

**A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO WELLBEING IN SECONDARY
SCHOOLS: THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM**

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of Arts in Educational Leadership and Management

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Abstract

A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO WELLBEING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

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M.A. (Educational Leadership and Management)

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The purpose of this study is to examine the views of the senior leadership team (SLT) in secondary schools on the role of the school, including the SLT, in promoting the wellbeing of the students as well as the staff. The study explores the existing strategies that school leaders are implementing in promoting students' and staff's wellbeing at secondary school level, and the key actions they can take to embed a whole school approach to wellbeing. The research methodology adopted is a qualitative one, making use of semi-structured interviews to examine the views of seven members of the SLT from two different secondary schools. Results show that the participants believed that a whole school approach to wellbeing should be part and parcel of the school's mission and goals. They underlined various processes and initiatives at classroom and whole school levels which impacted their respective school community's wellbeing. They believed that a whole school approach wellbeing is embedded in the school culture, curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment methods, classroom management, relationships and professional development. The SLT is an important pillar which provides the vision and the means to support the wellbeing needs of its stakeholders. They also placed great importance on the effective pedagogy and assessment used in the classrooms. The SLT stressed that building healthy and supportive relationships with educators and students is fundamental to wellbeing as well as working collaboratively with parents and different support services. Investment in continuing professional development of both school leaders and other school staff to promote a whole school approach to wellbeing, was another key recommendation by the participants. The study concludes with recommendations for practice and areas for further research in view of the study's limitations.

Keywords: *wellbeing, whole school approach, secondary schools, Senior Leadership Team*

Dedication

Every challenging work needs self-efforts as well as guidance and support of others
especially those close to our heart.

My humble effort I dedicate to my sweet and loving

PARENTS

Michael & Jane

&

HUSBAND

Frankie,

whose love, affection and encouragement
made me able to get such success and honour.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Context

Wellbeing is a core global issue, with governments and international organisations worldwide recognising its importance and making efforts to achieve and sustain higher levels of this desirable condition (McGillivray, 2007). Since mental health and wellbeing are major aspects of a good quality of life, they have been specifically included as one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (National Health Strategy, 2018). Happiness, social connectedness, personal security, health status and other non-monetary factors are among the elements which improve wellbeing (Ashton & Jones, 2013). Wellbeing is not certainly bound by income; rather, the things that determine wellbeing are a person's perceptions of how well they are doing in life, their satisfaction with material possessions, and their relationships that allow them to achieve their goals (ibid, 2013). Basically, wellbeing refers to happiness, satisfaction, and contentment based on optimal functioning. This does not imply a perfect function, but how one reacts to one's life events (McDowell, 2010).

Wellbeing is linked to a wide range of protective and risk factors (DES, 2019). Discrimination, poverty, oppression and inequality have been identified as significant risk factors within society. They create an increase in the vulnerability of the person and a decrease in their wellbeing (WHO, 2014). On the other hand, a society which promotes the values of fairness, equality, justice, respect and solidarity for differences is seen as a major protective factor in the development of wellbeing. Other protective factors that support the success of one's wellbeing and improve one's capacity when dealing with very difficult situations, are one's competencies and personal skills, the affective ties one has with family, the presence of supportive relationships, support networks and safe communities (DES, HSE & DOH, 2013). This view is supported by Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development and offers a broad system-based understanding of wellbeing. It shows how important it is for individuals to build healthy and supportive relationships within the social environment and the wider community. This model establishes that to be human is to be social and that wellbeing is always recognised in a community (DES, 2019). Therefore, wellbeing and mental

health are “influenced not only by individual attributes, but also by the social circumstances in which persons find themselves and the environment in which they live; these determinants interact with each other dynamically” (WHO, 2010, p. 2), and may protect or threaten one’s wellbeing and mental health.

1.2 Wellbeing promotion and protection

Enhancing the wellbeing of the whole school community is increasingly becoming a priority for schools. It is now considered as a primary goal in children’s education (Easton et al., 2016). International trends show that half of all mental disorders start before the age of 14 (WHO, 2013). In England, approximately 10% of adolescents experience mental health problems at any given moment (Meltzer, Gatward, Goodman & Ford, 2000). A national study reported by Cefai et al. (2008) found that about 10% of the Maltese student population experiences social, emotional and/or behavioural problems. A recent study from the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children Study (HBSC) shows that throughout all the ages surveyed, the percentage of boys and girls in Malta who report either feeling low or feeling nervous is higher than the average among other countries (WHO, 2016). On the other hand, many educators are struggling in their teaching profession and they are among those professionals with the highest levels of job stress and burnout across many countries (National Foundation for Educational Research, 2019; Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). Research shows that 1 in 4 new educators are choosing to leave the profession within the first five years of teaching (Marshall, 2013) and about 40% of experienced educators are experiencing high levels of occupational stress (Milburn, 2011). The extent of teacher stress in Malta is reported to be similar to the global picture (MEDE, 2019).

The promotion of the wellbeing of every school member is a shared community responsibility (DES, 2019), and schools play an important role in this area by providing opportunities to improve wellbeing (Jamstho, 2015). “Just as good health and nutrition in the prenatal period and early years lay the foundation for a healthy life course, the learning and social skills we acquire at a young age provide the basis for later development and support a strong national polity and economy” (Clark et al., 2020, p. 605). Schools need to be a safe environment where every school member feels supported and protected in order to cope with their difficulties.

The report *A future for the world's children* by the WHO-UNICEF-Lancet Commission (2020) clearly states that “Early investments in children’s health, education, and development have benefits that compound throughout the child’s lifetime, for their future children, and society as a whole” (p. 605). The report placed Malta 18th in the world with regards to children’s wellbeing.

One of the prescriptions of The Malta Education Act (2018) is to “provide guidance, monitoring, inspection, evaluation and reporting on student well-being in full respect of the character, identity and autonomy of the school” (p. 1235). The National Curriculum Framework for All (2012) states that schools should “develop individual strategies which help them (students) to cope with new challenges, become autonomous, self-regulating and self-determining individuals who make progress, overcome difficulties and feel satisfied with their endeavours” (p. 48). This is particularly more pertinent in Malta, a small nation whose economy depends on human resources. Hence schools are responsible for promoting student wellbeing that will enable them to work productively in future. The Teachers’ Code of Ethics and Practice for Maltese teachers also mentions the responsibility that schools have in promoting student wellbeing (MEDE, 2012). Recently the Minister for Education declared that “educators make crucial contributions to the development and well-being of children and youth” (Bonnici, 2020). The Ministry for Education and Employment (2019) recently launched a policy to promote and enhance wellbeing across educators through the development of a proactive and caring culture. It involves the use of effective leadership and management that takes care to promote wellbeing initiatives and provide access to professional support when needed. In this way, educators will be able to perform and function well at their workplace. The focus of this study as will be mentioned further below is on how school leaders can create a school and classroom environment that promotes student and staff wellbeing by means of a whole school approach.

1.3 Aims and objectives of the study

The purpose of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the views of a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in a secondary school on how to tackle mental health and wellbeing in their school community through a whole school approach. This will entail factors such as the

school climate and ethos, curriculum, staff support and training, and communication with parents, among others.

More specifically, the study seeks to understand to what extent the Senior Leadership Team members are aware of, and give importance to student and staff wellbeing. It will examine the ways the SLT members seek to promote these goals at curricular and organisational levels. The study will also identify the types of individual support given by the SLT in relation to the wellbeing of students and staff as well as identify contexts and opportunities when this can come about.

The specific research questions of the study thus can be listed as follows:

- How does the SLT in a secondary school perceive its role in addressing the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school community?
- How much is the SLT aware of, and gives importance to, the student and staff wellbeing?
- How does it seek to promote the mental health and wellbeing of both students and staff at curricular and organisational levels?
- What kind of opportunities and support does it provide in this regard?

In this present study these questions are explored through a qualitative methodology as the researcher considered it a suitable approach to research the experiences of SLT members in promoting wellbeing. The research employed an interpretivist approach. The current study seeks to discover the underlying meaning of events, activities and attitudes pertaining to a whole school approach to wellbeing. It tries to accomplish this by analysing the perceptions of different SLT members towards this topic, conscious of the complexity of the issue of wellbeing and the context in which it operates.

Qualitative research allows the researcher to be the active participant or “instrument” and help the researcher focus on the meaning and experiences of participants. Semi-structured interviews were the main research tool. The interviewees were seven SLT members recruited from two Maltese state secondary schools. The semi-structured interviews helped the

researcher to explore the SLT's perceptions in detail, and provided in-depth information which can only be discovered from one-to-one approaches. The interviews allowed the researcher to explore issues at greater depth and thus clarify and elaborate on the responses of the participants. Questionnaires and surveys – which were another option – appear superficial in comparison. Given the research question, thematic analysis was used to discover emerging themes and gain insights from the data gathered.

1.4 Motivation of the study

Before choosing this area of wellbeing and embarking upon my study I had decided that I wanted to carry out my research in a subject that is close to my heart. Throughout my past ten years of teaching, there were periods where I experienced vulnerability and the need of support as a classroom teacher. Due to the complex and ever-changing world, students and teachers are facing challenges and problems in various aspects of their life. Mental health problems are a growing phenomenon in our schools: about 20% of schoolchildren worldwide experience mental health problems annually and refer to mental health services (WHO, 2013). On the other hand, WHO (2019) acknowledges teacher burnout as a serious condition that requires proper consideration. These issues in my profession motivated me to focus my attention on wellbeing in school.

My interest in a whole school approach to wellbeing comes from the fact that the literature indicates that this approach is the most beneficial for schools (DfE, 2016; DES, 2019; Weare & Nind, 2011). A whole school approach helps to enhance staff and student wellbeing, and has a beneficial impact on the prevention and reduction of mental health problems across school populations (Weare, 2015). It underlines the need to safeguard and promote both student and teacher wellbeing and to be resilient in the face of uncertainties and challenges. Although presently I am operating in the rank of a secondary school teacher, I am particularly interested in the role of the SLT in the promotion of mental health and wellbeing as a result of my Masters studies in Educational Leadership and Management. School leaders are considered to be key stakeholders in the implementation and successful delivery of wellbeing in schools. They can actively “promote and encourage a broader vision of education in their

schools, providing adequate guidance and support for school staff to exercise their role as effective and caring educators” (Cefai & Cavioni, 2014 as cited in Cefai et al., 2018, p. 74).

This research should prove useful to me in my practice as a teacher. It should help me address student wellbeing by implementing effective pedagogy and assessment, empowering students to have a voice and creating a protective environment in the classroom which is ultimately imperative for learning to take place. On the other hand, it will also help me to engage in a collaborative learning environment with my colleagues and build a healthy staff relationship which is fundamental to a teacher’s wellbeing. Lastly, if the opportunity to be part of a senior leadership team comes my way, this research will be useful as it should provide insights into effective policies and practices in the promotion of wellbeing at school. This area of study should also prove useful for educators and heads of school in general as it will shed light on effective strategies in promoting student and staff wellbeing at secondary school level and on the whole school approach in particular.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the background to the study, including the methodology, the motivation, the rationale and the research questions. The next chapter presents a review of the literature by drawing on the relevant research on what enhances the wellbeing of the school community, the role of SLTs in supporting the needs of students and teachers and the implementation of a whole school approach to wellbeing. Chapter 3 describes the methodology adopted to conduct this study, while Chapter 4 presents the findings and their analysis in terms of the major themes and subthemes which emerged from the data. Finally, Chapter 5 gives a summary of the results, the limitations of the study, areas for further study and the implications for practice.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

This chapter consists of three sections that discuss the senior leadership's role in a whole school approach to wellbeing. The first section defines the terms *wellbeing* and *student and teacher wellbeing* and the importance of wellbeing in school with particular reference to secondary schools. The second section discusses a whole school approach to wellbeing; the role of school leaders in its implementation; and the opportunities and challenges associated with it. The third section discusses how school leaders can enhance student and teacher wellbeing at school.

2.1 Defining wellbeing

In the 21st century, there has been a substantial increase in the importance given to wellbeing but defining the term *wellbeing* has turned out to be complicated. *Wellbeing* was initially defined as “a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 1947, p. 1). Bradburn (1969) also attempted to define the term *wellbeing*, exploring how people dealt with challenges in their daily life. The meaning we use today goes back to Rogers (1961), who argued that each person strived towards becoming a “fully functioning person”, exposed to experience, trusts and believes in himself and lives a realist life (Dodge, Daly, Huyton & Sanders, 2012, p. 224). Shah and Marks (2004, as cited in Dodge et al., 2012, p. 225) refer to “well-being as more than just happiness”; they maintain that it concerns being fulfilled and developed as a person, and being able to contribute to the community. WHO (2001) defined wellbeing as “a state in which every individual realizes his or her potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a positive contribution to his or her community” (p. 1).

O'Brien and O'Shea (2016) noted that definitions of wellbeing are linked to different fields of sociology, philosophy and psychology and how these work in a multi-dimensional way. Indeed, the multi-dimensional nature of wellbeing is clearly elicited in this definition by WHO (2001, as cited in DES, 2019):

Wellbeing is present when a person realises their potential, is resilient in dealing with the normal stresses of their life, takes care of their physical wellbeing and has a sense of purpose, connection and belonging to a wider community. It is a fluid way of being and needs nurturing throughout life. (p. 10)

It is evident that wellbeing is made up of many interrelated elements such as resilience and respect, as well as being appreciated, active, mindful and connected (NCCA, 2017). Wellbeing is also described as “the capacity to respond effectively to adversity, drawing on internal resources such as self-regulation, optimism and mental agility, as well as external ones such as strong relationships,” that enable us to cope with difficulties and setbacks (Spiteri, 2018, p. 300). Dodge et al. (2012) believe that it is “the balance point between an individual’s resource pool and the challenges faced” (p. 230).

2.1.1 Student wellbeing

A progressive change in both research and practice away from the concept of ‘student welfare’ to that of ‘student wellbeing’ has occurred over the last twenty years. However, scholarly articles that include a definition of ‘student wellbeing’ are few. Some definitions particularly focus on student wellbeing versus general wellbeing. Fraillon (2004) defines student wellbeing as “the degree to which a student is functioning effectively in the school community” (p. 6). Another definition which combines ‘wellbeing’ and ‘student wellbeing’ is by Noble et al. (2008) who argue that student wellbeing consists of “a sustainable state of positive mood and attitude, resilience, and satisfaction with self, relationships and experiences at school” (p. 21). Student wellbeing is basically seen as an outcome of “the degree to which a student demonstrates effective academic, and social and emotional functioning and appropriate behaviour at school” (p. 22). A definition provided by the DEEWR report (2008) combines the most relevant and common hallmarks that appear in most definitions of wellbeing: satisfaction with relationships; resilience; positive affect and other dimensions of one’s life. These definitions perceive student wellbeing as a combination of academic achievement and appropriate social and emotional behaviour.

2.1.2 Teacher wellbeing

Wellbeing has appeared for some time in educational literature with reference to student wellbeing but lately it showed up in relation to teacher wellbeing as well. Its importance has flourished significantly in the 21st century particularly due to the fact teacher attrition is becoming a concern in educational environments (Acton & Glasgow, 2015). Teacher wellbeing is usually considered in deficit terms and from the perspective of models of burnout, mainly in the context of the reduction of stress in schools and the consequences of absenteeism (Hastings & Bham, 2003). Roffey (2012) stated that teacher wellbeing is related to how stress leads to teacher burn-out and problems with retention, which have become serious concerns (Galton & McBeath, 2008; Johnson, Berg & Donaldson, 2005; Stoel & Thant, 2002).

Acton and Glasgow (2015) define *teacher wellbeing* as “an individual sense of personal professional fulfilment, satisfaction, purposefulness and happiness, constructed in a collaborative process with colleagues and students” (p. 101). On their part, Aelterman, Engels, Van Petegem and Verhaeghe (2007) explain teacher wellbeing as “a positive emotional state, which is the result of harmony between the sum of specific environmental factors on the one hand, and the personal needs and expectations of teachers on the other hand” (p. 286). Teacher wellbeing creates a stable environment in the whole school community which is pivotal for a whole school approach to wellbeing. CESE (2014) argued that teaching wellbeing is strongly connected to their work performance and hence teachers are considered an important factor in student success and educational achievement.

2.1.3 Prioritising wellbeing in secondary schools

Prioritising wellbeing in secondary schools is crucial for teachers and students. Secondary school teachers are reported to have higher levels of stress than those working in other sectors (Education Support Partnership, 2018). Secondary-school students are in their adolescence, a progressive transition from childhood into adulthood, considered by many as a turbulent, transitional period of life. During this stage teenagers experience various complex changes in their life and it is essential that educators working with these cohorts

identify these problems (Morgan, 2016). It is through successful transitions, as Viner (2013) argues, that students develop good health and wellbeing in their life and become productive in society as adults.

Nowadays schools should teach, promote and foster wellbeing competencies such as self-awareness, relationship skills, social awareness, self-management and responsible decision-making (DePaoli, Atwell & Bridgeland, 2017). Research shows that emphasising student wellbeing in schools is crucial for two main reasons. First, schools will not focus on academic performance but also on the wellbeing of the 'whole child'. Secondly, students who have higher levels of wellbeing tend to have better cognitive outcomes at school (Social Policy Research Centre, 2010). The school should be "a place which develops the 'whole child', who should leave school with a balanced set of cognitive, social and emotional skills to face the challenges of the 21st century" (OECD, 2014, as cited in DES, 2019, p. 12). Viner (2013) argues that the promotion of wellbeing in schools should be a critical part of the 'core business' to improve achievement and enhance opportunities in future life. Wellbeing is fundamental especially in secondary schools because it helps students thrive both academically and in adult life (Public Health England, 2015). This might apply especially to secondary students who opt to enter the world of work soon after the end of compulsory education. School wellbeing thus impacts wellbeing in adulthood as well (Chanfreaux et al., 2013).

Eckersley (2005) argues that schools should be committed to help students be resilient when facing challenges in their lives. Their aim should be to produce healthier, happier and successful persons who can flourish as individuals. Students with high levels of wellbeing tend to build more significant and positive social interactions, are good at problem-solving, experience less stress, enjoy better physical and mental health, are more responsible and benevolent, possess qualities like generosity and forgiveness and achieve and perform better in their work (Australian Catholic University and Erebus International, 2008; Frisch, 2000; Veenhoven, 1989). Suldo and Huebner (2006) stated that students with very high life satisfaction had high self-esteem, low levels of neuroticism and the lowest level of behavioural and emotional problems. They also showed less psychological stress and depression. Linley et al. (2009) specified that students who were content in life reported academic achievement, life meaning, school satisfaction, happiness, academic aspirations,

healthy lifestyles and peer relationships throughout their lives. Other research shows that student wellbeing is closely linked with sincere relationship with families and friends (Man, 1991), high self-esteem (Huebner, 1991), empowerment and participation in extracurricular activities (Gilman, 2001) and a healthy lifestyle (Zullig et al., 2005).

Coleman (2009) argues that it “hardly makes sense to tackle the emotional health of the pupils in a school without attending to the emotional health of the staff. Schools are communities containing not just children and young people, but adults as well” (p. 290). Although throughout the years, especially this century, there have been ever-growing demands on teachers, these are not being met by any investment in teacher wellbeing (Schembri, 2018). This tallies with Cefai et al. (2015), who point out that “proposals to enhance student resilience need to be accompanied by parallel initiatives to support teachers’ own resilience” (p. 37).

Dodge et al. (2012) found that people with a good level of wellbeing can proactively manage stress, rather than suffer from it. For instance, educators who have a higher level of wellbeing tend to be attentive at work, happy and content in their life, feel generally healthy and be resilient to any obstacles and challenging situations that occur especially at their workplace. When teaching staff enjoy wellbeing in different areas, they are more engaged in school activities, and more gratified with their life, jobs and health (Kern et al., 2014). In addition, Calabrese (1987) stated that teachers with lower levels of stress are associated with higher attainment scores and improved teaching effectiveness.

Research shows that teacher wellbeing is connected to student wellbeing and these goals should be at the forefront of education. Student wellbeing can be supported by various teacher-friendly practices, such as giving value to teachers’ psychological wellbeing, building a good school environment, and providing adequate training (McCallum et al., 2017; Roffey, 2012). Further research shows that teachers with high levels of wellbeing are more likely to help children with mental health challenges (Sisask et al., 2014). Roffey (2012) states that students need teachers that are open to different practices and thus be effective in their teaching. Sisask et al. (2014) argue that a whole school approach to mental health promotion will flourish if all these suggestions are in place.

2.2 Defining a whole school approach to wellbeing

A whole school approach to wellbeing involves all school stakeholders in building and creating a positive culture in which each and every individual feels a sense of belonging (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013). The school is committed to address the needs of the entire school community. This approach “involves all the school members (students, staff, parents, and community); works across all the areas of school life (curriculum, culture, teaching practices, policies and procedures); engages all key learning areas and all year levels; and uses multiple (evidence-based) strategies that have a unifying purpose, and reflect a common set of values” (CEOM, 2008, as cited in Jamstho, 2015, p. 5). A whole school approach to wellbeing should be part and parcel of the school’s mission.

2.2.1 The role of the school leadership

The quality of of the school management and leadership is an important pillar in the promotion of a whole school approach to wellbeing (Ofsted, 2015). School leaders play a major part in meeting teacher and student needs and promoting their wellbeing (Public Health England, 2015). A supportive senior leadership team is more likely to implement effectively initiatives which promote emotional health and wellbeing. Its aim is to provide everyone with clear policies and guidelines to safeguard their own as well as others’ wellbeing. The support that the SLT provides within a positive ethos helps teachers and students overcome the various challenges encountered in teaching and learning (Public Health England, 2015). Strong leadership can ensure social and emotional wellbeing and is gained through effective policies, activities, plans and systems (NICE, 2009) and through constant monitoring and evaluation of these initiatives (NICE, 2008). Cefai et al. (2018) argue that a safe environment helps both teachers and students to nurture a sense of belonging and of self-efficacy.

School leaders can develop and support a comprehensive approach to students’ mental health and wellbeing in various ways (Whitley, 2010). Through their policies, management and relationships they can inspire the whole school community in promoting each other’s wellbeing and establish wellbeing as a key priority area at the school (Cefai & Cavioni, 2014).

Through their democratic leadership they can also give both staff and students a voice in the decisions being taken at the school (Cefai et al., 2018). Most often school leaders deal with several students' mental health and wellbeing issues such as bullying, school violence, low achievement and absences on a regularly basis (Adelman & Taylor, 2000). Thus, it is essential that leaders provide ongoing commitment aiming to increase access to the appropriate support services according to the students' needs. Moreover, the role of the school leader is also to coordinate and facilitate intervention programs for vulnerable and at risk students as well as to establish or enhance referral processes (Pervin & Gitterman, 2008). As O'Brien, Weissberg and Shriver (2003, as cited in Whitley, 2010) stated, it is the school leaders who "need to respond to these diverse challenges in a coherent and effective way that recognizes the reality of children and schools, as well as of the society in which we now live" (p. 62).

Research shows that teachers' sense of wellbeing is likely to be affected by the SLT and the schools' organisational climate (Dworkin, 1987). Teachers are usually less stressed and improve their wellbeing if they are actively supported and assisted by SLT members. Schembri (2018) reported that when students knew that their teachers were helped by their school leaders it led to an improvement in student behaviour and wellbeing. The SLT thus is pivotal in the promotion of emotional health and wellbeing and is an integral part of a multidisciplinary team which supports students, staff and parents (Public Health England, 2015).

School leaders are considered an important factor to sustain teaching practices that promote a teacher's wellbeing and foster good learning and teaching conditions (McCallum & Price, 2010). Long et al. (2012, as cited in McCallum et al., 2017) found that school leaders have a strong influence on teacher wellbeing, in particular through school ethos, induction of new teachers, instructional leadership and the prioritisation of meeting school needs. According to the Education and Health Committees (2017):

To achieve the whole-school approach, senior leadership must embed well-being throughout their provision and culture. Doing so will have implications for staffing and training and the balance of provision and delivery of subjects across the curriculum to allow more time to focus on well-being and building resilience. (p. 7)

2.2.2 Effectiveness and challenges of a whole school approach

A whole school approach to wellbeing is found to be effective especially when tackling student mental health and wellbeing because it takes into consideration the influences of every member of the community (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013). When all stakeholders unite and work collaboratively in the best interest of students their wellbeing is promoted. Wells, Barlow and Stewart-Brown (2003) found that the whole school approach is vital because it involves everyone in the school community, and helps to change the school culture and environment. Jamstho (2015) states that this approach is one in which “wellbeing is a shared responsibility of all stakeholders, and sees wellbeing as a function of interaction between individual and environmental factors” (p. 82).

Research suggests that a comprehensive ‘whole-school’ approach should be adopted by schools to promote their students’ social and emotional wellbeing (NICE, 2008; 2009). This approach has been shown to be effective in bringing about and sustaining health benefits because it encompasses all life-school aspects beyond teaching and learning (DfE, 2014). This approach involves several factors such as the school’s attitudes and values, the leadership role, the students’ voice, the physical and social environment, the curriculum, student needs, skills and knowledge, proactive engagement and collaboration with families and support services, and ongoing professional development for educators (Howard, Burton, Levermore & Barrell, 2017; Public Health England, 2014). St Leger et al. (2010) reported that school programmes that are strategic, holistic and integrated are likely to develop better education and health outcomes than those which are informative and class-based. Similarly, Weare and Nind’s (2011) meta-analysis concludes that a whole school approach to wellbeing is more effective than interventions that focus on only one aspect.

Evidence shows that the most practical and beneficial approach to the promotion of wellbeing at schools is a multi-component, preventative, whole school approach with interventions at both general and targeted levels (DES, 2019). Whole school and targeted elements of mental health promotion should be well balanced because it is a key issue in school communities. Other studies show that a whole school approach to wellbeing requires clearly targeted

interventions for students who suffer mental health problems and/or are 'at risk' (Cefai & Askell-Williams, 2017; Greenberg, 2010; Merrell & Gueldner, 2010).

Wyn et al. (2000) opine that it is useful to develop whole school settings to wellbeing because they collaboratively help to actively engage each school individual and bond him or her to the wider community. Studies revealed that investing in the ability of teachers not only increased their empowerment and wellbeing but also affected positively their achievement (Hargreaves et al., 2018).

A whole school approach to wellbeing has been found to generate a vast of array of social and educational benefits for students such as improved learning, increased inclusion, improved behaviour, increased social capital, greater social cohesion, and improvements to mental health (Weare & Gray, 2003). It has also been found to make a positive impact on the wellbeing of school staff themselves (Hargreaves et al., 2018). However, some studies revealed a number of barriers and challenges to the implementation of this approach (Jamstho, 2015). These include achieving the active participation and commitment of all stakeholders, the allocation of time and resources (Hazell, 2005; Khan, Bedford & Williams, 2011; Orpinas et al., 2000; Wyn et al., 2000), finding space in a crowded curriculum (Ainley et al., 2006; Askell-Williams et al., 2005), conflicting attitudes of teachers (Ainley et al., 2006), and the lack of knowledge and training in implementing interventions (Khan, Bedford & Williams, 2011). Stirling and Emery (2016) report that when too much emphasis is put on mental health and wellbeing in schools, these can be seen as a distraction for teachers particularly when pressured by the curriculum, budgets and expected standards. Wyn et al. (2000) warn that it is very challenging to implement a whole school approach because it involves going beyond the delivery of classroom programmes to address the school environment and ethos, practices and policy. This approach requires increased collaborations with parents, support services and the wider community, which entail additional resources, energy and time.

2.3 Enabling wellbeing initiatives

Initiatives and conditions that promote wellbeing in an educational setting range from a positive school climate with a sense of belonging, attachment and bonding to school; effective classroom management that relies on positive behaviour strategies (DES, 2019); and the development of competencies such as relationship skills, self-awareness, self-management, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2015; DePaoli et al., 2017). Others include the celebration of success stories and achievements; the establishment of proactive links and procedures that support students and their families when difficulties arise; and the provision of inservice teacher training to develop skills when teachers experience stress at work (DES, 2019). Weare (2001; 2002) noted that clarity of structures, boundaries and relationship and encouragement of autonomy, students and staff participation and empowerment in decision making as well as supportive relationship are other factors that promote wellbeing in schools. Cefai and Askell-Williams (2017) argued that the school culture and policies, relationships, classroom practices and curriculum help the school to develop mental health and wellbeing.

The sections below discuss a number of initiatives that, as some studies suggest, schools can implement to promote wellbeing as part of a whole school approach (NCCA, 2017). These are not unique and there are clearly areas of overlap. These are:

- School Culture and Environment;
- Curriculum, Teaching and Learning;
- Relationships;
- Training and Support.

2.3.1 School culture and environment

Staff and students spend most of their days at schools and it was found that the physical, social and emotional environment affects their physical, emotional and mental health, wellbeing, achievement and attainment (Jamal et al., 2013; McCallum & Price, 2016; Price & McCallum, 2015; Public Health England, 2014). “The quality and character of school life” (p. 182) which Cohen et al. (2009) explain is a considered an important stimulus of the whole school climate as it is based on Bronfenbrenner’s (1992) ecological systems model.

A school's ethos is inclusive when everyone's voice is acknowledged at school, cooperation between school members is considered as a norm, and staff members take a collegiate approach towards each other (Cole, 2015). Moreover, Ofsted (2015) suggests that schools should provide an environment where students feel safe and secure especially from physical and emotional harm; they should feel that they are valued as individuals, and where their interests and fears are supported in all ways. Similarly, Weare (2015) opines that a positive and supportive school ethos allows one to feel accepted and respected, and facilitates strong connections between school members and the school setting. All these produce fewer conflicts, more respectful communications, an environment that is responsive to school needs, and enable one to express one's emotions freely.

Bosworth and Judkins (2014) describe how a "safe, caring, participatory, and responsive school climate fosters attachment and bonding to school" (p. 301). A key element of a successful promotion of wellbeing in schools is the quality of the school's psychological environment and connectedness (Viner et al., 2012). A school community which provides a pleasant and responsive environment, and works collaboratively with all school members – students, staff, families and the local community – is more likely to create a sense of belonging and inclusion among its members (Slee, Dix & Askill-Williams, 2011).

Research shows that there is a strong relationship between wellbeing and a sense of belonging to school. When students build a positive student-teacher relationship and have a sense of belonging to school result to students liking school (Cemalcilar, 2010). The importance of feeling connected to school, when students feel that it matters that they are there, has a great influence on both academic and health performances (Blum, 2005; Rowe, Stewart & Patterson, 2007). The engagement level that students experience at school (Wang & Holcombe, 2010) and when they like school (Riglina et al., 2013) is greatly linked with their educational achievement. School connectedness is also associated with higher levels of school achievement, an increase in school engagement, school completion, lower rates of health-risk behaviour, and a reduction in anti-social or disruptive behaviours (Australian Catholic University and Erebus International, 2008).

When students feel safe and experience less bullying at school, school belonging is higher (Goldweber, Evian Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2013). Other positive factors that bring these results are an affirmative classroom management, lenient disciplinary measures and more opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities (Clea, McNeely, Nonnemaker & Blum, 2002; Weissberg & O'Brien, 2004). Effective school and classroom strategies include the means of support and interest teachers offer students, the empowerment of the students' voice, a shared vision of standards and policies, and the provision of school services to students by actively engagement with them (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009).

The school building and its facilities which form the physical school environment should ensure that all students are safe from harm and injury (NSW DEC, 2015). The WHO (1993) highlighted the importance of the physical environment to the wellbeing of the school community. The Malta Education Act (2018) also delineates that the physical environment and resources at school promote students' wellbeing and are conducive to learning. Research shows that when the school environment is not attractive, school members harbour negative attitudes towards themselves (Jago & Tanner, 1999). Similarly, McCallum et al. (2017) reported that the physical space can influence a new teacher's role and social networking into the school culture.

Another important feature of a 'safe school' is the sense of safety students feel and the knowledge that they are always supported emotionally if any problems arise (NSW DEC, 2015). Poor educational attainment and bullying are considered among the main causes that impact negatively on student wellbeing (Brooks, 2013). Secondary schools especially must provide a nontoxic environment where the threat of bullying is reduced, positive behaviours are promoted and the self-efficacy and self-worth are nurtured and encouraged (NICE, 2009; Ofsted, 2015). When educators use punishments to control behaviour in their classroom, this results in a lower level of students' wellbeing (Green et al., 2005). Youngblade et al. (2007) found that students who have a sense of security in the school environment experience better levels of social competence.

2.3.2 Curriculum, teaching and learning

The promotion of wellbeing requires attention to the process of teaching and learning (DES, 2019). Students spend hours and hours in the classroom and thus their teaching and learning affects their wellbeing. The role of educators is to provide effective learning but also to promote the students' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development (Ofsted, 2015). Teaching and learning must be differentiated, engaging, inclusive, democratic; it should offer learners chances to flourish and foster expectations of high achievement (DES, 2019). Such teaching and learning practices promote both academic and social and emotional learning.

The National Curriculum Framework for All (2012) states that schools should equip students with “the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that make them capable of sustaining their life chances in the changing world of employment, and to become actively engaged citizens” (p. 33). Educators should recognise that the connection between wellbeing and educational achievement is vital because it requires a change of attitude that puts wellbeing at the heart of the curriculum (Carter-Davies, 2015).

School curricula, especially those of secondary schools, need to be based on the promotion of successful relationships and positive behaviours and help to eliminate bullying and challenging behaviour. This can be achieved by incorporating emotional and social competence development within all curriculum strands (DePaoli et al., 2017). Schools should inculcate among students skills such as problem-solving, relationships collaborative working, self-awareness, conflict management and resolution, motivation, and the understanding and management of feelings (NICE, 2009). These help to equip students with the attitudes, understanding, knowledge and practical skills they need to live productively, safely, responsibly and healthily (Brooks, 2013). Giordmaina (2000) explains that Personal Social and Careers Development (PSCD) is a “fundamental aspect of the education of the whole child. It is essentially concerned with the development of lifeskills. All aspects of the child's experience at home, in school and out of school contribute to personal and social development” (p. 192). Modelling, active listening, being empathic and supportive, confronting, as well as self-disclosing are among the skills offered during PSCD lessons, which help in the development of holistic individuals (Muscat, 2006).

Although social and emotional skills are particularly developed through subjects like PSCD, they are also in play in other educational modules (Public Health England, 2015). Weare (2015) proposes that “skills are not acquired by osmosis, they involve the school taking a conscious, planned and explicit approach through the taught curriculum” (p. 10). Effective pedagogy for mental health and wellbeing includes an inclusive, experiential, student-centred and life skills-based approach by which wellbeing is addressed across all the subjects of the curriculum. Cefai and Askell Williams (2017) suggest that educators should ensure that each student is placed at the core of their teaching and learning process while empowering and raising their students’ voice. This voice gives students ownership and responsibility for their learning, “which becomes an empowering tool for self-determination and agency, building blocks of mental health and wellbeing” (Fielding, 2010; Kroeger et al., 2004, as cited in Cefai & Askell Williams, 2017, p. 19).

Social and emotional skills development should also be provided and reinforced through extra-curricular activities (NICE, 2009). When students participate in physical activities frequently, they benefit not only from advantages in terms of socialization and health (WHO, 2004) but also psychological wellbeing (Parfitt & Eston, 2005). In other studies participation in sports activities is connected with the development of various positive individual qualities such as self-confidence and self-esteem and a decrease in social anxiety among students (Dimech & Seiler, 2011). Clea, McNeely, Nonnemaker and Blum (2002) state that participation in physical activity establishes school connectedness and satisfaction and help students keep healthy.

2.3.3 Relationships and partnerships

2.3.3.1 Student-teacher relationships

Cefai and Askell Williams (2017) report that healthy relationships between students and teachers are main factors in the promotion of wellbeing in schools. The relationship that teachers develop with students is a key influence on students’ wellbeing. A welcoming school environment facilitates student-teacher relationships (Mikulincer & Florian, 1998). Ryan and

Deci (2001) argue that relationships must be based on trust, care and mutual support. If educators show care, are active listeners, empathic and understandable, students feel at ease especially in difficult times. The feeling of adult companionship is well known to help students' wellbeing, especially when they need someone to refer to (Kunnari & Lipponen, 2010). According to Bowlby's Attachment Theory (1969), educators that have deep relationships with their students are considered as a "secure base" that supports and helps them overcome educational problems (Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, 2011). Effective strategies that affect student-teacher relationships are care and respect, cooperation and teaching practices that meet the students' needs (Kunnari & Lipponen, 2010). Further research shows that having access to 'one good adult' in school could be the teacher's role in student wellbeing as it is considered a key factor in stressful periods (OECD, 2017).

Investment in student-teacher relationships has positive, fundamental and long lasting repercussions in students' educational and social improvements (Murray-Harvey, 2010; Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, 2011). A relationship built on compassion, empathy and responsiveness helps students to develop their own self-regulatory skills, positive socio-emotional competences, and enhance their connectedness to school (McNeely, Nonnemaker & Blum, 2000). This results in higher levels of achievement (Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, 2011). Marzano (2003) reported that, on average, teachers who had good relationships with their students had significantly fewer discipline and related problems than their colleagues who did not. Students are more likely to obey classroom rules and norms (Wentzel, 1996) and less likely to perform in an appropriate manner (Wong & Dornbusch, 2000) when they believe that teachers care about them. Students' social relationships and interactions (Flook, Repetti & Ullman, 2005) and poor student-teacher relationships (Cefai, 2007) are linked to low academic achievement. Teachers who build close relationships with students were found to have students who were more focused and engaged in learning, more cooperative, appeared more self-directed and were less likely to avoid school (Decker, Dona & Christenson, 2007; Klem & Connell, 2004).

Johnson et al. (2012) stated that positive student-teacher relationships not only helped students significantly; they also fostered teachers' wellbeing and resilience. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) report that educators who suffer emotional and physical exhaustion

struggle to sustain good relationships with students. On the other hand, being able to sustain high-quality relationships with students sustains teachers' sense of competence and wellbeing (Rimm-Kaufman & Hamre, 2010).

2.3.3.2 SLT and staff relationships

Educators are engaged in various daily interpersonal contacts (Holmes, 2005) and it is through the performance of these contacts that they either foster a sense of wellbeing or sustain a toxic working environment. Effective initiatives to sustain teacher wellbeing include the establishment of a positive school climate in which teachers and school leaders are able to build collegial and professional relationships (Acton & Glasgow, 2015). Retallick and Butt (2004, as cited in Acton & Glasgow, 2015) opine that “workplace relationships based on collegiality and trust rather than on hierarchy” (p. 106) are crucial for the establishment of a positive school climate and sense of community. School leaders play an important role in building this positive climate, and they should show interest in engaging in open, two-way communication, which requires a ‘horizontal’ rather than a ‘vertical’ approach, “where power and expertise are shared” (Butt & Retallick, 2002, as cited in Acton & Glasgow, p. 106).

Positive relationships that teachers build with their colleagues and with school leaders can have a positive impact on teachers' sense of wellbeing. Research shows that supportive communication is a way of increasing job satisfaction of teachers (De Nobile, 2008). This includes horizontal assistance between teaching staff and positive communication with the SLT (De Nobile & McCormick, 2008; Dinham & Scott, 2000). Roffey (2012) stated that the hallmarks of the teaching profession that impact a teacher's wellbeing were based on the quality of staff relationships. They demonstrate how educators perform together and their ability to cope well in the wide variety of work stresses. Research shows that when teachers increase their communication and collaboration, they are more likely to have the social support needed to reduce feelings of stress and to renew their energy (Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, 2011). All this enhances their sense of wellbeing (Acton & Glasgow, 2015; Day & Gu, 2007; Howard & Johnson, 2004). Staff collegiality, which refers to the quality of the relationships among teachers in a school, includes both the professional and social/emotional aspects of interactions at the workplace (Kelchtermans, 2006).

One useful strategy that promotes teacher wellbeing is to create collaborative opportunities to engage teachers (McCallum et al., 2017). Cefai and Askeff Williams (2017) give examples such as “team teaching, staff planning wellbeing curriculum and activities together in regular meetings, staff engaging in regular professional dialogue with the opportunity to make use and develop their strengths” (p. 7). Owen (2016) recommends having different supportive professional learning opportunities on an ongoing basis, which requires engagement with other teaching staff. These activities provide “challenging ideas to increase potential for success, gaining greater accomplishment through joint work and nurturing positive emotions and sharing of good feelings” (Owen, 2016, as cited in McCallum et al., 2017, p. 38). Soini et al. (2010, as cited in McCallum et al., 2017) argue that “the teacher community provides not only emotional support but a collaborative professional community that takes shared responsibility for pupils’ learning and growth as well as development of the whole school community” (p. 38).

School leaders play a substantial role in enhancing and supporting teacher wellbeing through staff relationships. Howard et al. (2017) argue that school leaders should build their school cultures on mutual respect and trust, supportive leadership, encourage teachers to participate in decision-making, boost their self-esteem and empowerment, and help them thrive during stressful moments. Other studies highlight the importance of the SLTs’ support of teacher learning and development, teacher motivation, as well as individual and collective resilience (Day et al., 2007; Day & Gu, 2010; Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris & Hopkins, 2006; OECD, 2005; Nieto, 2009). Teacher wellbeing is also influenced by recognition from leaders (Day et al., 2007; Day & Gu, 2010). A sense of wellbeing contributes to productive work and job satisfaction and, above all, to teachers’ positive influence on their students’ wellbeing and educational success (McCallum et al., 2017; Roffey, 2012). Teachers who feel they are capable of dealing with complex work issues and of building deep relationships with others are considered much better able to create better opportunities for their students to flourish (Brown, Jones, LaRusso & Aber, 2010).

2.3.3.3 School-family relationships

The family plays a key role in influencing students' emotional health and wellbeing (NICE, 2009; NICE, 2013; Stewart-Brown, 2006). A school-family relationship which is active, engaging and empowering helps educators reach their goals in wellbeing (Downey & Williams, 2010; Humphrey et al., 2010; Weare & Nind, 2011). Parents can offer schools their support in understanding students' needs (Weare, 2015). This relationship also helps "parents to deal with resistance resulting from anxiety, prejudice or lack of information, [and to] develop more positive attitudes" towards wellbeing. Parents should acknowledge the importance of such initiatives for both educational attainment and mental health and wellbeing. They could "take an active interest in developing their own wellbeing both for their children's sake [...] as well as their own education and wellbeing" (Cefai & Cavioni, 2016, as cited in Cefai & Askeff-Williams, 2017, p. 18). Schools need to take more personalised, empowering and culturally responsive approaches to engage parents and families (Bartolo & Cefai, 2017; Downes & Cefai, 2016).

The active participation of parents in schools encourages educators to listen and acknowledge their opinion. Parents should be kept fully informed in order to help them participate in immediate and future decisions taken on them and/or their children (DfE, 2016a). Research shows that when parents participate in an educational process such as students' learning activities or educational programmes that tackle their own needs, they are more likely to impact positively on students' learning outcomes (Flecha, 2015). The DfE (2016a) found that these collaborative relationships help to reduce student difficulties as well as enhance their emotional development. The school-family relationships along with support services and other professionals help families address issues such as bullying, school absenteeism and family matters that may hinder student learning and wellbeing. Parenting skills sessions and other wellbeing initiatives at school also help parents to become good role models for their children in self-awareness, self-management, relationships, and resilience (Public Health England, 2015).

2.3.3.4 Partnership with support professionals

Educators often face challenging tasks when dealing with student wellbeing especially when it comes to recognise students who are 'at risk' and therefore need targeted interventions. Partnership with support professionals is vital so that schools can offer a wide variety of support services according to the identified needs both within and beyond the school (DfE, 2016a). The role of the school has increasingly been recognized in the provision of targeted support and adequate service to those students who experience mental health and wellbeing problems (DfE, 2014; DfH & DoH, 2015). Such provisions include effective partnerships with external agencies and other providers (Ofsted, 2015). The National Health Strategy (2018) in Malta proposes that schools offer programmes for early identification and action with regards to emotional problems and addictions, self-harm as well as bullying and cyber-bullying. The support of trained staff in the provision of counselling and psychological services both within the school as well as through referrals to external agencies is of utmost important (Jamstho, 2015). Such support increases the students' chances of reaching their potential and of leading happy and healthy lives as adults (Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition, 2012).

2.3.4 Training and support

Another aspect of promoting a whole school approach to wellbeing is the investment in professional development of school staff and school leaders (Jamstho, 2015). School leaders and staff should be trained in taking a preventative approach, engaging in proactive leadership and reflective practice respectively (Freeman & Strong, 2004). DePaoli et al. (2017) argue that teachers need to be provided with training to be able to develop students' social and emotional competencies, as well as to be exposed to best practices in teaching and promoting social and emotional competences. Teachers who feel they are skilled in the implementation of social and emotional learning initiatives in the classroom show more confidence and fulfilment in their work (Oberle et al., 2016). They also present higher job satisfaction and lower levels of stress (Collie et al., 2012; McGilloway et al., 2014).

Educators should feel confident in different fields of their working practices and be able to recognise the specific areas where particular professional support is needed (Wyn et al., 2000). One of the actions proposed in Malta by the National Health Strategy (2018) is to provide training and skills for educators who are well placed to recognise behavioural changes and refer students for further support. Although it is important to have specialist personnel in supporting students with complex mental health needs, all teachers should be able to deliver basic forms of student support (Carter-Davies, 2015). Teachers thus need to receive training in understanding student development and behaviours at different developmental stages, such as adolescence, in secondary school, and in referring students to relevant support services either within the school itself or outside the school (Cole, 2015; DfE, 2016). Ongoing professional development should address staff needs in order to deal with the stress caused by rapid change, which can lead to mental health and emotional wellbeing issues (Howard et al., 2017). Newly qualified teachers and teachers at an early stage of their career are also prone to such stress (Ofsted, 2015). Continuous professional development should make the staff realize that promoting wellbeing is the responsibility of all school staff members. It can provide them with skills of how to promote wellbeing in their practice, to recognise early mental health problems signs and the way forward when a developing problem is spotted (DfE, 2016a; Public Health England, 2015).

Staff wellbeing is also an important feature of a whole school approach to wellbeing, and crucial to sustain teacher performance in the long term. It enables staff “to cope with challenges and adapt to change, and creates conditions to support and motivate staff to be effective” (DES, 2019, p. 15). Professional development helps school staff develop and improve their own emotional and social competence and wellbeing (Jennings et al., 2013; McGilloway et al., 2014). Cenkseven-Onder and Sari’s (2009) maintain that teachers and school leaders should be provided with training on interpersonal relationships and coping strategies for stress management. For instance, mindfulness training addresses anxiety and stress among educators as well as helps “to promote empathy, prosocial skills, attentiveness, sensory perception and other psychological and physiological benefits” (McCallum et al., 2017, p. 33). Sound investment in teacher training is necessary for student wellbeing, and in the long term saves money (McCallum et al., 2017). “Training teachers who then leave because their lives are unfulfilled at best and miserable at worst is not only devastating to

those individuals and damaging to students, but also expensive on the public purse” (Roffey, 2012, as cited in McCallum et al., 2017, p. 15). Acton and Glasgow (2015) recommend that initial teacher education should include the provision of training in emotional coping strategies to support educators in implementing the best practices that develop and maintain wellbeing in the profession (Hastings & Bham, 2003; Ross, Romer & Horner, 2012; Vesely, Saklofske & Nordstokke, 2014).

2.4 Conclusion

The literature review presented above reveals that there is a considerable amount of research which supports the promotion and effectiveness of a whole school approach to staff and student wellbeing, and the important role of school leaders in this process. The next chapter presents the methodology of this study.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Chapter 3 – Methodology

This chapter describes the research methodology employed to carry out this study, including the design of the study and the selection of participants, the instrument of data collection, the way the data was analysed and the strategies used for validating findings. It also discusses ethical considerations and the limitations of the study.

3.1 Research method and design

Since this study attempts to understand the SLT members' knowledge, insights and experiences related to the promotion of a whole school approach to wellbeing, a qualitative methodology was found to be the most fit-for-purpose. As defined by Lichtman (2006), the main aim of conducting qualitative research "is to provide an in-depth description and understanding of the human experience... Qualitative research has as its purpose a description and understanding of human phenomena, human interaction, or human discourse" (p. 8).

Patton (1985) explains qualitative research as "an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there" (p. 1). The focus of the research is to study in depth the views of a practising SLT on the role of the school in promoting wellbeing and how best to do to this. Maxwell (2005) explains that "the strengths of qualitative research derive primarily from its inductive approach, its focus on specific situations or people, and its emphasis on words rather than numbers" (p. 22).

The creation of a culture of wellbeing demands complex understanding; thus, the scope of educational research can be extended by the use of qualitative methods. Qualitative research can gain a better insight of the mindset of an SLT to promote wellbeing through a whole school approach. Creswell (2003) describes a qualitative study as an effective model that takes place in a natural setting that enables the researcher to develop a level of detail by being closely involved in the actual experiences. Apart from its exploratory nature, qualitative research is also more flexible, allows more in-depth investigation and therefore allows

participants to share their experience more freely. It helps in understanding better and in more depth the feelings and perceptions of the participants about the subject.

There are several advantages of this type of research. First, qualitative research provides rich data about “participants’ feelings, opinions, and experiences; and interprets the meanings of their actions” (Denzin, 1989, as cited in Rahman, 2017, p. 104). Secondly, a qualitative research approach “holistically understands the human experience in specific settings” (Rahman, 2017, p. 104). Thirdly, Rahman (2017, p. 104) argue that this research approach is considered as “ideographic research, that is, the study of individual cases or events (Klein & Myers, 1999), seeking to understand different people’s voices, meanings and events (Richardson, 2012)”. Fourthly, the qualitative study enables “the researcher to discover the participants’ inner experience, and to understand how meanings are shaped through and in culture” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, as cited in Rahman, 2017, p. 104). A fifth advantage is that qualitative research methods such as interviews make it possible for the researcher to interact directly with the participants, consequently gaining rich and detailed data. Lastly, qualitative research design has “a flexible structure as the design can be constructed and reconstructed to a greater extent” (Maxwell, 2012, as cited in Rahman, 2017, p. 104). Hence complex issues can be unpacked and quite easy to understand.

3.2 Participants

In view of the qualitative nature of the study, data was collected with a small number of SLT members in a small number of schools – in this case, two – in one of the ten state regional colleges. The selection of the college and the participants was one of convenience, with the researcher being familiar with the schools that participated in this study. Once ethics approval was obtained from the University of Malta and the Education Directorates respectively, permission letters were sent to the college principal (see Appendix 1) and the respective heads of school (see Appendix 2). Afterwards the two Heads of school were again contacted and provided with a copy of the information sheet describing the objectives and nature of the study. Both Heads of school were very helpful and accepted to have their schools participate in the study. The Information Sheet (see Appendix 3), the Consent Form (see Appendix 4) and the Interview Questions sheet (see Appendix 5) were given to the Heads

of School to be distributed among their respective Assistant Heads who had also agreed to participate. This follows, among others, Tuckman (1972), who advises that the interviewer should provide information on the nature and aim of the interview to the participants. Later individual appointments were set up with those Assistant Heads who were to participate in the study.

Seven participants agreed to take part in the study. These included two Heads of School and five Assistant Heads from the two participating schools. Participants included male or female members who formed part of the respective SLT of their schools. Table 3.1 below shows a list of the participants, who have been given pseudonyms for reasons of confidentiality.

Table 3.1 The participants of the study

Pseudonyms	Post	Gender	School
Ivy	Head of School	Female	A
Kay	Head of School	Female	B
Ana	Assistant Head	Female	A
Lia	Assistant Head	Female	A
Ben	Assistant Head	Male	A
Zoe	Assistant Head	Female	A
Mat	Assistant Head	Male	B

3.3 Data collection

Interviews were the key source of data collection in this study. For Guba and Lincoln (1981), “of all the means of exchanging information and gathering data known to man ... interviewing is perhaps the oldest and certainly one of the most respected of the tools that the inquirer can use” (p. 154). Kvale (1996) states that an interview is “an exchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production and emphasizes the social situatedness of research data” (p. 14). Ribbins (2007) argues that “we interview people to explore their views in ways that cannot be achieved by other forms of research and report the findings in as near as we reasonably can in their own words” (p. 208). Interviews enable participants to express their opinions

from their own point of view by discussing their interpretations of the world they live in. Interviews are a good means of data collection as they are a fine way of understanding how the participants feel about the subject being researched.

Interviews have been portrayed as rich formulas that provide a better, flexible way, giving participants sufficient freedom during the questioning. When interviewing, unresolved issues can be made clear and the interviewer has the possibility of being able to tackle questions spontaneously (Nachmais-Frankfort & Nachmias, 1996). They also enable the interviewer to stay alert and be sensitive to being presented with irrelevant or inconsistent data that should be omitted. Interviews are particularly effective in producing data of greater depth in various fields (Descombe, 2010). On the other hand, interviewing is prone to subjectivity and bias on the part of the interviewer. Also, when using interviews the researcher has to keep in mind that they are costly in terms of time required to collect and analyse the data. There are also issues of interviewee fatigue that may hinder the interview, while anonymity may be difficult to maintain (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). These issues were taken into consideration in this study as discussed in other sections of this chapter.

3.3.1 Semi-structured interviews

In this research study, semi-structured interviews were conducted to examine the participants' experiences, opinions and concerns. This type of interviews provides the researcher with more space for articulation and probing. It is also balanced in its approach: a rigidly structured interview restricts the researcher from delving further into what the interviewee reveals, while in an unstructured interview the interviewee might deviate from the original topic as the interviewer does not use a fixed set of questions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p. 415). In semi-structured interviews, the interviewees are left free, within limits, to respond as they best see fit. Considering the fact that an interviewee might jump to a later question, a schedule including key probes was set to help the interviewer to be responsive to the interviewee while checking of what has been covered and what needs to be asked. Sometimes the interview questions were modified both in terms of words and sequence and clarified further depending on the development of the interview. Bailey (1982) states that

Interviews can probe for more specific answers and can repeat a question when the response indicated that the respondent misunderstood. It may be that different questions are appropriate for different respondents; the interview situation makes it possible for the interviewer to decide what questions are appropriate rather than writing all in advance as the researcher must do for the mailed study. (p. 182)

Open-ended questions were used in the interview. These are considered as the core of qualitative interviewing as they offer the participant the flexibility of answering in different ways. Even though open-ended questions were used, participants were encouraged and often prompted to elaborate further on topics and issues they brought up. Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte (1999) explain how semi-structured interviews “combine the flexibility of the unstructured, open-ended interview with the directionality and agenda of the survey instrument to produce focused, qualitative, textual data” (p. 149). While leaving the participants quite free to express themselves and talk about their understanding or thoughts on the subject, semi-structured interviews also help the researcher to remain focused on the subject. Johnson (2002) argues that during interviews, the participants need to be encouraged to provide and share their authentic knowledge as much as possible. The aim of the interview questions was to explore the existing strategies that SLT members were implementing in promoting student and staff wellbeing at secondary school level, and the key actions they could take to embed a whole school approach to wellbeing at their school.

The interviews were conducted at the end of the scholastic year. They were held during school hours in the offices of the participants. All the interviews were held on a one-to-one basis. This eased the respondents’ engagement and made genuine replies to the questions asked more likely. All the interview questions were asked in English but the participants were told that they were free to answer in Maltese if they chose to. All the participants appeared well prepared for the interview. Each interview took about 45 minutes. Permission to audio record the interviews was sought from and given by the participants.

3.4 Ethical considerations

A number of ethical issues needed to be taken into consideration. First of all, ethical approval was obtained from the Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee (FREC, Education) to conduct the research. Permission to carry out the study in a state school was also acquired from the Directorate of Education (DCRILL) and the college principal of the participants' schools. The use of gatekeepers, who were the Heads of School, were vital to grant access to the participants.

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) state that informed consent and protection from harm are two key aspects that need to be addressed when involving human being in research. When conducting the interviews, the researcher explained procedures involved in the research and the aim of the study to the participants, and assured the participants that the data gathered would only be used for the purpose of the research. They were also reminded that participation was strictly voluntary and that even if they decided to take part, they were free to quit the study at any time without the need of an explanation. In order to formalize this condition, they were presented with an information letter and asked to sign a consent form that identified the objective, procedures, responsibilities, benefits and potential risks, the researcher's right to publish, and their right to withdraw at any time.

Confidentiality is another important aspect that needs to be maintained in qualitative research, especially in the case of interviews in which private conversations are published publicly in study reports (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Brinkmann and Kvale (2005) also indicate that qualitative interviews allow researchers access to participants' personal experiences and intimate aspects of their worlds which entail moral and ethical issues. Thus to ensure privacy, information collected from respective participants that could easily identify them, was stored safely and separately from the interview data. Participants were also assured that their identities would remain anonymous and that no reference would be made to them or to the participating schools that might identify them. This also helped participants feel safe about disclosing information during the interviews. Pseudonyms replaced real names in the entire study to ensure anonymity. Care and attention to maintain each participant's self-esteem, democratic freedom, dignity and privacy was given. A key ethical issue, according to

Oppenheim (1992) is that participants should not be exposed to any harm as a result of their participation in the research. The participants were assured that all audio recorded data would be destroyed after the completion of the study. All these measures helped to ensure that the highest ethical standards were maintained.

3.5 Data analysis

The process of data analysis is a way of discovering “patterns, coherent themes, meaningful categories, and new ideas and in general uncover better understanding of a phenomenon or process” (Newton Suter, 2006, p. 327). As soon as each interview was conducted, it was heard through at least once in entirety. The researcher found this process very helpful to viewing the interview while observing the use of gestures and context, and reflecting on their meaning or relevance. Sometimes the use of simple notes gave a clue of what to be further discussed in the next interviews. The audio data was carefully transcribed and the researcher immersed herself in the interviews to become familiar with them, “to ensure that the participant [became] the focus of the analysis” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 82).

Braun and Clark (2006) described thematic analysis as a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting themes present in the data. One of the advantages of thematic analysis is its flexibility (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It provides a useful and flexible research tool which can be used to describe the data set or a detailed account of one particular aspect. Boyatzis (1998) adds that thematic analysis is a process for encoding qualitative information to be used in different methods, rather than as a method on its own. However, Braun and Clarke (2006) state that it is a method in its own right, independent of any specific theory or theories. It is this flexibility which allows one to provide a “detailed, yet complex account of data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78). Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that sometimes this method is criticized by some as an ‘anything goes’ one, but on the contrary they maintain, it provides a method of analysis that should be applied rigorously throughout the data analysis.

Braun and Clarke (2006) also argue that the ‘keyness’ of themes is not dependent on quantifiable measures but rather on their relationship to the research questions. They state that “a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research

question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82).

Once the data was transcribed it was first read as a whole, and then re-read over and over again in order to code. Similar themes brought up by the participants were grouped together for analysis and patterns were identified among the themes. Thus, various themes emerged from the participants’ narratives through an iterative process of coding, grouping and regrouping into themes and subthemes, going back and forth to the data and the themes and subthemes, until the final themes were established. The translation of the responses from Maltese into English proved to be problematic sometimes, since the quotes could not always be translated literally word-for-word, but a huge effort was made to retain the original meaning. Although the quotes that feature in the findings of this study are presented in English, the original quotes in Maltese are presented in Appendix 6. Sometimes the gender referred to in the responses was changed so as to ensure anonymity.

3.6 Trustworthiness and credibility

Often the quality in research is measured in terms of its validity and reliability. Since this study made use of qualitative research, trustworthiness, credibility and applicability were important measures to be considered in the analysis of the findings. Glaser and Strauss (1967) identify two important measures for judging trustworthiness, namely, credibility and applicability. Credibility refers to “the truth of the data or the participant views and the interpretation and representation of them by the researcher” (Polit & Beck, 2012, as cited in Cope, 2014, p. 89). In light of this, the undersigned described her experiences as a researcher and verified the research findings with the participants. As Sandelowski (1986) states, qualitative research is considered credible “if the descriptions of human experience are immediately recognised by individuals that share the same experience” (as cited in Cope, 2014, p. 89). Applicability in qualitative research refers to the ability to “utilize results of the research in similar contexts with similar participants” (Myburgh & Poggenpoel, 2007, p. 65).

During the interviews, various strategies were employed to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of the research, both during the design and the implementation. Personal biases

which may influence the research findings were taken into consideration so as to be avoided (Morse et al., 2002). Ongoing 'critical reflection' to ensure a sufficient depth of data collection and analysis was maintained (Sandelowski, 1993). Meticulous record keeping was applied such as voice recording, the taking of field notes that were used at a later stage to transcribe the interviews as faithfully as possible. These helped to ensure the correct, consistent and transparent interpretations of data (Sandelowski, 1993; Long & Johnson, 2000). Several attempts to discern similarities and differences across the scripts were carried out to record the various perspectives of the participants (Morse et al., 2002; Slevin, 2002). Rich and verbatim quotations were included to support the research findings (Slevin, 2002).

3.6.1 Reflexivity in qualitative research

In qualitative research the researcher plays a fundamental role as an instrument of data collection (Creswell, 2007) and data interpretation. Since data are mediated through a human instrument, consumers of the research need to know about the human instrument. Greenbank (2003) argues that the researcher needs to present pertinent aspects of self, including any experiences, biases and assumptions, and expectations to qualify their ability to conduct the research.

It is important to point out that the profession of the researcher as a teacher differs from that of a SLT member. In this study the researcher dealt with participants who had a different occupational role. As a teacher, the researcher felt that it a sensitive approach was required to achieve levels of comfort and confidence in order to engage in deep conversations with the interviewees. Otherwise bias could have resulted as the SLT members would have been reluctant to express certain matters which they may have felt should not be shared with teachers. Being aware of this potential bias and after careful self-reflection, the researcher assured the participants of strict confidentiality and that no judgement was going to be made as the data was being collected for research purposes only. Moreover, during the interviews, the researcher sought to build a good rapport with each interviewee in order to encourage authentic disclosure of information on the research topic (Fontana & Frey, 1994). Ensuring confidentiality and anonymity created a sense of security and trust and this facilitated the sharing of authentic data.

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) recommend that during data collection issues such as race, age, ethnicity, status, gender, and disability should be considered, and expectations have to be devised to convert any potential difficulties into advantages. The identity of the researcher and their relationship to the participants at different phases of study are bound to influence the interview conversation (Jamstho, 2015). The researcher may be seen to the participants in different ways, for instance as an educator, as an outsider or as a research student, which may influence the content of the shared information. Moreover, Jamstho (2015) postulates that differences in factors such as beliefs, values, work experiences and cultural background can impact on interactions in countless ways. Since the researcher and participants are an integral part in the research process, it is therefore important to exercise reflexivity by taking into account one's preconceptions, recognising the importance of social roles, and be conscious of the situational dynamics (Atkinson & Coffry, 2001, as cited in Jamstho, 2015).

Dealing with participants with whom the researcher was familiar necessitated the need of reflexivity. Addressing researcher bias which could impact the outcome of the study was a challenging balancing act for the researcher; one had to remain objective and non-judgmental throughout the data collection and analysis process.

3.7 Limitations

One of the limitations of this was the topic itself. Promoting wellbeing among both students and staff is a vast area of study that closely involves other issues, like school behaviour management, family and cultural problems, and this makes it is difficult to set boundaries. While every effort was made to explore all the issues that the SLT members brought up, it was necessary to keep focused on the research question to ensure depth even if this meant sacrificing an element of breadth.

The implementation of a whole school approach requires a consideration of the perspectives of all the stakeholders, but this study only focussed on the perspectives of SLT members. Even though SLT members are the key implementers and likely to be most knowledgeable on the matter, this study is still an incomplete view. The research sample was small and this study

only focussed on two schools. Besides, the small number of participants can be hardly representative of the diversity of secondary schools. On the other hand, however, the qualitative in-depth nature of the study provides insights and understandings on the researched issues and should help to inform practice in the area.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has described the methodology of this study, including the participant sample, the data-collecting instrument and the data-collecting process. The following chapter presents the results and analysis of the data.

CHAPTER 4

Findings and Discussion

Chapter 4 – Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings that emerged from the data collected in the interviews. Once the data was collected, it was analysed according to themes and sub-themes. Four main themes and various sub-themes within each theme are identified and discussed, supported with relevant quotes from the various participants. This chapter discusses and analyzes the data in light of the literature and findings made by other researchers.

The table below presents the various themes that emerged from the data.

Table 4.1 The themes and subthemes developed from the data

Themes	Sub-themes
A school culture for wellbeing	Accessible, open-door policy
	Healthy physical environment
	Prevention of bullying
	Behaviour management for positive behaviour
	Staff engagement
	Mentoring new teachers
	Social encounters for school members
	Public celebration of appreciation and success
Wellbeing in the classroom and curriculum	Teaching and learning about wellbeing
	Student voice
	Pedagogy
	Assessment
	Extracurricular activities
Relationships for wellbeing	SLT-staff relationships
	Staff relationships
	Students-teachers relationships
	School-parents relationships
	School support staff and services to address students' wellbeing needs

Staff awareness and education in wellbeing training	Education for SLT
	Staff education to understand students and their needs
	Staff education in wellbeing
	Parents' education

4.1 A school culture for wellbeing

4.1.1 Accessible, open-door policy

Most of the participants mentioned qualities such as 'approachable', 'accessible' and 'visible' that every SLT member should have for the promotion of both student and staff wellbeing.

One of the participants remarked that:

the Head and the SMT I think are very approachable (Zoe, School A).

The participants agreed that their schools had adopted an open-door policy for all school members. Some of the participants confirmed this by stating:

The school has an open-door policy... you can come any time at your convenience and this already shows how much we care (Zoe, School A).

And this is visible because, for example, I never close the door. It's me who's suffering but the door is never closed (Kay, School B).

It was found that an open-door policy helped to create a caring and supportive environment. School leaders who exhibit listening, openness and respect when interacting with staff members, students and parents promote a whole school approach to wellbeing (DES, 2019). Public Health England (2015) states that school leaders have a significant role to support students and teachers and an open-door policy could be one of the means to do so. When school leaders establish an open-door policy it helps to build a thriving school culture, schools members feel confident to engage in a conversation and express their concerns (Collie, 2018; Howard et al., 2017).

4.1.2 Healthy physical environment

The importance of the physical environment for both students and staff wellbeing was mentioned in the participants' narratives. WHO (1993) states that schools should put emphasis on their physical environment. For instance, according to one of the participants,

For a student to feel good at school, for a teacher to feel good at school, can be created in the atmosphere... more seating areas, better atmosphere in the grounds, little things like bins in the corridors. I mean, what they expect from you can be little things (Ivy, School A).

Ms Zoe (School A) concurred, "...as in the case when they suggested how they wanted the reading corner in the library, and we did it." The participants outlined that establishing a healthy and welcoming environment included designing warm classrooms and creating appealing school grounds for recreation. This makes teachers and students happy and feel safe in their teaching and learning (Demanuele, 2013; McCallum & Price, 2010).

Two of participants focused on what can be done to promote teacher wellbeing:

Here there are emotional health and wellbeing and the Head mentioned air-conditioning, for example, [laughing]. You may say it's not related to emotional health and wellbeing but one must see how hot the staffrooms are, and the Head is trying to buy AC (Zoe, School A).

The gym follows a timetable and if it is vacant the teachers can use it. For example, the teachers also requested that I provide a shower so that one could use the gym and feel better (Kay, School B).

If the environment was safe and attractive, as Mr Ben (School A) remarked, students and teachers had a more positive attitude towards school. This tallies with the views of Jago and Tanner (1999), namely, that if the surroundings are not enjoyable, school members will have a gloomy outlook towards themselves. Thus it was found confirmed in this study that school leaders who take care of the physical school environment help to promote a whole school approach to wellbeing.

4.1.3 Prevention of bullying

Two of the participants reported that a key factor that affected student wellbeing was bullying, and they underlined the need to prevent and address bullying immediately and effectively.

There are students whom you cannot imagine what they are going through in case of bullying and we don't know and sometimes even at home they don't know and so I believe that a caring atmosphere with these students would help to bring out more problems (Lia, School A).

We are having many different difficulties concerning wellbeing, including bullying, and there are also instances of cyber-bullying and when this type of report comes in we immediately take action (Ivy, School A).

They argued that the school plays an important role in taking measures to stop and prevent bullying. Schools should establish firm policies that expound the desired behaviour standards to minimise and prevent bullying (DfE, 2016a). Schools also need to have clear policies on specific bullying behaviour to stop and address incidents immediately and effectively (MEDE, 2014). Research shows that bullying can have serious negative impact on the psychological wellbeing of victims and perpetrators, both in the short and long term (Downes & Cefai, 2016). Further research (NICE, 2009; Ofsted, 2015) shows that a positive school ethos helps to prevent and tackle different forms of bullying and harassment in the school environment.

4.1.4 Behaviour management for positive behaviour

On various occasions the participants mentioned that challenging behaviour of students was a major cause of staff distress and had to be dealt with robustly. Two of the participants (Ms Ana and Ms Lia, School A) emphasised that school leaders should help to address this issue by adopting a positive behaviour approach rather one based on punishment. Mr Mat (School B) added that “[a]s far as possible we try to keep discipline so that both students and teachers lead an easier life at school”.

One participant stated that behaviour difficulties at school were specifically mentioned as a weakness by various stakeholders in an internal review questionnaire. The participant argued that punishing students for undesirable behaviour was not working. The participant suggested that their priority is on changing the school culture and behaviour model from a punitive approach to restorative practices.

So we're going to fix our behaviour management system which teachers and everyone else calls discipline... to develop a positive approach to discipline so that little by little we get closer to restorative justice (Zoe, School A).

This concurs with research that concludes that schools should avoid negative behaviours, attitudes and outcomes and place greater emphasis on rewards, praise, encouragement and other positive incentives (DES, 2019; Weare, 2000). Although often educators use punishment and other negative approaches to control behaviour in their classrooms, research shows that when that happens there is a decrease in the level of student wellbeing (Green et al., 2005). Weare (2000) observed that school discipline problems could take a different form if instead of educators merely giving punishment, they try to discuss with students the logical consequences of their inappropriate behaviour or bad actions. ERO (2016) suggest that implementing restorative practices is useful as these focus on repairing harm in an inclusive way by engaging all school community members. They also empower students to lead and take increased responsibility for their actions. Ms Zoe (School A) argued that orderly classroom management affected student wellbeing:

And so when a student comes here happy and there's discipline in class, and [good] behaviour in class, he will enjoy emotional health because he will be happier.

Studies reveal that students are more attracted to school if there are affirmative classroom management and lenient disciplinary measures (Clea, McNeely, Nonnemaker & Blum, 2002; Weissberg & O'Brien, 2004). A participant commented that the teacher's attitude towards students and the tone of language affected the quality of the learning experience and had an impact on student wellbeing. Mr Ben asserted that both the SLT and teachers should be role models for their students. Weare (2000) argues that educators themselves should be role models in the kind of behaviour they want their students to exhibit by being respectful,

tolerant, warm and supportive in their teaching. Educators must avoid passing on negative messages and should use more inspiring words in their teaching (ibid, 2000).

4.1.5 Staff engagement

Active staff engagement is a key feature of good schools. The participants drew attention to the importance of staff participating actively in school decisions. The following excerpts speak highly of staff engagement:

We urge teachers to participate in the decisions taken at school (Ben, School A).

I believe that you can encourage them and bear with them when they are at risk, encourage and take an interest in teacher-initiated activities, involve teachers more in decisions taken at school (Ivy, School A).

Staff engagement helps schools to promote a sense of belonging, value, mutual respect and collegiality within the community (Howard et al., 2017; McCallum & Price, 2010). Ms Kay (School B) mentioned that “If you have some staff member who takes the initiative we [adopt it as] policy and back that initiative. Because I think it really helps and it helps them as well to build up their self-esteem”. The participants considered this a vital strategy by which the voice of the educators contributes to decision-making, policy development and school activities. This was found to lead to improvements in school culture and ethos (Cefai & Askeel Williams, 2017; DES, 2019). When school leaders take into consideration the staff members’ opinions and listen to their voice, it results in positive relations (Paull, 2015). Further research shows that when staff are empowered in school decisions and contribute in establishing policies and guidelines, their resilience, wellbeing and engagement will improve (Howard et al., 2017; MEDE, 2019). Hence active staff engagement at school is significantly connected to a higher level of teacher wellbeing.

4.1.6 Mentoring new teachers

One aspect of tackling a teacher wellbeing, as mentioned by the participants, is to mentor newly qualified teachers or teachers transferred from another school. The participants argued that new teachers in a school could experience certain difficulties and mentoring was a good way for new teachers to feel better in the school environment and in day-to-day activities.

Concerning those who are new, you're going to have to do mentorship throughout the year – those who are new to our system and not newly recruited teachers, such as those coming from other schools. Because these also wouldn't know a lot of things and so this makes you feel in a certain way (Zoe, School A).

When a new teacher comes it is as if he doesn't know what to expect and although the majority of teachers always try to make them feel welcome, still I feel that they need some type of mentoring (Ivy, School A).

In order to support new teachers in the school environment, participants proposed proactive teacher wellbeing initiatives such as mentoring. School leaders or senior teachers should offer mentoring systems to provide emotional support and suggest good teaching practices (DES, 2019), and team-teaching approaches (Ofsted, 2006) to initial and transitioning teachers. Le Cornu (2009) argues that supporting new teachers helps them to feel at ease at school and reinforces ongoing support practice networks. This tallies with other research which found that sound initial teacher education resulted in healthy relationships and responded to mental health issues (Askell-Williams & Cefai 2014; Cefai & Askell Williams, 2017).

Ms Zoe (School A) explained that mentoring could be done in an informal meeting, such as “a tea and talk session with the Head of School”. As McCallum et al. (2017) argue, school leaders have a great influence on teacher wellbeing, particularly newly qualified ones. Hence, school leaders can help teachers, especially those newly qualified, gain a sense of belonging to the school by these measures.

4.1.7 Social encounters for school members

Social activity that brings members of the school community together was considered by several participants as conducive to wellbeing. Good wellbeing initiatives mentioned by two participants were social activities to engage staff members, as well for parents and students.

Something else we have been doing for some time are social activities for adults. These consist of meals or walks, and the same goes for students... all this with the aim of making one feel well in the company of others (Kay, School B).

Mr Ben (School A) argued in favour of social activities that helped to build a culture where every school member felt a sense of belonging:

...organizing more activities during which we meet more often. Building a culture where every member feels a sense of belonging, feels part of the school (Ben, School A).

The participants believed that when teachers balanced social activities with their school lives, they were likely to increase their emotional wellbeing. The participants acknowledged McCallum and Price's study (2010) on the importance of socialisation among education colleagues. This serves to promote networks of emotional support and a means to develop collaborative teams. When educators and students socialise together, they are more likely to develop a positive learning community (ibid, 2010).

One of the participants mentioned other things that can help teacher wellbeing:

You should take the coffee-break; that is a need. You should take the break. Exchange a few words with your colleagues. Don't take your work home if you can do it here; get up and go for a walk (Lia, School A).

The above initiatives encourage a work-life balance that, according to Collie (2018), helps teachers feel better. McCallum and Price (2010) found that socialising during leisure time is seen as a "worthwhile experience" that develops teamwork, builds respectful collegial relationships, and promotes social competence skills.

4.1.8 Public celebration of appreciation and success

On a positive note, some of the participants stated that showing appreciation and gratitude, celebrating success and/or birthdays, and showing empathy when a colleague is passing through difficult times could make a difference in a person's life. Two of the participants said that schools could take various small initiatives such as sending birthday, sympathy and get-well-soon cards, organizing teachers' day, and sending positive SMS messages. For instance, Ms Zoe (School A) suggested that apart from using the SMS as a communication tool with the school staff, the Head of School could also send positive messages to acknowledge and encourage good performance. On her part, Ms Ivy (School A) said that sending birthday cards "takes me some time to do but it shows that we care".

Two of the participants mentioned a 'Thank You day' or 'Teachers' Appreciation Day' that could be organized partially by students. Ms Zoe (School A) suggested that students could write a card or a note when they wished to thank a teacher for his or her work. Ms Ivy (School A) proposed organising Teachers' Appreciation Day "when we involve also students and these take place during assemblies so that students can show their appreciation of their teachers".

It is evident that school leaders acknowledged the importance of staff wellbeing through activities such as Teachers' Appreciation Day. In this way a school can acknowledge the staff's hard work and as a result enhance teacher wellbeing (Day et al., 2007; Day & Gu, 2010). School leaders who foster a culture of praise, recognition and gratitude are likely to have greater job satisfaction and engagement among their staff (MEDE, 2019).

A wellbeing committee at school can help to respond to events such as bereavement, sickness, marriage and births in a more formal way, like "sending e-cards to teachers who are passing through difficult times; celebrate success by giving tokens to teachers to give them a boost; send a get-well card to some family member who is recovering from an operation or is ill in hospital. Small things but they make a difference in a person's life" (Ivy, School A).

This shows that school leaders need to promote a school ethos which routinely celebrates success and rewards achievement and effort. Studies suggest that school leaders who

celebrate and share success stories improve relationships in the school community (McCallum et al., 2017; Weare, 2015) and thus produce a higher level of wellbeing.

4.2 Wellbeing in the classroom and curriculum

4.2.1 Teaching and learning about wellbeing

All the participants confirmed that topics related to wellbeing were tackled during the PSCD lesson.

It appears that the curriculum area which most focuses on wellbeing is that they attend PSED but it's not just that (Ivy, School A).

As far as teaching and learning is concerned what is certain is that PSED really helps students (Ben, School A).

Mr Mat stated that PSCD lessons were more likely to address wellbeing because they were based on discussions and helped to develop social and emotional skills. In fact, class discussions give students a chance to develop emotional and social competences such as assertiveness, conflict resolution, listening, empathy, cooperation and negotiation (Weare, 2000).

Other subjects mentioned by participants that focus on wellbeing areas were Religion, Ethics and Social Studies. This concurs with Ofsted (2015), who suggest that social, moral, spiritual and cultural opportunities are an important aspect of an individual's development.

If you take Social Studies, it says how you can help society; if you take Religion, you have topics on tolerance; if you take Ethics... er... I mean our areas all speak generally on what our values of education are (Zoe, School A).

Other participant stated that wellbeing featured in all teaching areas.

Here all the subjects can promote mental health and wellbeing. All of them. Every subject (Zoe, School A).

It is evident in the data that according to the participants of this study wellbeing should be promoted through all aspects of teaching and learning. The literature also states that teachers who embed wellbeing in various subjects support student learning (NCCA, 2017; Public Health England, 2015). Weare (2000) believes that social and emotional competences “can be taught through any subject, often through its content and always through its process” (p. 124). Thus, a whole school approach to wellbeing requires the teaching of social and emotional skills through what is done and said in the classroom and should “become a seamless part of teaching” (Elias et al., 1997, as cited in Weare, 2000, p. 125). It is well stated that real impact on school environments and student learning starts when social and emotional skills are implemented and “they come and are lived, breathed and reinforced in all interactions across the school” (Diekstra, 2008, as cited in Weare, 2015, p. 10).

Holistic education implies that schools do not focus only on children’s academic development but on the ability to survive in their daily life. This was acknowledged by various participants, including Zoe:

The promotion of mental health and wellbeing for me are how to be happy with yourself, how to be content and how to work with others; any area of the curriculum you cover is not aimed at making you shine and clever and this sort of thing. We... that’s why we moved towards Celebration Day and not only for multi-intelligence because the key today is teamwork. How you can fit with others? (Zoe, School A).

Social and affective education should always support the academic curriculum and motivates students to behave appropriately and think more clearly (Weare, 2000). This results in higher academic achievement (Durlak et al., 2011). The participants mentioned that schools played an important role in teaching students daily life skills and wellbeing competencies. “[T]eamwork, equality and emotional skills [are] to be tackle[d] by teachers in their teaching” (Lia, School A). The same participant added:

...and the teachers not only focus on the content of the lesson but keep in mind essential principles for life, such as helping others, equality, that they understand and recognize their own emotions and of those around them, as well as the needs of others (Lia, School A).

Respecting your own self and others is also fundamental: “And wellbeing comes into it as well, respect towards the person himself and towards others” (Lia, School A).

The participants reported that when wellbeing was incorporated in all subjects, students felt better and it enhanced their wellbeing.

We teach students skills that they use in everyday life such as conflict resolution, problem solving, coping skills,... to be resilient (Ana, School A).

And every teacher should integrate the use of coping skills in the lesson, such as problem solving, how to solve conflict, how they work in groups, and resilient skills, among others. These help the student feels better (Ben, School A).

The participants suggested that social and emotional skills should be developed in all students by integrated them in every lesson. Teaching students social and emotional skills helps schools to build a whole school approach as students learn to build successful relationships, as well as to understand and regulate their emotions and of those around them (Adelman & Taylor, 2009; Commonwealth of Australia, 2013; Cefai & Askell Williams, 2017). Other research indicates that for learning to be effective it needs to provide problem-solving skills (PSHE Association, 2015; Weare 2015). Mr Ben (School A) argued that these skills helped students to feel better both at school and in future societal life. This tallies with the literature, which reports that teaching social and emotional skills helps students be better students and productive adults in future (DePaoli et al., 2017), with the skills to grow and thrive in a challenging world (Cefai & Cavioni, 2014).

4.2.2 Student voice

A common way of enhancing student wellbeing is encouraging their active involvement. The participants asserted that schools used a range of ways to involve students in decision-making and learning, for example through the students’ councils, class discussions and during assembly.

The participants spoke about the importance of school culture and classroom environment in making students feel safe to express their opinions. During class activities such as discussions, for example, “the student has a better opportunity of bringing out his fears into the open and we can discuss them” (Ivy, School A).

It is evident that the level of student wellbeing increases when students are empowered to participate in decisions. Research shows that it improves student-teacher relations (Tangen, 2009) and encourages students to engage with their learning (Sebba & Robinson, 2010). Supporting the student voice in teaching and learning leads to a more democratic learning environment (NCCA, 2017). It also helps students to take ownership and responsibility of their learning (Fielding, 2010; Kroeger et al., 2004, as cited in Cefai & Askeff Williams, 2017) and to cope with challenging situations that affect their mental and emotional wellbeing (Howard et al., 2017).

Apart from bringing up the issue of listening to the students’ voice, some participants stressed that a key aspect of listening was accountability – making sure that what the students had to say would be heard and, if necessary, acted upon:

The fact that it is them who mentioned the matter and that you took action, they say look, when we mentioned something they addressed it (Ivy, School A).

This helps students develop a sense of belonging to their school and a better student-teacher relationship (Flynn et al., 2013).

Some of the participants stated that student councils help students develop, encouraging them to voice their opinions and be more active within their schools. They offer opportunities to have a say on a personal level and get actively involved in decision-making.

Our students as a body did not feel much... well... ownership of the school, especially when we started at the beginning of this year... and so we started working on student ownership... and the student council was a great opportunity to give students a voice (Zoe, School A).

The students are also involved in certain decisions that are taken... er... in an area where they themselves could benefit through the Student Council (Mat, School B).

I wouldn't say that the Student Council has reached out to the out-of-school community but they have managed to reach out to the school community; we had activities such as Hate Day, Healthy Food Day, where they have reached out to the school community (Kay, School B).

A range of student-led initiatives to engage students in the school community were specified by one of the participants, such as clubs held during the midday break, and "during the assembly there are some movement activities which are also led by the students themselves" (Kay, School B).

Ms Kay stated further:

Something we did to help students in their wellbeing and self-esteem... er... during the assembly [is that] we gave students space to show their talent. Er... there were instances when they presented a PowerPoint, and played the guitar (Kay, School B).

Another participant reported that involving students in decision-making helped students to gain confidence in life skills such as entrepreneurship and creativity.

If students express their wish to have a "reading corner in the library, I, for example, had a meeting with the Student Council... we checked the state of our budget... and so whether they could help in fund raising... a little involvement of theirs, as I felt that unless it is involved in this way, it is as if, yes, they just put their wishes to the administration and that was that (Ivy, School A).

The Christmas tree in the foyer, you know, they worked for it and paid for it. That enhances the school climate and culture (Zoe, School A).

The participants agreed that different structures were in place so that students could make their voices heard. This results in a good number of benefits that enhance wellbeing such as an increased personal agency, better academic outcomes, closer interactions and

communication, reduced school exclusion, increased confidence and higher self-esteem and confidence (Anderson & Graham, 2015). Further benefits include total care and protection when having the chance to express opinions (Alderson, 2000) together with the strengthening of social, judgmental and negotiating skills (Rayner, 2003).

4.2.3 Pedagogy

Most of the participants were convinced that the quality of the teaching and learning environment could positively and negatively impact the students' wellbeing. Strong links were made between wellbeing and approaches to pedagogy, such as when Ms Zoe (School A) stated "Take [for example] the way of teaching that promote wellbeing".

Some of the participants believed that lessons must be student-centred, increase student motivation and actively engage students in learning:

[The lessons] involve hands-on tasks and groupwork. But I believe that every teacher should also integrate the interests of the student in every lesson (Ivy, School A).

There are students who need a more fluent environment to gain motivation to learning. Teachers need to use real-life examples [such as] construction sites, plumbing, installing an electricity service... (Ana, School A).

It was found that lessons should engage students in learning by being more appealing, by including teamwork and entailing an element of curiosity. Cefai and Askell Williams (2017) found that pedagogies based on inclusive, student-centred and a hands-on approach promote mental health and wellbeing. Wellbeing is supported through teaching and learning. Teachers who use different pedagogies and practices can help students increase confidence, feel a sense of belonging and be actively involved in their learning (NCCA, 2017). Other studies show that a student-centered approach and addressing students' needs in teaching and learning encourage students to participate in decision-making, increase motivation and create a higher level of engagement in learning (Daniels & Perry, 2003).

Other factors related to teaching that were mentioned were delivery and feedback styles. Ms Ivy (School A) argued that “[s]ometimes the method of delivery and the method of collecting feedback and so on, should be adapted more than anything else”. Indeed, it has been ascertained that when educators give adequate feedback, students are more likely to improve their attainment level by increasing their confidence and control of their learning (NCCA, 2017).

The participants confirmed that in their lessons teachers had to cater for the needs of all their students.

The lessons should be delivered in a way that appeals to all students even these who have diverse needs (Lia, School A).

[W]e always have children who come from different challenging backgrounds, foreign students... our aim is to ensure that they are respected and that we help in every way we can for them to succeed at school (Ana, School A).

The participants remarked that differentiated teaching and learning approaches should be designed and prepared to cater for the needs of all the students. Research shows that educators who use differentiated teaching help students – especially those with diverse needs – to experience a sense of achievement (DES, 2019), and provide a powerful classroom climate for learning mental health and wellbeing competencies (Durlak et al., 2011; Weare & Nind, 2011). Additionally, effective pedagogical strategies to promote student wellbeing are those based on student strengths, interests and needs (Cefai & Askeff Williams, 2017).

Other participants underlined that students with learning difficulties are supported and included in their communities:

We have a big focus on inclusive practices and we seek to integrate students with disability with their peers (Ana, School A).

As a school we are an inclusive school, we have students who are integrated in mixed abilities classrooms so they always feel included with their peers (Mat, School B).

It was found in this study that schools always presented a welcoming and inclusive environment to those school members coming from different cultural backgrounds and those students with additional needs. Cefai and Askeff Williams (2017) argue that inclusion and diversity are facets of wellbeing in schools. Thus, as part of a whole school approach to wellbeing, school leaders should encourage educators to demonstrate a caring pedagogy based on the principles of inclusion and diversity (ERO, 2016). Inclusion is a process that enables one to feel included, accepted and valued in the school environment (Ainscow, Farrell & Tweddle, 2000). Similarly, a supportive and positive school ethos helps diversity to be celebrated and accepted (Howard et al., 2017) and helps each member of the school community to have a higher level of wellbeing.

4.2.4 Assessment

In this study assessment featured as another factor in the wellbeing curriculum, but the participants thought that the Maltese educational system focused too much on exams and consequently undermined student wellbeing.

The school gives importance to the fact that exams create tension and a change in routine... (Lia, School A).

Perhaps the curriculum should also indicate that, listen, it is not simply [a matter of] good or bad, a cross or a tick (Ivy, School A).

Ms Ivy (School A) added:

In every lesson you should be aware of the wellbeing of the student... er... in the amount of homework, amount of work, it depends on what class you have, that you don't create fixations, that I have to be perfect. You should indicate to the student that, listen, if you answer and make a mistake it doesn't matter. Because sometimes we have many students who never put a question because they're afraid of making mistakes and this mentality of being afraid of making mistakes is destroying a lot of potential development because they take a back seat and don't put questions. And this could happen in every type of curriculum, that is, in every type of subject.

One of the participants argued that a change in the mode of assessment would be ideal, that is, a switch to formative and continuous assessment rather than summative or competitive.

Subjects like those VET and applied are a blessing for students who used to feel like failures before and gave up. They are a blessing because the method of delivery and assessment is different (Ivy, School A).

It appears assessment modes impact student wellbeing. Studies show that when schools focus their assessment on examinations it leads to a higher level of stress and anxiety (Cefai & Cavioni, 2015) as well as to labelling and stigmatization (Ecclestone 2012; Emery et al., 2012). One of the participants proposed that students should be assessed through different methods such as projects, presentations, and self and peer assessment. These types of assessment provide various advantages such as greater student engagement in and ownership of their learning, a positive sense of themselves as learners, and a strong sense of self-efficacy (NCCA, 2017). Contrary to when students score a mark or grade in exams, research shows that when assessment feedback is given in the form of comments, it is more individualised and is more likely to reveal specific areas for improvement (ibid, 2017).

Assessment based on tests, marks and grades is considered as a source of stress and anxiety (NCCA, 2017). Some of the participants argued that it is important to teach students how to study and cope with exam pressures:

During examinations students should know how to study and how to cope with the pressures that exams bring along (Ana, School A).

When educators incorporate useful skills such as coping with examination demands and frustration, regulating emotions and dealing with emotional distress, among others, students achieve a higher level of academic success (Cefai & Askeff Williams, 2017).

4.2.5 Extracurricular activities

One of the participants mentioned that extracurricular activities helped to maintain a person's physical wellbeing and mental health. Physical activities such as dancing classes and

aerobics were such examples. Ms Lia (School A) believed that if “they have a little space... dance clubs, aerobics... er... I really believe in this. So those types of structures can help”.

In the same line of thought Ms Zoe (School A) mentioned two outings – “[o]ne year they went to Comino, another year they went kayaking” – as extracurricular activities. The participants thought that such activities created happy school memories and more bonding with the school environment. Extracurricular activities are also great opportunities to promote student wellbeing. Studies reveal that extracurricular activities promote student wellbeing because there is greater peer involvement and a sense of belonging in school (Rogus & Wildenhaus, 1991). Students also experience higher school connectedness and raise their academic achievement (Clea, McNeely, Nonnemaker & Blum, 2002).

Other participants opined that sports activities and physical education were also important to a person’s wellbeing.

Wellbeing *per se* can refer to other areas as well. PE or sports activities can be involved. Listening to people here ranting on for a day and you go out for three quarters of an hour I consider in fact helpful (Lia, School A).

We would like to do more in the area of... physical, in terms of physical education, where sports are involved. This year we expanded and in fact even though we don’t have water-polo, even though we don’t have swimming, we still had students enter competitions where we gave opportunities also for swimming and water-polo. We are unable to do so many sports because we don’t have the facilities but this year we’re going to put more emphasis on sports and a field day has already been planned when the entire school, young and grown-ups, will be involved (Kay, School B).

The school leaders and management in this study acknowledged the connection between physical activity and wellbeing and felt the need to facilitate physical activity and movement breaks at school. It was found that participation in sports activities promote students’ physical, social and psychological wellbeing. Physical education can help to develop commitment and motivation in students (NCCA, 2017), and promotes the value of teamwork, cooperation, shared responsibility and good behaviour (Thomas, 1993; Elias et al., 1997).

Other research shows that participation in physical activity creates school connectedness and school satisfaction (Clea, McNeely, Nonnemaker & Blum, 2002). It boosts their self-confidence, self-esteem and self-control (Dimech & Seiler, 2011; Weare, 2000).

4.3 Relationships for wellbeing

4.3.1 SLT-staff relationships

A collaborative and supportive relationship

A desirable feature related to wellbeing that was expressed by all the participants was a good relationship between the SLT and staff. One participant said:

I also believe that there should be a good relationship with every member of the staff and I feel this is one of the school strengths (Ben, School A).

The participants stated that this type of relationship was collaborative and supportive and promoted wellbeing. Focusing on a culture based on mutual respect, care and support” (Lia, School A) is vital to promote a whole school approach to wellbeing. “If one needs to do something then I will report for duty in his place or sort of help each other in that way” (Lia, School A).

Various participants expressed their views on the collaborative and supportive nature of the relationship:

We’re also always here to give help and to lend a helping hand to every member of the staff who’s going through some problem or who is in a difficult situation (Ben, School A).

[W]here we can, we should help one, whoever he is, show support, and teachers feel they can count on us... I also like showing teachers that, hey, they’re individuals for us and not just the school staff (Ivy, School A).

That is, we have the HODs who really look after teachers who are, let’s put it this way, their subordinates... their colleagues more than their subordinates. They really take an

interest, that is, they tell you “no, don’t assign that certain teacher to that class; I say you’d better give it to the other one because this teacher is really good with that type of children”. So they know the person more intimately than you... it will transpire that the one concerned will be happier because you come to know him better, and so you’re not going to oppose that. You’ll avoid whatever irritates that person. HODs really help in this matter because they would really know their team, so that’s one more thing. But I always say that a school is a whole culture (Ivy, School A).

Two of the participants mentioned that one of the ways in which SLT members can support teachers is by monitoring behaviour at school and providing the necessary support to staff.

They argued that:

As members of the SMT I’m always present in the corridors especially between lessons and also during lessons. Always to give support both to teachers and also to see whether any help is needed with regards to students (Mat, School B).

[If there’s] an incident at school involving two students who would not have got along together... er... as far as possible the Assistant Head first sees what has happened to him and then we resume with what would have been planned for the day (Kay, School B).

Communication and listening skills

Good communication and listening skills were mentioned by various participants as a necessary requisite for a supportive relationship between SMT and staff. Mr Ben (School A) said that “we’re always ready to listen to what they have to say”. Another participant replied as follows:

When a person turns up and you notice they’re not well, you stop from whatever you’re doing and listen to them as much as I can. If I cannot attend to them [immediately] I ask the person to wait, I finish whatever is a priority and then that person becomes the priority and I listen to their needs (Kay, School B).

Ms Lia (School A) explained that “[c]ommunication helps a person’s health, mental health and wellbeing because it reduces stress... a little more communication, I think, helps”. She added that a structured method of collaboration encourages communication.

A little more structure in the organization, a little more communication among the staff, among the SLT, between the SLT and the staff, among the SLT, teachers and students so that everybody knows exactly what’s going on. It’s true that this is a matter of organization, a matter of structure but when you see things you know where you should be, you know what’s bound to happen, you know what’s next, you know in this way... I believe that it helps a person’s health, mental health and wellbeing because it reduces stress (Lia, School A).

...because they are the listening skills, negotiation skills, how to tackle conflict, how you communicate ... that SLT member needs to improve to help a person reduce stress (Zoe, School A).

One of the participants reconstructs a routine episode in a school leader’s life:

Because when I enter a classroom and notice an angry teacher and I take it calmly and I have the skills, [it means] I’m improving. The fact that there was no fighting, and that the teacher didn’t go home worried about what [the student] would say to their mother and father and what will happen the day after (Zoe, School A).

Most of the participants highlighted the fact that the SMT needed to be empathic. They considered it a sign that they cared for their staff:

And when you know that you can take special leave without any pressure, it helps you a little bit (Zoe, School A).

When I notice a person under some pressure..., there were times when I gave them a few minutes’ time-off. There were times, for example, when a person told me that they are going out for a walk and I give them permission according to the persons [involved] and the situations (Kay, School B).

Now if a teacher has a difficulty and I perhaps know it concerns a health problem and perhaps he has to arrive late in the morning, then we ourselves find a solution. It's an internal matter and you don't blow it up but cater for the needs of that particular person on the day. Also, when he's not well; everybody passes through a difficult patch one day or other, so, you know, you've got to be humane otherwise you cannot operate (Ivy, School A).

One of the participants insisted that SLT members should also have a positive attitude:

...how beneficial is a word of encouragement, both from our superiors to us adults, as well as between ourselves and our staff and students! That word of encouragement works miracles because attitude is everything (Kay, School B).

Moments of joy, of being united together and happy at school including the person means that we look forward to our day at school. We really insist that we be positive, the fact that it is nice to report for work, it is nice that you as a student have come to school. Let's help each other to spend a happy day together (Kay, School B).

Providing support to staff

School leaders recognised the importance of staff wellbeing and this was featured in the participants' narratives to build a supportive relationship between each staff member. The participants mentioned various means of supporting teachers for them to be effective in their teaching and supportive of student wellbeing:

The fact that we always provide support and help most certainly helps one to feel better (Ben, School A).

[When] you give support to the staff to make them content because once they are content they will help others to be content (Kay, School B).

And I believe that if we are happy, teaching and learning will improve (Mat, School B).

It is clear that school leaders play an important part in teacher wellbeing. Teachers' sense of wellbeing is affected by the school leader's management style (Acton & Glasgow, 2015;

Dworkin, 1987; McCallum et al., 2017). A sound SLT-staff relationship supports teachers' emotional health and wellbeing. Cefai and Askeff Williams (2017) reported that the guidance and support of the school administration to teachers in an important process successful mental health initiatives at school. Further research shows that when teachers are helped by their school leaders, it improves student behaviour and wellbeing (Schembri, 2018) and promotes other school members' emotional health and wellbeing in the school community (Public Health England, 2015).

4.3.2 Staff relationships

Staff relationships was another factor that was mentioned as a key component of a whole school approach to wellbeing. It was considered as one of the school's strengths by some of the participants:

The school strengths are the fact that we have a group of teachers who work a lot as a team (Ivy, School A).

...we have good teams and I have great faith in the teachers here... er... and I believe that they do their work and that they do it well and they take an interest (Lia, School A).

The participants commented that collegial support helped to promote teacher wellbeing. The need of a supportive and caring atmosphere among staff members was considered as another important factor. As Ms Zoe (School A) stated, "relations are important in everything. Teachers must always support and care for each other". And similarly, Ms Kay (School B) opined: "Relations are everything. If you have a problem but you feel that you are on good terms with your colleagues then I think half the problem disappears." A colleague that could 'get along well with' is considered by McCallum and Price (2010) as a crucial factor that develops teacher wellbeing. This goes in line with other studies which report that a collaborative collegial relationship among teachers in school improves teacher wellbeing (Acton & Glasgow, 2015; Day & Gu, 2007; Howard & Johnson, 2004).

Some of the participants argued that schools should aim to create space for teachers to work together to build a collaborative school culture. They attested that staff who were actively

engaged in collaborative working structures were more likely to enjoy positive health and wellbeing:

I feel there's collaboration here, learning structures in which everybody helps everybody else... [The Head of School should] encourage and offer opportunities in which teachers could discuss among themselves in order to share resources and other good practices. And that helps us also to adopt good practices from each other (Ivy, School A).

We should focus more on collaborative working structures. We should create more spaces where staff members work together such as in team teaching, encourage teachers to discuss, and find ways of making them feel better (Ben, School A).

We would like our teachers to be actively engaged and participate in learning activities, teamwork, and other school initiatives, showing sensitivity and concern for their students and, as I have already told you, try out new teaching strategies (Zoe, School A).

Collaborative teams are fundamental to a whole school approach to wellbeing. Research shows that when schools create spaces for teachers and foster strong working relationships to help teachers collaborate and engage in sharing best practice, they help to promote a whole school culture. This fosters the wellbeing of all the school community (DES, 2019; Howard et al., 2017).

4.3.3 Student-teacher relationships

The participants supported the idea of schools fostering positive student-teacher relationship to create a caring school environment for students:

I believe strongly that the teacher-student relationship is one of the elements that make a student feel better (Zoe, School A).

The relationship between the staff and the students is really good. I believe that in our school, as a school, teachers love their work and they love children (Mat, School B).

The participants also spoke about this relationship by which staff members help students with problems. Ms Ivy stated that “every teacher should be of support to students”. This relationship helped to create an environment where students feel that they could express their difficulties openly with their teachers. Mr Ben (School A) stated that “if a teacher has a good relationship with children then certainly the problems will be brought out and [he] could refer them... we should always help students overcome every obstacle to learning and create a positive ethos in the school”. Research also shows that when students are passing through tough moments, access to ‘one good adult’ is vital (OECD, 2017). The feeling of adult companionship (Kunnari & Lipponen, 2010) helps them to feel at ease and increases their wellbeing. Moreover, a positive student-teacher relationship carries several advantages and leaves a positive impact on teaching and learning (Galea, 2014), school connectedness, good social interactions with their peers, positive socio-emotional competences (McNeely, Nonnemaker & Blum, 2002), and academic achievement (Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, 2011).

4.3.4 School-parents relationships

Participants of both schools stated that parents were a key stakeholder in their schools’ efforts to promote student wellbeing.

...parents and the family play a key role in influencing their children’s wellbeing (Kay, School B).

So for the sake of the child we communicate, meet and collaborate with all the professionals including the parents. The parents should be active stakeholders in wellbeing initiatives at school (Ivy, School A).

Most of the participants reported that the active support of the parents was another important factor for the success of promoting a whole school approach to wellbeing.

...we invited them several times to come here so that we could sit down and talk to each other. We feel that it is essential for parents to be on board with us (Kay, School B).

The participants stated that when parents were invited for general talks at school, their participation and contribution was of utmost importance. They noted that parents were a good source of information on their children's needs.

At the beginning of the year, regularly throughout the year, we invite parents to visit our school so that we can pass on information related to both the education of their children and also this type of topics... Apart from this during the meeting we give information but at the same time we also collect information concerning specific cases which perhaps have to be ticked off one by one (Mat, School B).

At the beginning of the year we hold parental meetings and I like to emphasize... that, for example, parents should keep themselves aware of what is happening in the life of the student (Ivy, School A).

The participants attested that the collaboration of school with the home was crucial especially when children were in difficulty. As Weare (2015) noted, "parental input is invaluable: it is often their expressed concerns that are the first sign that something is amiss" (p. 8) particularly when students are in their early stage of showing symptoms. Further research shows that parents assist and support schools to address students' needs effectively by providing early identification signs, resources and information (Slee, Dix & Askill-Williams, 2011).

Participants added that most parents cooperated and participated actively in resolving learning and behaviour difficulties at school. They mentioned that there was frequent communication with parents of challenging students but lack of engagement where there were no problems:

Concerning children, where there are challenges or problems there's frequent communication with the Headmistress or the Assistant Head, or the guidance [officer] will call her so in that regard communication is exchanged. Where there are no problems or unfortunately where it [only] appears there are no problems we assume that everything's fine and we move on (Lia, School A).

...when we note a bit of trouble we always bring the parents on board. We send for the parents, try to discuss what's happening at home; perhaps there's some trouble at home which is causing these things, apart from the considerable pressure coming from here (Ivy, School A).

...we send for the parents and the guardians and all the stakeholders concerned and examine... er... the situation and what we can do for the way forward. Ideally the parents and the guardians cooperate (Ana, School A).

Schools usually engage with parents of challenging students because “without parental cooperation, long term, successful management of troubled students is very difficult” (Olsen & Cooper, 2001, p. 119). Parental consultation, however, is required in many issues and not when there are behavioural problems only (Demanuele, 2013).

The participants reported that they made use of various ways to engage and empower parents at school. Ms Kay (School B) said that when parents were involved in school activities such as cooking, it helped them to be closer to the school: “you hold open days and invite parents... Once we also had a parent who helped out in the cooking activity which was a success; you try as much as possible to create home-to-school links”. Although it was stated that the schools tried to involve the parents actively all the time, some pointed out that some parents did not cooperate:

One doesn't always find that cooperation. Sometimes they say 'yes' and then in fact they don't cooperate (Ana, School A).

The participants would like schools to be more open and actively collaborative in recruiting the cooperation of parents. Their aim was to make parents feel welcome and included in the school environment in order to help them get involved in school planning and decision-making, as recommended by the literature (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013). It is through a coalition with parents that schools can reach their goals regarding mental health and wellbeing (Cefai & Askeff Williams, 2017). Thus it is in the hands of the school leaders to find means and ways to make parents feel that “their views, wishes and feelings are taken into account, and [that] they are kept fully informed, so [that] they can participate in decisions

taken about their children and [are] provided with information and support” (Weare, 2015, p. 8).

4.3.5 School support staff and services to address students’ wellbeing needs

The participants agreed that their schools work collaboratively with various support services. They reported that as an initial support to assist students, schools had a guidance teams and school counsellors on their staff:

...our Guidance Unit, who are excellent, who know the pulse everywhere in order to support student wellbeing (Ivy, School A).

...the guidance teachers always help and it isn’t the first time that a teacher faces some difficulty but still goes to speak to the guidance [teachers]. These are people who are the most well-read in these matters (Ivy, School A).

I observe the guidance teams at work all the time, for whom no problem is too small... they attack the problem at once and solve it (Lia, School A).

...we have strong teams who keep an eye on the students and we also have a school counsellor at school, and so she gives a lot of help to the students (Kay, School B).

Participants regarded the Learning Support Zone as another important school service that supports student wellbeing at school:

[N]ow the school strengths consist of the many good groups we have and here I can mention to you the Learning Zone in the students’ emotional health and wellbeing (Zoe, School A).

What they get done in the Learning Support Zone... er... they cater not only for students who have mental health challenges but also those who have other challenges (Ana, School A).

Another point that I haven't mentioned is the Learning Support Zone which we have in the school... where they are referred for the Learning Support Zone. There you have teachers and LSEs who help them according to their needs, including social needs or else [instructed on] how you are integrated in a group or how better to organize your work (Kay, School B).

The participants appreciated the work done by the Learning Support Zones to promote student wellbeing. They believed that the objective of the Learning Support Zone was to provide individualised support programmes tailored for student needs in order to enhance their social and emotional development. This took place through "activities and interactions that encourage the development of the student's sense of emotional security, self-awareness, socio-emotional competence, and confidence" (Cefai & Cooper, 2011, p. 66).

Some participants referred to other support services when they did not have the appropriate means to address social and emotional problems at their school. These include, as in the literature, social workers, educational psychologists and the use of "child guidance unit" (Kay, School B and Ivy, School A). Other participants referred to the safe schools programme: "there are anti bullying services, substance abuse, child safety services..." (Ben, School A). Other psycho-social support services were also mentioned, such as "OASI, Autism Support, Respite Centre, speech therapist, and occupational therapist" (Ivy, School A).

Two participants mentioned, however, the lack of personnel specialized in wellbeing at school.

Obviously, if there is someone among the staff who is an expert in that field it can help (Lia, School A).

The participants mentioned the usefulness of a healthy, collaborative relationship with the support services:

The school has a good relationship with other professionals such as counsellor, social worker (Zoe, School A).

...we, as a school, have guidance teachers, we have the school counsellor and we work very well together, always to ensure that the student feels well and succeeds at school and in life (Mat, School B).

The relationship with the support services is very good and I feel it is useful. It cannot but work well... Because there you have a link with the home. It's useless to work here at school when there is no link with the home (Kay, School B).

They added that they worked simultaneously with other professionals to help students.

We have always found support from the Education [Department] and we work hand-in-hand, always in the interest of the student (Ben, School A).

The Guidance [Section], we have a guidance group who are out of this world, I mean, we work a lot together (Zoe, School A).

Apart from the guidance team and career guidance, there are also the social workers, the psychologist all of whom always work hand-in-hand with us. We're a team. If there's some difficulty concerning a student, we then send for them, make appointments, the parents come and we take it up from there (Ivy, School A).

The participants thought that creating an effective partnership with support professionals both within and outside school was a priority in supporting student wellbeing. Collaboration and communication with every professional and showing respect towards their responsibilities is of utmost importance (Hughes & Cooper, 2007). This type of relationship helps schools to identify students with early mental health issues and thus ensure easier access to support services (Demanuele, 2013) and provide students proper and timely support (Ofsted, 2015; Stirling & Emery, 2016).

4.4 Staff awareness and education in wellbeing

4.4.1 Education for SLT

The participants felt that the training they had received on wellbeing matters was very useful for their work. They argued that nowadays, SLT members were introduced to Mindfulness training to address their wellbeing:

Recently I attended wellbeing sessions. I myself this year had seven weeks, every Tuesday of seven weeks training in wellbeing. It was very interesting and we learned many ideas on how you can actuate things in your school (Mat, School B).

What was organized for us Assistant Heads was a course of six weeks, six times not six entire weeks, six times... er... to help us overcome certain challenges and stress we come across at work (Ben, School A).

[W]e held a Mindfulness course which also helps a lot in the field of wellbeing. The fact that you're given training on how to keep yourself grounded helps, because we, who lead a life of stress, are not always able to function properly. That is, if you don't find a way of keeping calm and work on, your brain will stop. And this Mindfulness course had helped me a lot in that sense (Ivy, School A).

The participants reported that engaging in mindfulness practice had positive effects in their life. This is in line with other studies which found that mindfulness practice helps educators "to live in the present moment, with the promise of reduced anxiety and depression and heightened performance and life satisfaction, and then instantly and reliably realize that state of being" (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 148).

In this respect, Ms Ana (School A) concluded that "[t]he fact that we attended a course helped us a lot. It was a very positive thing and I believe that it helps us a lot at work especially to address the wellbeing of the staff and the students."

The participants commented that the investment in their professional development helped them to feel well and thus promote student wellbeing. The importance and value given by school leaders to professional development on wellbeing areas and stress management should not be underestimated (Cenkseven-Onder & Sari, 2009). Jamstho (2015) noted that

to promote a whole school approach to wellbeing, the attitudes and competences of the school leaders had to be addressed.

4.4.2 Staff education to understand students and their needs

Another aspect underlined by the participants was to provide educators with training in understanding student needs. Ms Zoe argued that “[s]ome of the teachers don’t admit that there is this reality and that there are these complex needs... So I consider the most [effective help is to] give them many types of training”. The participants mentioned that teachers were encouraged to attend relevant professional development sessions on how to meet the needs of the school population and they were encouraged to incorporate and model learnings in their practice. Several participants emphasized the need for the school staff to be adequately trained in student wellbeing:

Already a great amount of work is being done but I believe that there should be more focus on promoting mental health and wellbeing, more meetings where there are perhaps also different experts so that perhaps everybody offers his ideas... there should be more training so that children, teachers and ourselves are satisfied and enjoy our life of work (Mat, School B).

In terms of courses and so on as far as I know the staff hasn’t had one on how to support students’ wellbeing but it would be ideal to cater for it (Ana, School A).

Some COPE, PD session which helps teachers and informs them on what they can do to support students’ wellbeing – I think it would be a good idea (Ben, School A).

Similar to PDs on assessment that have perhaps been held in the past, or PDs on discipline or PDs on the use of technology in the classroom, there should be held a PD on mental health and the wellbeing of students and staff (Lia, School A).

The participants agreed that teachers required professional development to ensure that they had a deep conceptual understanding of wellbeing which they could apply to support student

wellbeing. They argued that increased training in teaching social and emotional learning was necessary to achieve a successful school-wide implementation of wellbeing. DePaoli et al. (2017) found that schools are successful in promoting wellbeing when teachers are provided with proper professional training in developing their students' social and emotional skills. Further research attests that continuing teacher training promotes a broader vision of education and affirms the value and meaningfulness of students' mental health and wellbeing (Cefai & Askell Williams, 2017; Cefai & Cavioni, 2014).

Various participants also underlined the need for school staff to be trained to support students who exhibited social and emotional difficulties:

In one of the COPE sessions we attended recently, some two months ago, we were helped by two psychiatrists, one of whom works in hospital and obviously whenever we require to refer some students, she is one of these experts who look at the cases... She came to school, delivered a session for us, trained us and told us how she as a person ... how she operates when she has similar cases (Mat, School B).

COPE sessions for teachers so that was one of the COPE sessions that we held on mental health, on self-harm because we had already been noting cases of self-harm... So like this first aid course the one on mental health was really helpful because we were shown many scenarios (Ivy, School A).

Wyn et al. (2000) underlined the importance of providing appropriate training for all educators to help them identify worrying signs in vulnerable students and recognise the need for early intervention. In fact, the participants reported that such courses provided teachers with the tools to ensure timely identification of students who would benefit from targeted support:

...holding some type of training so that they can also follow is not a bad idea (Ben, School A).

That... er... teachers are given instructions that if you note anything you are not sure about, yes, then you cannot say now that will be checked by someone else... [but] er... I should approach an Assistant Head or a guidance [teacher] (Lia, School A).

Some type of courses to all teachers may also be held... there were times when courses were held to [help teachers] recognize... if I remember correctly one was held on the mental wellbeing of students. How teachers can recognize, know beforehand... er... recognize immediately that certain children need help (Ben School A).

In fact the same participant reported that such sessions had already been fruitful:

During the year we noted an improvement, that is, teachers who before had never told us that, listen, it seems there's a difficulty, or an LSE would keep everything to himself and not tell you anything... during the year we noted that they were reporting and bringing us evidence and we could work more (Ivy, School A).

It is evident in the participant data that when teachers are provided with the appropriate training, they support the development of a whole school approach. This finding concurs with a study that found that a whole school approach to wellbeing requires the appropriate training of staff to be able to identify mental health difficulties in students and then be able to refer them to relevant support (Public Health England, 2015).

4.4.3 Staff education in wellbeing

The participants acknowledged that wellbeing was important not only for the students but also for the staff themselves. Thus school leaders should offer appropriate support to promote teacher wellbeing, such as professional development in this area:

Yes, I think that if they offer training on teachers' wellbeing it will be interesting even for the teachers themselves (Ana, School A).

Some staff members asked earnestly for more PDs, COPE sessions on the wellbeing of persons (Kay, School B).

We held both PD sessions, we held COPE sessions dealing with these topics. There are others, I'm sure of it because [...] in the plan for next year they are already planned to be organized for us, the staff. Obviously, if we benefit from it as a staff and are satisfied we can then pass it on to the students (Mat, School B).

The importance of such courses was to provide “an opportunity for growth also for the staff to be more tolerant... and be able to help as well” (Ana, School A).

Holding courses that help the staff is very important for the improvement of the learning process because everybody becomes more self-aware and happier at the place of work, while students look forward to school (Ben, School A).

The participants saw the importance of creating future opportunities of staff development and counselling to reduce stress and increase teaching effectiveness. Howard et al. (2017) argue that school leaders should promote ongoing professional development for teachers to support their wellbeing. This is considered central to promoting a whole school approach to wellbeing. It helps teachers become more mindful and caring in their classroom, making an improvement in their relationships with others more likely, and affirms the importance of knowing the present moment (Garrison Institute, 2005).

The participants also mentioned that teachers should be aware of the services available when in need. Ms Lia (School A) said that “This year we had a visit from the ESP Employment Support Programme”. Ms Zoe (School A) added that “a government employee feels the need to talk with someone and needs help, what he should do and whom to talk to”. School leaders should ensure that appropriate support systems are put in place for staff wellbeing and they should be provided with details of the available relevant supports (DES, 2019).

4.4.4 Parents' education

The participants also referred to the importance of helping parents and carers to develop parenting skills. The participants opined that although limited, general talks for parents to

help them acquire the skills to help their children's wellbeing were held at school. They mentioned courses offered to parents and the need for parental education:

Yes, sometimes there were some services, some meetings with parents... There were times when speakers came from outside school but these types of meetings were few, that is, but some were held, some were held (Ben, School A).

...during general talks held with parents we tell them ourselves what we have available in terms of support for students and how they can help (Ivy, School A).

That would be an opportunity, if talks for parents are held, to invite psychologists or experts on mental health, wellbeing to deliver very useful talks for parents (Lia, School A).

Obviously many formal meetings are held but you're mentioning mental health and wellbeing. We're still a bit behind there (Zoe, School A).

The participants agreed that the school had an important part to play in supporting the kind of parenting and family life that boosted well-being. Weare (2015) suggested that schools need to help parents who have a negative parenting experience and thus be able "to respond to their children's behaviour in emotionally literate ways, to spend quality time with their children, to focus on their children's strengths, to listen, empathise and understand the cause of their behaviour rather than acting harshly or inconsistently" (p. 8). Schools can help to provide parents with such competences.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the main findings of this study along with a discussion of the most salient issues. The next concluding chapter presents a summary of the study, its implications and limitations, and recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

This chapter concludes this research study by giving a short summary of the main research findings, the implications for practice, the limitations of the study and areas for further research.

5.1 Summary of the findings

This study, which adopted a qualitative approach using in-depth interviews with seven senior SLT members in secondary schools, draws on their experiences on a wide range of good practices that can be implemented in schools to promote wellbeing. The findings show the participants' belief that a whole school approach to secondary school student and staff wellbeing was embedded in the school culture, curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment methods, management, relationships and professional development. In their view, these initiatives had a profound effect on wellbeing in schools. Four areas of a whole school approach to wellbeing were identified: the school culture and environment; the curriculum; relationships and partnerships; and training and support.

A whole school approach involves providing the ethos, culture and environment that can best support individual wellbeing in school especially inside the classrooms. The school management can play a pivotal role in providing a vision and means to support the wellbeing needs of its stakeholders. School leaders reported that they were accessible and adopted an open-door policy in respect of students, staff and parents. Their schools paid attention to a healthy physical environment to ensure a safe and welcoming learning environment for all stakeholders. The importance of preventing any form of bullying and harassment was considered vital for the promotion of wellbeing. Another significant factor that school leaders underlined was the adoption of a positive approach to behaviour management. School leaders also encouraged staff members to participate actively in school decisions. Participants also reported that one type of support they sought to provide was the mentoring of new teachers in the school environment. Schools also held various social activities during which school members could engage and develop a sense of belonging. Their schools felt the

importance of continuing to foster a culture of praise, acknowledgement, recognition and appreciation among all stakeholders.

The curriculum and teaching and learning processes can significantly contribute to a climate that promotes student wellbeing. The school management personnel who participated in this study placed great importance on the classrooms and the curriculum for the promotion of student wellbeing. They also underlined the need to raise the profile of their students' voice and engage them in school activities. They argued that an effective pedagogy that promoted wellbeing was one that was student-centred, included differentiated teaching and learning activities, promoted an inclusive and practical-skills approach and encouraged the use of different modes of assessment and feedback. Their schools organised various outings, extracurricular and sports activities which also supported student wellbeing.

Relationships are at the heart of a whole school approach to wellbeing. School leaders stressed that they sought collaborative and supportive relationships with the staff. They tried to be good communicators and active listeners, and be empathic where possible. They created spaces and opportunities to engage teachers in sharing best practices. A caring school environment for students was promoted by encouraging positive student-teacher relationships. Their schools also had to work closely with parents, especially those of students with challenging behaviour problems, and engage them in school activities. They expressed their belief that working collaboratively with different support services was fundamental in facilitating a holistic approach to provide needed support and promote wellbeing at school.

In the context of a whole school approach to wellbeing, the participants mentioned investment in staff awareness and wellbeing training. The school leaders themselves participated in mindfulness wellbeing courses and acknowledged its importance in their daily lives. They provided various professional development sessions to help educators understand students and address their needs. The participants argued that the continuing professional development of school staff helped the latter to realize that they had a clear role to play when identifying and supporting students. Their schools also provided parent education sessions and underlined the importance of increasing such opportunities.

5.2 Recommendations for policy and practice

Although the immediate context of this study concerned only one state college, its findings may provide a better understanding of how school leaders may promote the wellbeing of their school community through a whole school approach. This section focuses on recommendations for policy and practice in Maltese secondary schools in light of the findings and conclusions of this study.

Schools need to develop a supportive school and classroom climate and ethos which promote a sense of belonging among both students and staff. They should set up policies such as those related to Anti-bullying, Behaviour Management and Wellbeing that are effective. Schools should make sure that the physical environment is clean and well-kept with good ventilation and light. Schools should provide various means for both students and teachers to be physically active during the school hours by offering access to sports facilities where possible. An open-door policy for all school members is recommended to enable two-way communication and feedback among members of the school community. There should be mentoring schemes led by SLT members or senior teachers that provide occupational and social support to newly qualified teachers and new staff members. Schools also need to ensure that all the staff are empowered and given a sense of ownership in the development and formulation of school policies and initiatives especially those that prioritise wellbeing. Schools need to show visible signs of appreciation of staff efforts and achievements, while the creation of a school social committee would provide support in instances of staff bereavement and sickness, celebrate marriages and births, and organise social activities for all school members even outside school.

Schools have a central role to play in supporting and promoting student learning on wellbeing and for wellbeing. They should embed wellbeing in the curriculum and extracurricular activities by linking sports activities, bands and dance clubs to develop skills, knowledge and awareness of wellbeing. Student wellbeing should be integrated in the curriculum across all subjects, with subject teachers giving priority to relationships, communication, collaboration, positive behaviour management and constructive conflict management in their teaching. They need to engage in pedagogies and assessment which encourage participation, address

diversity, include active, cooperative and peer learning, generate engagement and enthusiasm and connect with life outside the school. They should also promote their students' voice by empowering them to participate in whole school activities such as assemblies, student councils, newsletters and peer mentoring.

Relationships between each school member are a crucial aspect of a whole school approach to wellbeing and should be characterised by respect, active listening and openness. School leaders need to offer help to any school member who needs support, such as those who are struggling with classroom management problems and/or mental health problems. More effective communication between school leaders and teachers in secondary schools is highly recommended. Moreover, the SLT's presence in corridors, greeting the school staff and students as well as monitoring behaviour is very important. They also need to promote collegiality, teamwork and collaborative spaces (for instance during a staff meeting) so that together they can identify best practices and share success stories. The SLT should also encourage positive student-teacher relationships and build a good relationship with parents and engage them in student wellbeing activities. The schools need to establish strong working relationships with all support services to support student wellbeing needs.

Professional development sessions for school staff need should be organised. School staff members need to be provided with adequate training to support and build student wellbeing and address their social and emotional needs. These sessions could also be a great opportunity to provide clear referral pathways whenever teachers identify a student in difficulty. On the other hand, professional development sessions for school leaders and educators in relation to their own mental health and wellbeing could also be a key part of a whole school approach to wellbeing. Schools might use professional development sessions to enable staff to develop structures to seek help and assistance, for instance, those linked with Employees' Support Programmes.

5.3 Limitations of the study

One of the limitations of this study was that only seven SLT professionals were interviewed. Although the findings are consonant with other local and international studies, the fact that the research only consisted of this small number of interviews precludes generalization.

The study focused on wellbeing of staff and students from the SLT's perspective; it is important also to explore the views of students and staff on how the SLT may facilitate their wellbeing in the context of a whole school approach. Parents – key stakeholders in a whole school approach to wellbeing – were also not among the participants of this study.

This study involved only one of the ten state colleges of this country, and only one level of schooling, that is, the secondary level. While secondary schools in themselves offer a distinct area of research, the inclusion of SLT participants working in primary schools would have enabled the research to cover collaboration between primary and secondary SLTs in, for example, the transition from primary to secondary in the context of wellbeing.

5.4 Recommendations for future research

This research study could be replicated in primary, Church and Independent schools in order to compare and contrast findings. The study focused on the perspectives of SLT members. The research could be extended to involve other members of the school community. The perspective of students from different cohorts may be investigated to explore the ways and strategies that students feel can help them to promote their wellbeing. A study with teacher participants from different sectors could be carried out in order to obtain insight into the practices they employ to promote wellbeing in the classroom. Such a study would also reveal what they find supportive in promoting their own wellbeing as practitioners, including their expectations from the SLT. A quantitative research study with SLT members or other school stakeholders could be conducted by means of an online questionnaire, targeting a larger and more representative sample, thus producing generalisable findings.

5.5 Conclusion

This research study on the promotion of wellbeing in schools was found to be very current one because mental health and wellbeing are becoming more pertinent issues in our schools. Indeed, recently the Education Directorate issued official policies on wellbeing in schools. Schools are prioritizing and investing in staff and student wellbeing to enable them to perform and function well at school and in their daily life. Wellbeing has many facets and this study should be highly relevant to and meaningful for the promotion of staff and student wellbeing through a whole school approach. The findings offer practical insights to educational leaders in Malta to help them enhance wellbeing for both students and staff through a whole school approach. Cefai and Cavioni (2014, as cited in Cefai et al., 2018) argue that it is “critical for inspiring school leaders to promote and actively encourage a broader vision of education in their schools” (p. 74) by providing adequate guidance and support to all school members. “If a country has a big dream, the education system of that country must support and advance that dream” (Powdyel, as cited in Bicknell, 2012). Weare (2015) notes that a whole school approach to wellbeing should be “everyone’s business, with genuine involvement of all staff, pupils, governors, parents and the community and outside agencies” (p. 5). Schools are places where wellbeing should be promoted to help both students and teachers to flourish and achieve their full potential. Murray-Harvey and Slee (2010) argue that “it is important that schools provide an environment that makes it possible for their students to thrive and to achieve, not only academically but in all ways that relate to their overall well-being” (p. 271). On the other hand, teacher wellbeing is of critical importance for the future of education and impacts on student outcomes (McCallum et al., 2017). Indeed, as Confucius stated a long time ago, all teachers contribute to the education of the whole child.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Permission Letter – College Principal

Appendix 1: Permission Letter – College principal

[Date]

Dear College Principal,

I, Janet Haber, am reading for my Master's degree in Educational Leadership and Management at the Faculty of Education, University of Malta. As part of this course I will be carrying out research in order to write a dissertation. My dissertation supervisor is Prof Carmel Cefai.

The title of my dissertation is "A whole school approach to Wellbeing in Secondary Schools: The Perceptions of the SLT". For this study, I will be investigating the views of the Senior Leadership Team in secondary schools on how they can address the mental health and wellbeing of their school community through a whole school approach. I would be grateful if you would give me permission to conduct this research study at Middle and Secondary Schools.

Should permission be granted, I would like to carry out interviews with two Heads of School and their respective Assistant Heads. This semi-structured interview will contain questions regarding the existing strategies that school leaders are implementing in promoting students' and staff's wellbeing, and the key actions they can take to embed a whole school approach to wellbeing at their school. Each interview will take approximately 45 minutes to complete and will be audio-recorded.

I will first ask the respective Heads of School for their kind permission to carry out the data collection in their schools, following which I will forward information letters to Assistant Heads. Participation is completely voluntary and participants are guaranteed anonymity, confidentiality and the possibility of withdrawing from the study at any time. A new name will be given to each participant in order to protect their identity. All audio recorded data will be destroyed on completion of the study.

I would like to assure you that I will abide by all the ethical guidelines issued by the University Research Ethics Committee of the University of Malta throughout the course of my research.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

Janet Haber

Mobile number: 79*****

Email address: janet.haber.07@um.edu.mt

Supervisor's Details

Name: Prof Carmel Cefai

Email address: carmel.cefai@um.edu.mt

Researcher's signature

APPENDIX 2

Permission Letter – Head of School

Appendix 2: Permission Letter – Head of school

[Date]

Dear Head of School,

I, Janet Haber, am reading for my Master’s degree in Educational Leadership and Management at the Faculty of Education, University of Malta. As part of this course I will be carrying out research in order to write a dissertation. My dissertation supervisor is Prof Carmel Cefai.

The title of my dissertation is “A whole school approach to Wellbeing in Secondary Schools: The Perceptions of the SLT”. For this study, I will be investigating the views of the Senior Leadership Team in secondary schools on how they can address the mental health and wellbeing of their school community through a whole school approach.

I would be grateful if you would give me permission to conduct my research study at your school.

Should you give me permission, I would like to carry out interviews with you and your Assistant Heads. The semi-structured interview will contain questions regarding the existing strategies that school leaders are implementing in promoting students’ and staff’s wellbeing, and the key actions they can take to embed a whole school approach to wellbeing at their school. Each interview will take approximately 45 minutes to complete and will be audio-recorded.

Participation in the study is voluntary and participants are guaranteed anonymity, confidentiality and the possibility of withdrawing from the study at any time. A new name will be given to each participant in order to protect their identity. All audio recorded data will be destroyed on completion of the study.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

Janet Haber

Mobile number: 79*****

Email address: janet.haber.07@um.edu.mt

Supervisor’s Details

Name: Prof Carmel Cefai

Email address: carmel.cefai@um.edu.mt

Researcher’s signature

APPENDIX 3

Information Sheet

Appendix 3: Information Sheet

[Date]

Dear Head of School/Assistant Head,

I, Janet Haber, am reading for my Master's degree in Educational Leadership and Management at the Faculty of Education, University of Malta. As part of this course I will be conducting a research project which is required for my dissertation. I am doing my research under the supervision of Prof Carmel Cefai, University of Malta.

The title of my dissertation is "A whole school approach to Wellbeing in Secondary Schools: The Perceptions of the SLT". For this study, I will be investigating the views of the SLT in secondary schools on how they can address the mental health and wellbeing of their school community through a whole school approach. I will explore the existing strategies that school leaders are implementing in promoting students' and staff's wellbeing, and the key actions they can take to embed a whole school approach to wellbeing at their school.

This study takes a qualitative approach to address the research question, by undertaking an in-depth study of the perceptions of SLT members. I am inviting you to participate in a semi-structured interview which will be held at school. It will explore your views on the role of the SLT in promoting the mental health and wellbeing of both students and staff at the school. The interview should not take more than 45 minutes and will be audio-recorded. Participation is completely voluntary and participants are guaranteed anonymity, confidentiality and the possibility of withdrawing from the study at any time. A new name will be given to each participant in order to protect their identity. All audio recorded data will be destroyed on completion of the study.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

Janet Haber

Mobile number: 79*****

Email address: janet.haber.07@um.edu.mt

Supervisor's Details

Name: Prof Carmel Cefai

Email address: carmel.cefai@um.edu.mt

Researcher's signature

APPENDIX 4

Consent Form

Appendix 4: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Head of School/Assistant Head

A whole school approach to Wellbeing in Secondary Schools: The Perceptions of the SLT

Date: _____

I, _____, have read and understood the information related to the research study about the perceptions of the SLT with regards to the promotion of wellbeing in secondary schools as a whole school approach. I hereby give my consent to take part in an audio recorded interview.

I understand that:

- My participation is voluntary
- I can withdraw my consent at any time without suffering any consequence
- Anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed
- Audio recorded data will be securely stored and destroyed on completion of the study.

I accept to take part in this research study on promoting wellbeing in secondary schools.

Head of School/Assistant Head Name

Head of School/Assistant Head Signature

Date: _____

Researcher's signature

APPENDIX 5

Interview Questions

Appendix 5: Interview Questions

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How does the school seek to provide visible senior leadership in the promotion of the students' and staff's emotional health and wellbeing?
2. What do you think are the main areas in the school's culture and climate related to the promotion of mental health and wellbeing? What are the school's strengths? What challenges are there? What can be added?
3. What do you think are the main areas within the curriculum related to the promotion of mental health and wellbeing? What are the school's strengths? What challenges are there? What may be added?
4. How does the school ensure timely and effective identification of students who would benefit from targeted support and ensure appropriate referral to support services?
5. How are staff supported in relation to their own health and wellbeing?
6. How are staff sustained to be able to support student wellbeing?
7. How does the school work in partnership with parents and carers to promote the school community's mental health and wellbeing?
8. How can the school's SLT improve its efforts to promote the mental health and wellbeing of both students and staff?

APPENDIX 6

Excerpts from Transcripts

Appendix 6: Excerpts from Transcripts

Participant's Name	Original Excerpts from Transcripts in Maltese	Translated Excerpts in English
Zoe	I-iskola għandha an open door policy... you can come any time tal-konvenjenza tiegħek u dik diġa turi how much we care.	The school has an open-door policy... you can come any time at your convenience and this already shows how much we care.
Kay	U dan hu viżibbli għax pereżempju jien qatt ma nagħlqu l-bieb. Qiegħda nbati jiena imma l-bieb qatt ma jkun magħluq.	And this is visible because, for example, I never close the door. It's me who's suffering but the door is never closed.
Ivy	Li l-istudent iħossu tajjeb l-iskola, it-teacher tħossha tajjeb l-iskola can be created in an atmosphere... more seating areas, better atmosphere in the grounds, affarijiet żgħar bħal more bins in the corridors. Jiġifieri inti jistgħu jkunu affarijiet żgħar li huma qegħdin jistennew mingħandek.	For a student to feel good at school, for a teacher to feel good at school, can be created in the atmosphere... more seating areas, better atmosphere in the grounds, little things like bins in the corridors. I mean, what they expect from you can be little things
Zoe	Hawnhekk hawn emotional health and wellbeing u l-Head semmiet l-air condition. [laughing] Pereżempju u int tgħid mhux mal-emotional health and wellbeing imma ara kemm ikun hemm sħana fl-istaffrooms u l-Head ħa tipprova tixtri l-AC.	Here there are emotional health and wellbeing and the Head mentioned air-conditioning, for example, [laughing]. You may say it's not related to emotional health and wellbeing but you must see how hot the staffrooms are, and the Head is trying to buy AC.
Kay	il-gym għandu t-timetable u jekk ikun vojta l-għalliema jkunu jistgħu jużawh... Anke per eżempju l-għalliema talbu li nipprovdli shower ħalli dan li jkun, jkun jista' juża l-gym u iħossu aħjar.	The gym follows a timetable and if it is vacant the teachers can use it. For example, the teachers also requested that I provide a shower so that one could use the gym and feel better
Lia	Ikollok studenti ma tistax timmagine min xiex ikunu għaddejjin f'każ ta' bullying and	There are students whom you cannot imagine what they are going through in case of bullying

	we don't know u anke ġieli tad-dar ma jafux u allura nemmen that with a caring atmosphere ma' dawn l-istudenti hemm lok li joħorgu aktar il-problemi.	and we don't know and sometimes even at home they don't know and so I believe that a caring atmosphere with these students would help to bring out more problems.
Ivy	qed ikollna ħafna diffikultajiet ta' wellbeing differenti fost hemm il-bullying u qed ikun hawn ukoll cyber bullying u meta jidħol rapport ta' dan it-tip aħna mill-ewwel nieħdu action.	We are having many different difficulties concerning wellbeing, including bullying, and there are also instances of cyber-bullying and when this type of report comes in we immediately take action.
Mat	Kemm jista' jkun aħna nippruvaw inżommu d-dixxiplina biex kemm l-istudenti u kemm it-teachers ikollna ħajja aktar faċli ġol-iskola.	As far as possible we try to keep discipline so that both students and teachers lead an easier life at school.
Zoe	Mela ħa nippruvaw nirrangaw is-sistema tal-behaviour management tagħna li t-teachers u kulhadd jgħidilha d-dixxiplina... to develop a positive approach to discipline ħalli ftit ftit nersqu għall-restorative justice.	So we're going to fix our behaviour management system which teachers and everyone else calls discipline... to develop a positive approach to discipline so that little by little we get closer to restorative justice.
Zoe	għalhekk xħin student jiġi hawnhekk kuntent u fil-klassi hemm id-dixxiplina, u ġol-klassi hemm l-behaviour, ħa jkollu good emotional health għax ħa jkun kuntent aktar.	And so when a student comes here happy and there's discipline in class, and [good] behaviour in class, he will enjoy emotional health because he will be happier.
Ben	Ingagħlu lit-teachers jipparteċipaw fid-deċiżjoni li jittieħdu fl-iskola.	We urge teachers to participate in the decisions taken at school.
Ivy	nemmen li tista' tinkuraġihom u tissaportjahom when they have risks, tħegġeg u turi interest f'teacher-initiated activities, tinvolvi aktar għalliema f'deċiżjonijiet li jittieħdu l-iskola.	I believe that you can encourage them and bear with them when they are at risk, encourage and take an interest in teacher-initiated activities, involve teachers more in decisions taken at school.

Kay	jekk inti għandek xi staff member li jiehu l-inizjattiva aħna neħduhom policy and back that initiative. Għax naħseb li tgħin ħafna biex il-persuni jhossuhom aħjar u jkun hemm build up tas-self-esteem.	If you have some staff member who takes the initiative we [adopt it as] policy and back that initiative. Because I think it really helps and help them as well to build up their self-esteem.
Zoe	dawk li huma ġodda ħa jkollok ftit mentorship matul is-sena kollha, li dawk li ġew għas-sistema tagħna jigifieri mhux teachers ġodda imma ġew pereżempju minn skola oħra għax xorta ma jkunx jafu ħafna affarijiet allura dik tħossok ftit naqra hekk.	Concerning those who are new, you're going to have to do mentorship throughout the year – those who are new to our system and not newly recruited teachers, such as those coming from other schools. Because these also wouldn't know a lot of things and so this makes you feel in a certain way.
Ivy	meta jiġi xi teacher ġdid qisu l-ewwel ma jkunx jaf x'ser isib u għalkemm l-maġġoranza tat-teachers always try to make them feel welcome, xorta inħoss li għandhom bżonn xi tip ta' mentoring.	When a new teacher comes it is as if he doesn't know what to expect and although the majority of teachers always try to make them feel welcome, still I feel that they need some type of mentoring.
Kay	Xi ħaġa oħra li qegħdin nagħmlu u ilni ftit nagħmluha qegħdin nagħmlu social activities għall-adulti. Huma ikliet jew mixjiet flimkien u l-istess anke għall-istudenti... Kollu bil-għan li dak li jkun iħossu sew flimkien.	Something else we have been doing for some time are social activities for adults. These consist of meals or walks, and the same goes for students... all this with the aim of making one feel well in the company of others.
Ben	norganizaw aktar attivitajiet fejn niltaqgħu aktar ma' xulxin. Nibnu kultura fejn kull membru iħoss a sense of belonging, iħossu parti mill-iskola.	organizing more activities during which we meet more often. Building a culture where every member feels a sense of belonging, feels part of the school.
Lia	il-coffee break ħudu dak bżonn. Il-break ħudu. Għid kelma ma' sħabek. Ix-xogħol teħdux id-dar jekk tista tlestih hawn, qum imxi passigġata.	You should take the coffee-break; that is a need. You should take the break. Exchange a few words with your colleagues. Don't take

		your work home if you can do it here; get up and go for a walk.
Ivy	fejn ninvolvu ukoll lill-istudenti u dawk isiru waqt l-assemblies to show appreciation to the teachers from the students.	Where we involve also students and these take place during assemblies so that students can show their appreciation of their teachers.
Ivy	Qisu l-aktar area tal-curriculum li tiffoka fuq wellbeing imorru fil-PSED imma mhux biss.	It appears that the curriculum area which most focuses on wellbeing is that they attend PSED but it's not just that.
Ben	Fejn jidhol teaching and learning zgur li hemm il-PSED illi jgħin ħafna lill-istudenti.	As far as teaching and learning is concerned what is certain is that PSED really helps students.
Zoe	Jekk taqbad is-Social Studies u qiegħed jgħidlek kif tgħin fis-soċjetà, jekk taqbad ir-Religjon għandek it-topics fuq it-tolleranza, jekk inti għandek l-Ethics, eee jgħifieri aħna l-areas tagħna huma kollha ħa titkellem fuq fuq what are mainly our values tal-education.	If you take Social Studies it says how you can help society, if you take Religion you have topics on tolerance, if you take Ethics... er... I mean our areas all speak generally on what our values of education are.
Zoe	Hawnhekk is-sugġetti kollha all the subjects can promote mental health and wellbeing. All of them. Kull sugġett.	Here all the subjects can promote mental health and wellbeing. All of them. Every subject.
Zoe	Aħna l-promotion tal-mental health and wellbeing għalija huma how to be happy with yourself, how to be content and how to work with others, any area of curriculum li qiegħda tagħmel mhux li inti tibrilla u tkun bravu u kif hekk. Aħna that's why ersaqna lejn celebration day u mhux għal multi intelligence biss because the key today is teamwork. How can you fit with others?	The promotion of mental health and wellbeing for me are how to be happy with yourself, how to be content and how to work with others; any area of the curriculum you cover is not aimed at making you shine and clever and this sort of thing. We... that's why we moved towards Celebration Day and not only for multi-intelligence because the key today is teamwork. How you can fit with others?

Lia	U l-għalliema mhux biss jiffukaw fuq il-kontent tal-lezzjoni imma jzommu f'moħħhom prinċipji essenzjali għal-ħajja bħal ngħidu aħna li jgħinu lil xulxin, ugwaljanza, li jifhmu u jagħrfu l-emozzjonijiet tagħhom u ta' madwarhom kif ukoll il-bżonnijiet tal-oħrajn.	And the teachers not only focus on the content of the lesson but keep in mind essential principles for life, such as helping others, equality, that they understand and recognize their own emotions and of those around them, as well as the needs of others.
Lia	U hemmhekk jidhol il-wellbeing ukoll, ir-rispett lejn il-persuna nnifsu u lejn l-oħrajn.	And wellbeing comes into it as well, respect towards the person himself and towards others.
Ana	Ngħallmu lill-istudenti skills li jużahom għall-ħajja ta' kuljum bħal conflict resolution, problem solving, coping skills, ... to be resilient	We teach students skills that they use in everyday life such as conflict resolution, problem solving, coping skills, ... to be resilient
Ben	Kif ukoll kull teacher għandu jintegra l-użu ta' coping skills fil-lezzjoni bħal problem solving, kif isolvi kunflitt, kif jaħdmu f'gruppi, resilient skills fost l-oħrajn. Dawn jgħinu biex l-istudent iħossu aħjar.	And every teacher should integrate the use of coping skills in the lesson, such as problem solving, how to solve conflict, how they work in groups, and resilient skills, among others. These help the student feels better.
Ivy	discussions u hemmhekk l-istudent ikollu ċans iktar il-bezġħat tiegħu joħorgu fil-wisa' u nistgħu niddiskutuhom.	discussions and there the student has a better opportunity of bringing out his fears into the open and we can discuss them.
Ivy	Il-fatt li huma qalulha l-ħaġa u inti ħadt action, huma jgħidu ara xħin għedna xi ħaġa taw kas.	The fact that it is them who mentioned the matter and that you took action, they say look, when we mentioned something they addressed it.
Zoe	L-istudenti tagħna bħala body ma kienx qed iħossu daqshekk hekk, ownership ta' din l-iskola speċjalment meta aħna bdejna fil-bidu ta' din is-sena... U allura bdejna naħdmu fuq student ownership... and the student	Our students as a body did not feel much... well... ownership of the school, especially when we started at the beginning of this year... and so we started working on student ownership... and the student council was a great

	council was a great opportunity to give students a voice.	opportunity to give students a voice.
Mat	I-istudenti jġu anke involved f'ċertu deċiżjoni li jittieħdu em f'qasam li jistgħu jkunu huma stess li ħa jgawdu minnu permezz tal-student council.	The students are also involved in certain decisions that are taken... er... in an area where they themselves could benefit through the Student Council.
Kay	I-student council ma ngħidlekx li laħaq l-komunità daqshekk barra mill-iskola imma l-komunità ġewwa l-iskola irnaxxihom jilħquha, kellna activities pereżempju no Hate day, healthy food day, fejn laħqu l-komunità ta' l-iskola.	I wouldn't say that the Student Council has reached out to the out-of-school community but they have managed to reach out to the school community; we had activities such as Hate Day, Healthy Food Day, where they have reached out to the school community.
Kay	fl-assembly jkun hemm ftit em movement activities fejn imexxu anke l-istudenti stess.	during the assembly there are some movement activities which are also led by the students themselves.
Kay	Xi ħaġa li wkoll għamilna biex ngħinu lill-istudenti fil-wellbeing tagħhom u fis-self-esteem tagħhom emm fl-assembly konna qed nagħtu spazju lill-istudenti jagħtu t-talent tagħhom. Em ġieli għamlu powerpoint, ġieli daqqew il-kitarra.	Something we did to help students in their wellbeing and self-esteem... er... during the assembly [is that] we gave students space to show their talent. Er... there were instances when they presented a PowerPoint, and played the guitar.
Ivy	reading corner in the library, jiena pereżempju għamilt meeting mal-students' council... rajna naqra l-budget fejn aħna... Allura setgħux jgħinu ftit fil-fund raising... Naqra their involvement għax jien ħassejt li jekk ma jkunx involved anke b'dan il-mod, speċi huma ehhe, they just put their wishes to admistration and that was that.	reading corner in the library, I, for example, had a meeting with the Student Council... we checked the state of our budget... and so whether they could help in fund raising... a little involvement of theirs, as I felt that unless it is involved in this way, it is as if, yes, they just put their wishes to the administration and that was that.

Zoe	I-Christmas tree ġol-foyer fhimt ħadmu għaliha u ħallsu għaliha. That's enhances the school climate u culture.	The Christmas tree in the foyer, you know, they worked for it and paid for it. That's enhances the school climate and culture.
Zoe	Hu l-way of teaching them li ħa tagħti hekk.	Take [for example] the way of teaching that promote wellbeing
Ivy	jinvolve hand on tasks u groupwork. Imma nemmem ukoll li kull għalliem għandu jagħraf li jintegra l-interessi tal-istudenti f'kull lezzjoni.	[The lessons] involve hands-on tasks and groupwork. But I believe that every teacher should also integrate the interests of the student in every lesson.
Ivy	Kultant il-method of delivery u l-method of picking up feedback u hekk illi jrid jkun adapted iktar minn ħaġa oħra.	Sometimes the method of delivery and the method of collecting feedback and so on, should be adapted more than anything else.
Lia	Il-lezzjonijiet għandhom jiġu imwassla b'mod li jattiraw lill-istudenti kollha anke dawn b'bżonnijiet diversi.	The lessons should be delivered in a way that appeals to all students even these who have diverse needs.
Ana	għadna tfal dejjem ġejjin minn challenging backgrounds differenti, tfal barranin...", our aim is "dejjem naraw li jkunu rrispetati u ngħinu b'kull mod li nistgħu biex jirnexxu fl-iskola.	we always have children who come from different challenging backgrounds, foreign students... our aim is to ensure that they are respected and that we help in every way we can for them to succeed at school.
Ana	we have a big focus on inclusive practices u anke studenti b'diżibilita kemm naraw kif jiġu integrati mal-oħrajn.	We have a big focus on inclusive practices and we seek to integrate students with disability with their peers.
Mat	Bħala skola aħna skola inklussiva, għadna studenti li huma integrati fil-klassi fejn hemm abbiltajiet differenti allura jħossuhom dejjem included ma' sħabhom.	As a school we are an inclusive school, we have students who are integrated in mixed abilities classrooms so they always feel included with their peers.
Lia	L-iskola tagħti l-importanza li l-eżamijiet li joħolqu tensjoni u tibdil fir-rutina...	The school gives importance to the fact that exams that create tension and a change in routine...

Ivy	Forsi ukoll il-curriculum irid jagħtik lok illi isma' mhux sempliċiment tajba jew ħażina, salib jew very good.	Perhaps the curriculum should also indicate that, listen, it is not simply [a matter of] good or bad, a cross or a tick.
Ivy	F'kull lezzjoni inti trid tkun aware tal-wellbeing tal-istudent, em fl-ammont ta' homework, fl-ammont ta' xogħol, jiddependi xi klassi għandek, li ma toħloqx fissazzjonijiet, tara li rrid inkun perfett, li inti l-istudenti itih li int isma' billi tirrispondi u tieħu żball ma ġara xejn. Għax kultant għandna ħafna studenti li ma jistaqsu qatt xejn għax jibzġħu jieħdu żball u din il-mentalità ta' li nibza' nieħu żball qiegħda tkisser ħafna żvilupp li jista' jsir għax joqogħdu lura u ma jsaqsux. U dik tista' isir f'kull tip ta' curriculum jiġifieri f'kull tip ta' suġġett.	In every lesson you should be aware of the wellbeing of the student... er... in the amount of homework, amount of work, it depends on what class you have, that you don't create fixations, that I have to be perfect. You should indicate to the student that, listen, if you answer and make a mistake it doesn't matter. Because sometimes we have many students who never put a question because they're afraid of making mistakes and this mentality of being afraid of making mistakes is destroying a lot of potential development because they take a back seat and don't put questions. And this could happen in every type of curriculum, that is, in every type of subject.
Ivy	Is-suġġetti bħal VET subjects u applied huma a blessing għall-istudenti li qabel kienu jħossuhom failures u jaqtgħu ħafna qalbhom. Huma ta' blessing għax il-method of delivery u l-assessment huma differenti.	Subjects like those VET and applied are a blessing for students who used to feel like failures before and gave up. They are a blessing because the method of delivery and assessment is different.
Ana	Waqt l-eżamijiet, l-istudenti għandhom ikunu jafu kif jistudjaw u jikopjaw mal-pressures li jġibu magħhom l-eżamijiet.	During examinations students should know how to study and how to cope with the pressures that exams bring along.
Lia	ikollhom ftit spazju clubs taż-żfin, aerobics... ee jien nemmen ħafna fih. Allura dawk it-tip ta' strutturi jistgħu jgħinu.	they have a little space... dance clubs, aerobics... er... I really believe in this. So those types of structures can help.

Zoe	Year minnhom marru Kemmuna, year minnhom marru kayaking.	One year they went to Comino, another year they went kayaking.
Lia	Wellbeing <i>per se</i> jista' jimraħ f'affarijiet oħra wkoll. Jidħol l-PE jew sports activites. PE is a main factor in maintaining a person's physical wellbeing and mental health. Dik li f'gurnata hawnhekk nies inħambqu toħroġ dik it-tliet kwarti PE fil-fatt naraha tgħin.	Wellbeing <i>per se</i> can refer to other areas as well. PE or sports activities can be involved. Listening to people here ranting on for a day and you go out for three quarters of an hour I consider in fact helpful.
Kay	Aħna nixtieq inżidu fil-kamp... physical fejn tidħol physical education, fejn jidħlu sports. Din is-sena żidna u fil-fatt alavolja ma għandiex water polo, alavolja ma għandniex swimming imma daħalniehom f'competitions fejn tajna l-opportunità anke għas-swimming u water polo. Ma nistgħux nagħmlu daqshekk sport għax ma għandniex il-facilitajiet però din is-sena ħa nżidu l-emphasis fuq sport u hemm diġà pjanat field day fejn tkun involutat l-iskola kollha mill-kbar saż-żgħar.	We would like to do more in the area of... physical, in terms of physical education, where sports are involved. This year we expanded and in fact even though we don't have water-polo, even though we don't have swimming, we still had students enter competitions where we gave opportunities also for swimming and water-polo. We are unable to do so many sports because we don't have the facilities but this year we're going to put more emphasis on sports and a field day has already been planned when the entire school, young and grown-ups, will be involved.
Ben	Nemmen ukoll li għandu jkun hemm relazzjoni tajba ma' kull membru tal-istaff u dik inħossha bħala waħda mill-ischool strengths.	I also believe that there should be a good relationship with every member of the staff and I feel this is one of the school strengths.
Lia	jekk dak għandu bżonn xi ħaġa mela ħa nidħol jien minn floku jew speċi ngħinu lil xulxin b'dak il-mod.	If one needs to do something then I will report for duty in his place or sort of help each other in that way.
Ben	Aħna wkoll dejjem qegħdin hawn biex ngħinu u nagħtu daqqa t'id lil kull membru tal-istaff li jkun għaddej min xi problema jew jkun jinsab f'sitwazzjoni diffiċli.	We're also always here to give help and to lend a helping hand to every member of the staff who's going through some problem or who is in a difficult situation.

Ivy	Fejn inkun nistgħu, għandna ngħinu lil dak li jkun, hu min hu, show support and teachers feel that they can count on us... It-teachers inħobb nurihom ukoll illi isma' they are individual għalina mhux just the school staff.	Where we can, we should help one, whoever he is, show support, and teachers feel they can count on us... I also like showing teachers that, hey, they are individuals for us and not just the school staff.
Ivy	Jigifieri għadna l-HODs li jieħdu ħafna ħsieb lit-teachers ejja ngħidu hekk ta' taħthom, their colleagues iktar milli ta' taħthom... Hi qisha jien naraha l-kultura ta' din l-iskola... Jieħdu ħafna ħsieb jigifieri jgħidulek le lit-talli teacher ittihix lil dik il-klassi, ħa ngħidlek aħjar tagħtiha dik l-oħra għax din it-teacher tajba ħafna ma' dawk it-tip ta' tfal. Allura huma jafu l-persuna iktar intimament li inti... ħa timxi li lil dak li jkun ħa jkun aktar ferħan għax tafu iktar il-persuna, mela inti mhux ser tmur kontra. Dak li jdejjaqha li dik il-persuna ħa tevitah. Il-HODs jgħinu ħafna f'dik għax ikunu jafu t-team tagħhom sew, so dik hi ħaġa oħra. Imma jien dejjem ngħid li l-iskola it's a whole culture.	That is, we have the HODs who really look after teachers who are, let's put it this way, their subordinates... their colleagues more than their subordinates. They really take an interest, that is, they tell you "no, don't assign that certain teacher to that class; I say you had better give it to the other one because this teacher is really good with that type of children". So they know the person more intimately than you... it will transpire that the one concerned will be happier because you come to know him better, and so you're not going to oppose that. You'll avoid whatever irritates that person. HODs really help in this matter because they would really know their team, so that's one more thing. But I always say that a school is a whole culture.
Mat	Bħala membri tal-SMT dejjem inkun prezenti fil-kuritur speċjalment in between lessons u anke waqt li jkunu għaddejjin il-lezzjonijiet. Dejjem biex nagħtu support kemm lill-għalliema u anke naraw jekk jkunx hemm bżonn xi għajnuna min-naħa tal-istudenti.	As members of the SMT I'm always present in the corridors especially between lessons and also during lessons. Always to give support both to teachers and also to see whether any help is needed with regards to students.
Kay	jkun hemm xi incident fl-iskola ta' żewġ studenti li ma jkunx ftehm ma' xulxin emm sa fejn hu possibbli l-Assistant Head l-	[if there's] an incident at school involving two students who would not have got along together... er... as far as possible

	ewwel tara xi ġralu mbagħad inkomplu b'dak li jkollna pjanat għal matul il-ġurnata.	the Assistant Head first sees what has happened to him and then we resume with what would have been planned for the day.
Kay	Jiena malli tiġi persuna u taraha mhix sew, qisek twaqqaf kollox u tismagħha sa fejn inkun nista'. Jekk ma nkunx nista' nitlobha tistennieni, ineħhi dak li hu prijorità imma mbagħad tiġi l-persuna prijorità u tisma' l-bżonnijiet li għandha.	When a person turns up and you notice they are not well, you stop from whatever you're doing and listen to them as much as I can. If I cannot attend to them [immediately] I ask the person to wait, I finish whatever is a priority and then that person becomes the priority and I listen to their needs.
Lia	ftit aktar struttura fl-organizzazzjoni, ftit aktar komunikazzjoni bejn l-istaff bejn l-SLT bejniethom bejn l-SLT u l-istaff bejn SLT, l-għalliema u l-istudenti li kulhadd ikun jaf eżatt x'inhu jiġri. Vera dik hija affarijiet ta' organizzazzjoni, affarijiet ta' struttura imma int xħin tara l-affarijiet taf fejn support qiegħed taf x'support jiġri taf, taf xi jmiss, taf hekk I believe it helps a person's health, mental health and wellbeing għax inaqqas l-istress]	A little more structure in the organization, a little more communication among the staff, among the SLT, between the SLT and the staff, among the SLT, teachers and students so that everybody knows exactly what's going on. It's true that this is a matter of organization, a matter of structure but when you see things you know where you should be, you know what's bound to happen, you know what's next, you know in this way.... I believe that it helps a person's health, mental health and wellbeing because it reduces stress.
Zoe	Għax jien xħin nidhol go klassi u nara lis-sir irrabjata and if I take it calmly and if I have the skills, I am improving. Li ma kienx hemm glied, li t-teacher ma marx id-dar inkwetat li x'ha jgħidlu ommu u missieru u x'ha jiġri l-għada.	Because when I enter a classroom and notice an angry teacher and I take it calmly and I have the skills, [it means] I'm improving. The fact that there was no fighting, and that the teacher didn't go home worried about what [the student] would say to their mother and father and what will happen the day after.

Zoe	U inti l-fatt li taf li tista tieġu special leave mingħajr pressure, it helps you a little bit.	And when you know that you can take special leave without any pressure, it helps you a little bit.
Kay	Meta jien nara persuna ftit pressured... ġieli ukoll tajtha timeoff nara ftit kif nista nagħtiha xi timeoff ta' ftit minuti. Ġieli pereżempju persuna tgħidli ħa mmur nimxi ftit sa hemm barra u nagħtiha l-permezz meħtieġ skont il-persuni u s-sitwazzjonijiet.	When I notice a person under some pressure..., there were times when I gave them a few minutes' time-off. There were times, for example, when a person told me that they are going out for a walk and I give them permission according to the persons [involved] and the situations.
Ivy	Issa jekk teacher għandu diffikultà illi jien naf forsi għandu health problem u filgħodu forsi jrid jiġi tard, dak imbagħad nirrangaw aħna. Something internal li ma toqgħodx idoqq ħafna trombi imma you cater for the needs of that particular person on the day. Anke jekk ma jkunx jiflaħ, kulhadd jgħaddi minn żmien diffiċli illum jew għada, allura ehh inti trid tkun humane inkella ma tistax taħdem. When you are working with humans, you have to be humane.	Now if teacher has a difficulty and I perhaps know it concerns a health problem and perhaps he has to arrive late in the morning, then we ourselves find a solution. It's an internal matter and you don't blow it up but cater for the needs of that particular person on the day. Also, when he's not well; everybody passes through a difficult patch one day or other, so, you know, you've got to be humane otherwise you cannot operate.
Kay	kemm tkun ta' ġid dik il-kelma ta' kuraġġ kemm is-superjuri tagħna lejna l-adulti u kif ukoll aħna mal-istaff tagħna u mal-istudenti tagħna. Dik il-kelma ta' inkuraġġiment tagħmel mirakli għax inti l-attitude kollox.	how beneficial is a word of encouragement, both from our superiors to us adults, as well as between ourselves and our staff and students! That word of encouragement works miracles because attitude is everything.
Kay	Li mumentu ta' ferħ, t'għaqda flimkien li jkunu ferħanin l-iskola u anke l-persuna tiġi we look forward to our day at school. Ninsistu ħafna li nkunu pożittivi, l-fatt li huwa sabiħ li ġejt għax-xogħol, huwa sabiħ li inti bħal student ġejt l-iskola. Ejja ngħinu	Moments of joy, of being united together and happy at school including the person means that we look forward to our day at school. We really insist that we be positive the fact that it is nice to report for work, it is nice that you as a student has come to school.

	lil xulxin biex nagħmlu l-gurnata tagħna sabiha flimkien.	Let's help each other to spend a happy day together.
Ben	Li dejjem nipprovdu support u għajnuna żgur, żgur ser tgħin biex wieħed iħossu aħjar.	The fact that we always provide support and help most certainly helps one to feel better.
Kay	[meta] int tagħti s-support lill-istaff biex huma jkunu sew għax once li huma sew ħa jgħinu lil haddieħor ikun sew.	[When] you give support to the staff to make them content because once they are content they will help others to be content.
Mat	U nemmen li jekk inkunu kuntenti, it-teaching and learning jitjieb.	And I believe that if we are happy, teaching and learning will improve.
Ivy	L-school strengths hi li għandna grupp ta' teachers li jaħdmu ħafna bħal team.	The school strengths are the fact that we have a group of teachers who work a lot as a team.
Lia	għadna teams tajbin u jien għandi fiduċja kbira fit-teachers li hawn eh u nemmen li jagħmlu xogħolhom u jagħmlu sew u jieħdu interess.	we have good teams and I have great faith in the teachers here... er... and I believe that they do their work and that they do it well and they take an interest.
Kay	Ir-relationships huma kollox jekk int għandek il-problemi imma tħossok sew mal-bqija tal-kollegi tiegħek naħseb nofs il-problema tmur.	Relations are everything. If you have a problem but you feel that you are on good terms with your colleagues then I think half the problem disappears.
Ivy	Inħoss li hawn collaboration learning structures fejn kulhadd jgħin li kulhadd... [il-Head of School għandha] tinkoraġġixxi u toffri opportunità fejn t-teachers ikunu jistgħu jiddiskutu ma' xulxin biex jixxerjaw ir-resources and other good practices. U dak jgħin ukoll biex nieħdu good practices minn ta' xulxin.	I feel there's collaboration here, learning structures in which everybody helps everybody else... [The Head of School should] encourage and offer opportunities in which teachers could discuss among themselves in order to share resources and other good practices. And that helps us also to adopt good practices from each other.
Ben	Għandna niffukaw aktar fuq collaborative working structures.	We should focus more on collaborative working structures.

	Iridu noħolqu aktar spazji fejn l-istaff members jaħdmu ma' xulxin bħal team teaching, inħeġġu lit-teachers biex jiddiskutu u naraw x'nistgħu nagħmlu biex iħossuhom aħjar.	We should create more spaces where staff members work together such as in team teaching, encourage teachers to discuss, and find ways of making them feel better.
Zoe	Aħna nixtiequ li l-għalliema tagħna jkunu actively engaged and participating in learning activities, teamworks and other school initiatives, showing sensitivity and concerns for their students and kif diġà għedtlek try out new teaching strategies.	We would like our teachers to be actively engaged and participate in learning activities, teamwork, and other school initiatives, showing sensitivity and concern for their students and, as I have already told you, try out new teaching strategies.
Zoe	Jien nemmen ħafna li teacher-student relationship hi waħda mill-elements li twassal biex student jħossu aħjar	I believe strongly that the teacher-student relationship is one of the elements that make a student feel better.
Mat	ir-relazzjoni bejn l-istaff u l-istudenti hi tajba ħafna. Jien nemmen illi l-iskola tagħna, bħal skola, it-teachers jħobbu ix-xogħol u jħobbu t-tfal.	The relationship between the staff and the students is really good. I believe that in our school, as a school, teachers love their work and they love children.
Ben	jekk teacher ikollu relationship sewwa mat-tfal żgur li ħa joħorġu l-problemi u jistgħu jirreferuhom imbagħad... Irridu dejjem ngħinu lill-istudenti biex jegħlbu kull ostaklu għat-tagħlim u noħolqu positive ethos in the school.	if a teacher has a good relationship with children then certainly the problems will be brought out and [he] could refer them... we should always help students overcome every obstacle to learning and create a positive ethos in the school.
Kay	stedinhom jiġu hawn kemm-il darba ħalli madwar mejda nitkellmu flimkien. Dik inħossu li hija essenzjali li l-ġenituri jkunu on board magħna.	we invited them several times to come here so that we could sit down and talk to each other. We feel that it is essential for parents to be on board with us.
Mat	Fil-bidu tas-sena, regolari matul is-sena nistiednu lill-ġenituri biex jiġu l-iskola biex aħna ngħadduhom informazzjoni relatata kemm mal-edukazzjoni	At the beginning of the year, regularly throughout the year, we invite parents to visit our school so that we can pass on information related to both the

	<p>ma' wliedhom u anke ma' dawn it-tip ta' topics... Aparti minn hekk waqt il-meeting aħna nagħtu l-information però fl-istess ħin inkunu qegħdin niġbru information aħna ukoll għall-każijiet speċifiċi li forsi inti tkun trid tikkiljhom one by one.</p>	<p>education of their children and also this type of topics... Apart from this during the meeting we give information but at the same time we also collect information concerning specific cases which perhaps have to be ticked off one by one.</p>
Ivy	<p>fil-bidu tas-sena nagħmlu l-parental meetings u nħobb nenfasizza... illi pereżempju l-parents jzommu ruħhom aware x'inhu jiġri fil-ħajja tal-istudent.</p>	<p>At the beginning of the year we hold parental meetings and I like to emphasize... that, for example, parents should keep themselves aware of what is happening in the life of the student.</p>
Lia	<p>fit-tfal fejn hemm sfidi jew problemi there is frequent communication jew il-Madame jew il-Assistant Head jew il-guidance ħa nċemplilha so hemmhekk hemm il-communication dejjem għaddej. Fejn ma hemmx problemi sfortunatament jew fejn jidher li ma hemmx problemi we assume li kollox sew u nibqgħu għaddejjin.</p>	<p>Concerning children, where there are challenges or problems there is frequent communication with the Headmistress or the Assistant Head, or the guidance [officer] will call her so in that regard communication is exchanged. Where there are no problems or unfortunately where it [only] appears there are no problems we assume that everything is fine and we move on.</p>
Ivy	<p>aħna dejjem meta naraw naqra inkwiet dejjem we get the parents on board. Nibagħtu għall-parents, nippruvaw nitkellmu x'inhu jiġri d-dar forsi hemm xi trouble d-dar li qed joħloq dawn l-affarijiet aparti l-pressure ħafna minn hawn.</p>	<p>when we note a bit of trouble we always bring the parents on board. We send for the parents, try to discuss what is happening at home; perhaps there is some trouble at home which is causing these things, apart from the considerable pressure coming from here.</p>
Ana	<p>ngħajtu lill-parents u l-guardians u l-stakeholders kollha concerned u naraw emm x'inhu s-sitwazzjoni u x'nistgħu nagħmlu bħala the way forward. Idealment l-parents u l-guardians jikkooperaw.</p>	<p>we send for the parents and the guardians and all the stakeholders concerned and examine... er... the situation and what we can do for the way forward. Ideally the parents and the guardians cooperate.</p>

Kay	tagħmel open days u tistieden lill-ġenituri... Darba wkoll kellna parent li għenet biex l-activity tat-tisjir setgħet tirnexxi, tipprova toħloq kemm jista' jkun home to school links.	you hold open days and invite parents... Once we also had a parent who helped out in the cooking activity to be a success; you try as much as possible to create home-to-school links.
Ana	Mhux dejjem isib dik l-kooperazzjoni ġieli jgħidulek iva u mbagħad fil-fatt ma jikkooperawx.	One doesn't always find that cooperation. Sometimes they say 'yes' and then in fact they don't cooperate.
Ivy	l-guidance unit tagħna li huma eċċellenti, li għandhom il-polz kullimkien to support students' wellbeing.	our Guidance Unit, who are excellent, who know the pulse everywhere in order to support the students' wellbeing.
Ivy	il-guidance teachers jgħinu dejjem u mhux l-ewwel darba li teacher jkollu diffikultà u jmur xorta jtkellem mal-guidance. Dawn huma nies li huma l-iktar li huma well read fuq dawn il-affarijiet.	the guidance teachers always help and it isn't the first time that a teacher faces some difficulty but still goes to speak to the guidance [teachers]. These are people who are the most well-read in these matters.
Lia	nara l-guidance teams jaħdem il-ħin kollu, li no problem is too small... mill-ewwel they surround the problem and solve it.	I observe the guidance teams at work all the time, for whom no problem is too small... they attack the problem at once and solve it.
Kay	għandna teams qawwija li jsegwu l-istudenti u għadna wkoll school counsellor fl-iskola, allura tagħti ħafna għajjuna lill-istudenti.	we have strong teams who keep an eye on the students and we also have a school counsellor at school, and so she gives a lot of help to the students.
Zoe	Issa l-ischool strengths li għandna ħafna groups tajbin u hawn hekk nista' insemmilek il-learning zone fl-istudenti' emotional health and wellbeing.	now the school strengths consist of the many good groups we have and here I can mention to you the Learning Zone in the students' emotional health and wellbeing.
Ana	fil-learning support zone li jagħmlulhom ehh..., lil jikkterterjaw għal dawn l-istudenti mhux biss li għandhom mental	What they get done in the learning support zone... er... They cater not only for students who have mental health challenges

	health challenges imma wkoll li għandhom challenges oħra.	but also those who have other challenges.
Kay	Punt ieħor li ma semmejtx huwa l-Learning Support Zone li għandna fl-iskola... fejn jiġu referuti għal-Learning Support Zone. Hemmhekk ikollok għalliema u LSE li jgħinuhom skont il-ħtiġijiet tagħhom anke social needs jew inkella kif inti integrat f'grupp jew kif tkun aktar organizzat fil-ħidma tiegħek.	Another point that I haven't mentioned is the Learning Support Zone which we have in the school... where they are referred for the Learning Support Zone. There you have teachers and LSEs who help them according to their needs, including social needs or else [instructed on] how you are integrated in a group or how better to organize your work.
Lia	Ovvjament jekk ikun hemm xi ħadd expert f'dik il-ħaġa fl-istaff that can help... It's good to have someone among staff.	Obviously, if there is someone among the staff who is an expert in that field it can help.
Mat	aħna bħala skola għandna l-guidance teachers, għandna l-school counsellor u naħdmu ħafna tajjeb ma' xulxin, dejjem biex naraw li l-istudent jhossu tajjeb u jirnexxi kemm fl-iskola kif ukoll fil-ħajja.	we, as a school, have guidance teachers, we have the school counsellor and we work very well together, always to ensure that the student feels well and succeeds at school and in life.
Kay	Ir-relationship mas-support services hija tajba ħafna u nħossha utli. Ma tistax ma taħdimx... Għaliex inti hemmhekk għandek il-link mad-dar. Inutli taħdem hawnhekk l-iskola imbagħad ma għandekx link mad-dar. U s-social worker jekk ser nieħdu din il-figura mis-support services hemm kemm-il darba iservi ta' punt bejn id-dar u l-iskola.	The relationship with the support services is very good and I feel it is useful. It cannot but work well... Because there you have a link with the home. It's useless to work here at school when there is no link with the home.
Ben	sapport sibna dejjem mill-Education u nimxu id f'id ma' xulxin dejjem għall-ġid tal-istudenti.	we have always found support from the Education [Department] and we work hand-in-hand, always in the interest of the student.

Zoe	Il-guidance, għadna grupp tal-guidance tal-ġenn, naħdmu ħafna jiġifieri ma' xulxin... We never had a problem about that, we are not in a competition with each other.	The guidance [section], we have a guidance group who are out of this world, I mean, we work a lot together.
Ivy	Barra l-guidance team u l-career guidance, hemm ukoll s-social workers, il-psychologist li dawn dejjem jaħdmu magħna hand in hand. We are a team. Jekk ikun hemm diffikultà fuq student, aħna mbagħad nibagħtu għalihom, nagħmlu l-appointments, jiġu l-parents u naħdmu minn hemm.	Apart from the guidance team and career guidance, there are also the social workers, the psychologist all of whom always work hand-in-hand with us. We're a team. If there's some difficulty concerning a student, we then send for them, make appointments, the parents come and we take it up from there.
Mat	Dan l-aħħar kelli wellbeing sessions, jien stess din is-sena kelli seba' ġimgħat, seba' ġimgħat kull nhar ta' Tlieta training fuq wellbeing. Kien interessanti ħafna u ħadna ħafna ideat ta' kif inti tista' tatwa dan li tkun qed tista' fl-iskola tiegħek.	Recently I attended wellbeing sessions. I myself this year had seven weeks, every Tuesday of seven weeks training in wellbeing. It was very interesting and we learned many ideas on how you can actuate things in your school.
Ben	Li sar lilna l-Assistant Heads sar kors ta' 6 weeks, sitt darbiet mhux 6 weeks propja sitt darbiet kellna kors em... biex jgħin lilna negħelbu ċertu challengings u stress li niltaqgħu miegħu fix-xogħol	What was organized for us Assistant Heads was a course of six weeks, six times not six entire weeks, six times... er... to help us overcome certain challenges and stress we come across at work.
Ivy	għamilna Mindfulness course li wkoll jgħin ħafna fil-wellbeing. Il-fatt illi jagħtuk training ta' kif you keep yourself grounded, jgħin għax aħna fil-ħajja stressanti mhux dejjem tkun tista' tiffunzjona sew. Jiġifieri jekk ma ssibx mod kif inti tikkalma u tkompli taħdem, moħħok jieqaf. U dan il-kors tal-Mindfulness kien għeni ħafna f'dak is-sens.	we held a Mindfulness course which also helps a lot in the field of wellbeing. The fact that you're given training on how to keep yourself grounded helps, because we, who lead a life of stress, are not always able to function properly. That is, if you don't find a way of keeping calm and work on, your brain will stop. And this Mindfulness course had helped me a lot in that sense.

Ana	Għenitna ħafna l-fatt li ħadna kors, it was a very positive thing u nemmen li jgħina ħafna fix-xogħol tagħna speċjalment to address staff and student wellbeing.	The fact that we attended a course helped us a lot. It was a very positive thing and I believe that it helps us a lot at work especially to address the wellbeing of the staff and the students.
Zoe	biċċa mit-teachers ma jammetux li hemm din ir-realtà u li hawn dawn il-complex needs... Għalhekk naraha li l-aktar billi nagħtuhom ħafna tip ta' training.	Some of the teachers don't admit that there is this reality and that there are these complex needs... So I consider the most [effective help is to] give them many types of training.
Mat	Digà qed isir ħafna xogħol però nemmen li għandu jkun hemm aktar focus fuq promoting mental health and wellbeing, aktar meetings fejn forsi jkun hemm anke esperti differenti biex forsi kulħadd jagħtik l-idea tiegħu... għandu jkun hemm aktar training ħalli kemm t-tfal, kemm it-teachers u kemm aħna inkunu kuntenti u ngawdu l-ħajja tagħna tax-xogħol.	Already a great amount of work is being done but I believe that there should be more focus on promoting mental health and wellbeing, more meetings where there are perhaps also different experts so that perhaps everybody offers his ideas... there should be more training so that children, teachers and ourselves are satisfied and enjoy our life of work.
Ana	Bħala korsijiet u hekk sa fejn naf jien ma għamlux l-staff kif jissaportjaw students' wellbeing but it would be ideal to cater for it.	In terms of courses and so on as far as I know the staff hasn't had one on how to support students' wellbeing but it would be ideal to cater for it.
Ben	Xi COPE, PD session li jgħin lit-teachers jgħidilhom x'jistgħu jagħmlu to support students' wellbeing naħseb tkun idea tajba.	Some COPE, PD session which helps teachers and informs them on what they can do to support students' wellbeing – I think it would be a good idea.
Lia	Bħala ma forsi fil-passat gieli saru PDs fuq assessment, jew PDs fuq discipline jew PDs fuq the use of technology in the classroom, issir PD fuq mental health and wellbeing of students and staff.	Similar to PDs on assessment that have perhaps been held in the past, or PDs on discipline or PDs on the use of technology in the classroom, there should be held a PD on mental health and the wellbeing of students and staff.

Mat	F'waħda fil-COPE sessions li kellna dan l-aħħar xi xahrejn ilu kellna l-għajnuna ta' żewġ psikjatri li jaħdmu waħda minnhom naf li taħdem l-isptar u li ovvjament kull meta jkollna bżonn nirreferu xi istudenti hi tkun waħda minn dawn l-esperti li tara l-każijiet... Ġiet l-iskola, għamlitilna session, ittrenjata u qaltilna hi bħal persuna kif,... kif taħdem meta jkollha każijiet bħal dawn.	In one of the COPE sessions we attended recently, some two months ago, we were helped by two psychiatrists, one of whom works in hospital and obviously whenever we require to refer some students, she is one of these experts who look at the cases... She came to school, delivered a session for us, trained us and told us how she as a person,... how she operates when she has similar cases.
Ivy	COPE session għat-teachers so dik kienet waħda mill-COPE sessions li għamilna fuq mental health, fuq self harm għax konna ga bdejna naraw self harm...Hekk bħal dan il-kors tal-first aid mental health għen ħafna għax tana ħafna scenarios.	COPE sessions for teachers so that was one of the COPE sessions that we held on mental health, on self-harm because we had already been noting cases of self-harm... So like this first aid course the one on mental health was really helpful because we were shown many scenarios.
Ben	Però naħseb li jsir xi tip ta' training ħalli huma ukoll jkunu jistgħu jiffoljawhom ma tkunx idea ħażina.	But I think that holding some type of training so that they can also follow is not a bad idea.
Lia	li ehh teachers are instructed li jekk taraw xi ħaġa li intom għandkom dubju iva ma tistax tgħid issa dak jarah ħadd ieħor eh I should approach an Assistant Head or a guidance.	that... er... teachers are given instructions that if you note anything you are not sure about, yes, then you cannot say now that will be checked by someone else... [but] er... I should approach an Assistant Head or a guidance [teacher].
Ben	Jistgħu isiru wkoll xi tip ta' courses lill-għalliema kollha em ... ġieli saru biex jagħrfu jekk niftakar tajjeb kien sar wieħed m'ilux minħabba mental wellbeing tal-istudenti. Kif it-teachers jistgħu jgħarrfu, jittendu minn qabel em jindunaw mal-	Some type of courses to all teachers may also be held... there were times when courses were held to [help teachers] recognize... if I remember correctly one was held on the mental wellbeing of students. How teachers can recognize, know beforehand... er...

	ewwel kif ċertu tfal jkollhom bżonn l-għajnuna.	recognize immediately that certain children need help.
Ivy	Matul is-sena rajna improvement jgħifieri teachers li qabel qatt ma kienu jgħidulna b'xi ħadd illi isma' donnu hemm diffikultà jew LSE kien iżomm kollox hu u ma jgħix jgħidlek, matul is-sena rajna li qed jiġu u jgħibulna l-evidenza u stajna naħdmu iktar.	During the year we noted an improvement, that is, teachers who before had never told us that, listen, it seems there's a difficulty, or an LSE would keep everything to himself and not tell you anything... during the year we noted that they were reporting and bringing us evidence and we could work more.
Ana	Iva naħseb jekk joffru training fuq teachers' wellbeing ikun interessanti anke għat-teachers stess.	Yes, I think that if they offer training on teachers' wellbeing it will be interesting even for the teachers themselves.
Kay	xi staff members talbu ħafna li jkun hemm aktar PDs, Cope sessions fuq il-wellbeing tal-persuni.	Some staff members asked earnestly for more PDs, COPE sessions on the wellbeing of persons.
Mat	Għamilna kemm PD sessions, għamilna COPE sessions li nittrattaw dawn it-topics. Hemm oħrajn naf fiċ-ċert għax [...] [f]il-pjan għas-sena d-dieħla ġa huma pjanati li jiġu organizzati għalina l-istaff. Ovvjament jekk ingawdu minnu l-istaff u inkunu kuntenti aħna nistgħu ngħadduh lill-istudenti.	We held both PD sessions, we held COPE sessions dealing with these topics. There are others, I'm sure of it because [...] in the plan for next year they are already planned to be organized for us, the staff. Obviously, if we benefit from it as a staff and are satisfied we can then pass it on to the students.
Ana	opportunità ta' growth għall-istaff ukoll biex ikunu aktar tolleranti ... u jkunu kapaċi aktar jgħinu wkoll.	an opportunity for growth also for the staff to be more tolerant... and be able to help as well.
Ben	Li jsiru courses li jgħinu lill-istaff hi importanti ħafna biex intejbu aktar il-proċess tat-tagħlim għax kulħadd ikun aktar konxju tiegħu nnifsu u jkun aktar kuntent fuq il-post tax-xogħol u l-istudenti jiġu għal qalbhom l-iskola.	Holding courses that help the staff is very important for the improvement of the learning process because everybody becomes more self-aware and happier at the place of work,

		while students look forward to school.
Zoe	an employee tal-gvern iħoss il-bżonn li jkellew li xi ħadd u jrid l-għajjnuna, x'għandu jagħmel lil min irid ikellew.	a government employee feels the need to talk with someone and needs help, what he should do and whom to talk to.
Ben	Iwa ġieli sar xi servizzi, xi laqgħat mal-parents... Ġieli ġabu xi speakers minn barra imma ftit sar dawn it-tipi ta' laqgħat jġifieri imma ġieli saru, ġieli saru.	Yes, sometimes there were some services, some meetings with parents... There were times when speakers came from outside school but these types of meetings were few, that is, but some were held, some were held.
Ivy	during general talks held with parents ngħidulhom aħna x'jkollna available bħala support lill-istudenti u kif jgħinu huma.	during general talks held with parents we tell them ourselves what we have available in terms of support for students and how they can help.
Lia	dik tkun opportunità fejn jekk jigu organizzati talks għal parents fejn nistgħu nistiednu psychologist jew esperti fuq mental health, wellbeing biex jagħmlu talks utli ħafna lill-parents.	That would be an opportunity, if talks for parents are held, to invite psychologist or experts on mental health, wellbeing to deliver very useful talks for parents.
Zoe	Hi ovjament hemm ħafna laqgħat formali imma int qed tgħidli fuq mental health and wellbeing. Dik għadna ftit lura.	Obviously many formal meetings are held but you're mentioning mental health and wellbeing. We're still a bit behind there.