention bullying due to disabilities?	
13	Mention bullying because of faith or religious beliefs?	
Total for Section A		

Section B: Reporting and responding to bullying incidents		
1	State what victims of bullying should do (e.g., tell a teacher; should clearly apply to victims/ pupils who experience bullying)?	
2	Say how teaching staff should respond to a report of bullying (<i>should specifically mention bullying, and be more specific than just “deal promptly”</i>)?	
3	Clearly mention the responsibilities of other school staff (teaching assistants, lunchtime supervisors, etc.) if they know of bullying? (<i>This should be more specific than simply referring to “all staff”</i>).	
4	Clearly mention the responsibilities of parents if they know of bullying (this can include knowing if their child has a behaviour problem if bullying is included elsewhere)?	
5	Clearly mention the responsibilities of pupil bystanders if they know of bullying?	
6	State whether sanctions applied for bullying will depend on type or severity of incident? (<i>It should be clear that the sanctions apply to bullying behaviour</i>)	

7	Mention follow-up to see whether the sanctions were effective?	
8	Discuss what action will be taken if the bullying persists?	
9	Suggest how to support the victim? (<i>More than just "we will support victims"</i>)	
10	Suggest how to help the pupil(s) doing the bullying to change their behaviour (apart from sanctions)? (<i>More than just "we will support ..."</i>)	
11	Discuss if, when or how parents will be informed? (<i>"parents will be informed" is sufficient if it clearly refers to bullying</i>)	
Total for Section B		

Section C: Recording bullying, communicating and evaluating the policy		
1	Say reports of bullying will be recorded?	
2	Say who is responsible for coordinating the recording system?	
3	Show how records or survey data will be used to know whether the policy is working or not?	
4	Mention periodic review and updating of the policy?	
Total for Section C		

Section D: Strategies for preventing bullying		
1	Mention any of encouraging cooperative behaviour, rewarding good behaviour, improving school climate, or creating a safe environment?	
2	Discuss general issues of peer support (beyond B5)?	
3	Discuss advice for parents about bullying (beyond B4)?	
4	Mention the preventative role of playground activities or lunchtime supervisors?	
5	Discuss issues of inclusiveness (e.g., non-English speakers; pupils with learning difficulties)?	
6	Mention the issue of bullying on the way to school or happening outside school?	
Total for Section D		

Total anti-bullying policy content (34 items)	
Total length of policy (in words)	

Appendix C

Examples of data from Excel and SPSS spreadsheets

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S
13	2571																		
14	2588																		
15	1201																		
16	2418																		
17	1520																		
18	2881																		
19	2999																		
20	1353																		
21	2480																		
22	239																		
23	2467																		
24	3002																		
25	2316																		
26	1995																		
27	2788																		
28	1943																		
29	1845																		
30	953																		
31	1529																		

Above is a screenshot of the list of numbers selected by the random number generator. For example, the 13th number generated was 2571. The school in the tab “All Schools” that was on row 2571 was selected, and its data was copy and pasted on row 13 in the tab “Total Data”.

Official Dissertation Data Collection - Excel

Nessa Lahert

File Home Insert Draw Page Layout Formulas Data Review View Help Tell me what you want to do

Clipboard Font Alignment Number Styles Cells

Share

Share this document, and see who it's shared with.

E1 County

County	Gaeltach	DEIS (Y/N)	Ethos (Catholic/Protestant/Other)	Female	Male	Total	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10	A11	A12	A13	DES Definition	policy	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5
Dublin	N	Y	Catholic	145	171	316	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Dublin	N	Y	Catholic	75	91	166	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
Dublin	N	N	Catholic	436	10	446	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Kilkenny	N	N	Catholic	124	137	261	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
Mayo	N	Y	Catholic	33	32	65	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Wicklow	N	N	Catholic	12	19	31	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Wexford	N	N	Catholic	9	9	18	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
Galway	N	N	Catholic	43	60	103	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cork	N	N	Catholic	77	88	165	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Dublin	N	Y	Catholic	0	408	408	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0
Monaghan	N	N	Catholic	77	72	149	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
Tipperary	N	Y	Catholic	0	108	108	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Dublin	N	N	Catholic	194	237	431	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
Cavan	N	N	Catholic	28	37	65	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
Dublin	N	N	Multi Den	210	243	453	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cork	N	Y	Catholic	162	5	167	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sligo	N	N	Catholic	43	48	91	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
Sligo	N	N	Catholic	99	148	247	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
Cork	N	N	Catholic	124	145	269	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Waterford	N	N	Catholic	53	94	147	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Meath	N	N	Multi Den	236	241	477	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Galway	N	N	Catholic	41	58	99	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Waterford	N	Y	Catholic	0	350	350	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Carlow	N	N	Catholic	185	74	259	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Donegal	N	Y	Catholic	28	29	57	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Wicklow	N	N	Catholic	93	91	184	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Monaghan	N	N	Church Of	21	10	31	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Total Data n=482 Total Data n=321 Schools w.o. website Schools w.o. policy on website

Ready Accessibility: Investigate

13°C Rain showers

ENG GA

12:11 06/05/2022

The raw data can be seen here. All the schools that were selected by the random number generator are in the tab “Total Data n=482”. In the tab pictured above, only the data from the schools actually analysed is here. The following two tab contain the excluded data (i.e., schools without a website, and schools without a policy on the website).

SPSS Data Sheet for dissertation_1.sav [DataSet1] - IBM SPSS Statistics Data Editor

File Edit View Data Transform Analyze Graphs Utilities Extensions Window Help

	Name	Type	Width	Decimals	Label	Values	Missing	Columns	Align	Measure	Role
1	RandomNo...	Numeric	5	0	Random No. G...	None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
2	RollNumber	String	6	0	Roll Number	None	None	6	Left	Nominal	Input
3	SchoolName	String	48	0	School Name	None	None	48	Left	Nominal	Input
4	County	String	9	0		None	None	9	Left	Nominal	Input
5	Eircode	String	7	0		None	None	7	Left	Nominal	Input
6	GaeltachtIn...	String	1	0	Gaeltacht Indic...	{1, Y}...	None	6	Left	Nominal	Input
7	DEISYN	String	1	0	DEIS (Y/N)	{1, Y}...	None	5	Left	Nominal	Input
8	EthosDescr...	String	20	0	Ethos Descripti...	{1, Catholic}...	None	20	Left	Nominal	Input
9	Female	Numeric	4	0		None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
10	Male	Numeric	4	0		None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
11	Total	Numeric	4	0		None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
12	A1	Numeric	2	0		None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
13	A2	Numeric	2	0		None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
14	A3	Numeric	2	0		None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
15	A4	Numeric	2	0		None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
16	A5	Numeric	2	0		None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
17	A6	Numeric	2	0		None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
18	A7	Numeric	2	0		None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
19	A8	Numeric	2	0		None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
20	A9	Numeric	2	0		None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
21	A10	Numeric	2	0		None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
22	A11	Numeric	2	0		None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
23	A12	Numeric	2	0		None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
24	A13	Numeric	2	0		None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input

Data View Variable View

IBM SPSS Statistics Processor is ready Unicode: ON Classic

11°C Rain showers

Windows taskbar icons: File Explorer, Settings, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, SPSS, etc.

System tray: ENG GA, 15:00, 30/04/2022

The data set is visible above after being exported to SPSS to allow for statistical analyses to be completed.