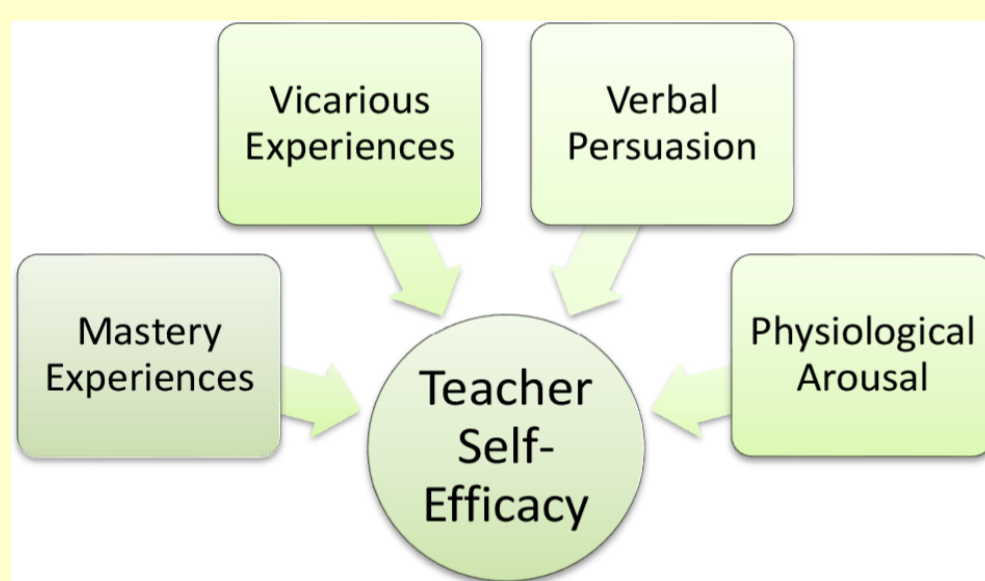


Introduction


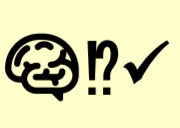
- Supporting the social and emotional wellbeing of primary school pupils has become an **increasingly significant endeavour** to be undertaken by primary school teachers in Ireland (Department of Education and Skills, 2018).
- Training and resources in relation to this discipline of education have been found to be **lacking** for primary school teachers internationally (Shepherd et al., 2016).
- **A lack of confidence** in relation to supporting the social and emotional wellbeing of primary school pupils has been conveyed by teachers throughout numerous studies, and spans across both novice and experienced practitioners (Ransford et al., 2009).
- While a **Wellbeing Policy and Framework** and associated wellbeing guidelines have been published by the Department of Education and Skills (2018), it appears as though teachers still express concerns in relation to how to implement social and emotional learning into their classrooms in practical ways (Nohilly & Tynan, 2019).
- In order to decompose teacher behaviour to a degree, several researchers have applied **Bandura's social cognitive theory**, and more specifically the concept of **self-efficacy** within this theory, to explore teachers' behaviour (Bandura, 2001; De George-Walker, 2010).
- More specifically, the degree to which Bandura's proposed **four sources of self-efficacy** influence teacher behaviour has been researched in relation to the implementation of co-operative learning and similar programmes (Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009).



- This study aimed to investigate the **overall self-efficacy of Irish primary school teachers** in relation to supporting the social and emotional wellbeing of primary school pupils.
- It also aimed to analyse this overall self-efficacy in depth, in order to discover which of **seven predictor variables** (mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, psychological and affective states, age, gender and number of years of qualified teaching experience), would influence teacher self-efficacy to the greatest degree.



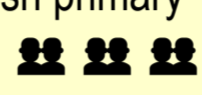
Research Question and Hypotheses

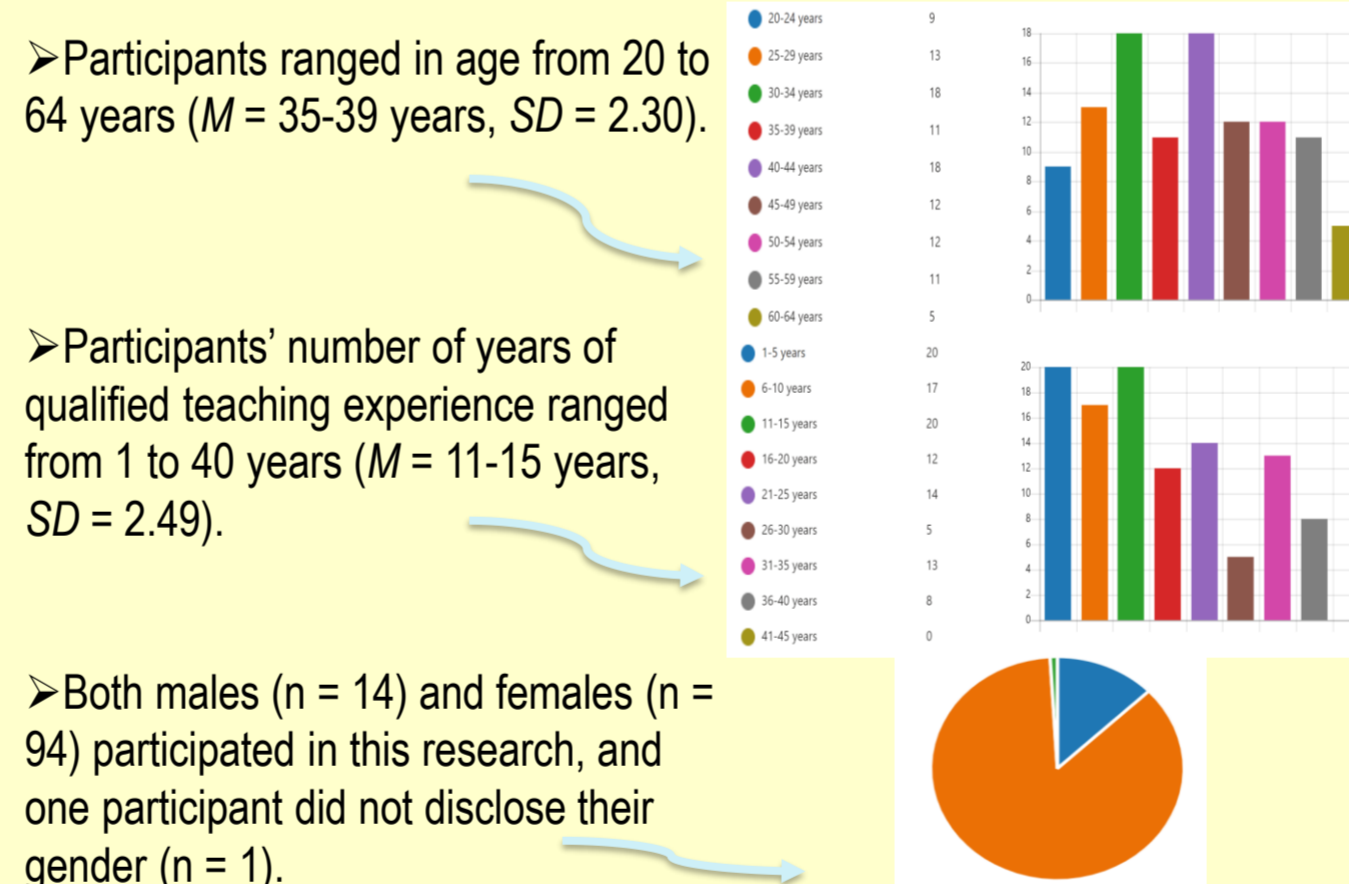
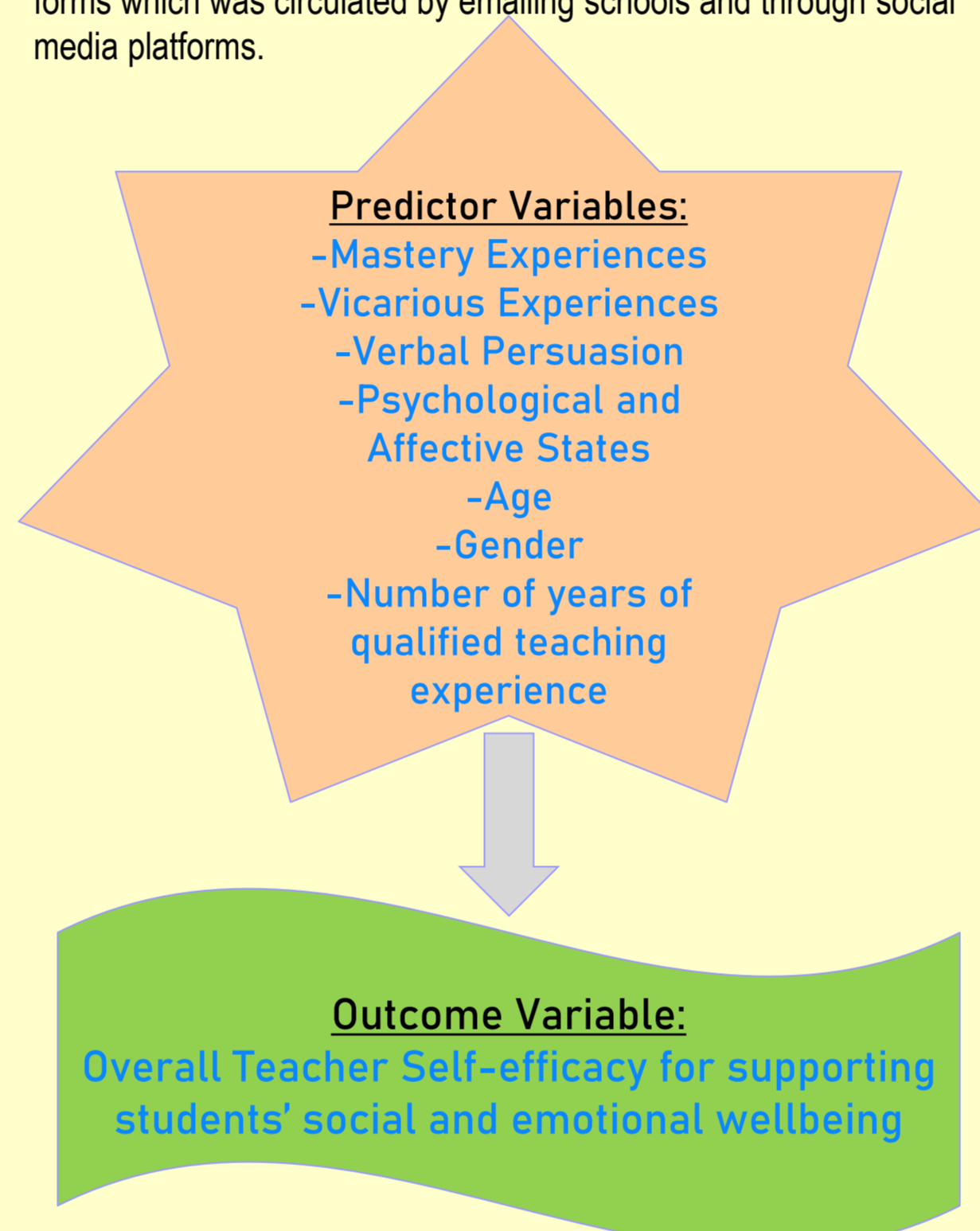
- **Research Question:** 
What is the overall level of self-efficacy of Irish primary school teachers in relation to supporting students' social and emotional wellbeing in the classroom, and what are the sources that influence this self-efficacy?
- **Hypotheses:** 
It was hypothesised that overall teacher self-efficacy for supporting students' wellbeing would be **of a low level**, due to results from previous research (Nohilly & Tynan, 2019; De George-Walker, 2010), and due to the impact of pandemic-related school closures on pupil wellbeing and concerns expressed by educators and guardians in relation to pupil wellbeing (Dempsey & Burke, 2020).
- It was hypothesised that the most influential source of teacher self-efficacy would be the source of **mastery experiences**, which are authentic experiences relating to supporting pupil wellbeing (De George-Walker, 2010).
- It was also hypothesised that **age and number of years of qualified teaching experience** would influence self-efficacy significantly (De George-Walker, 2010).



Method

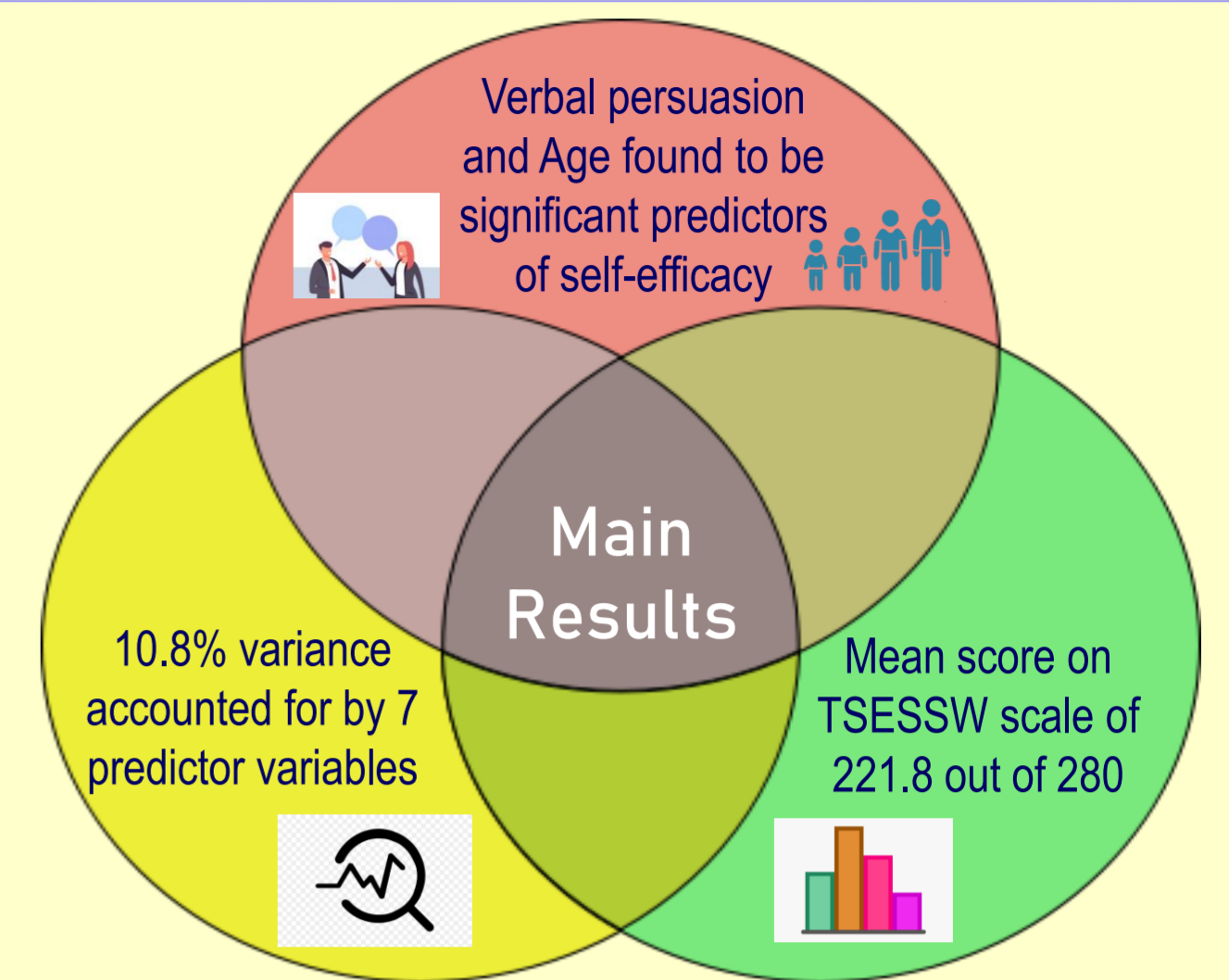
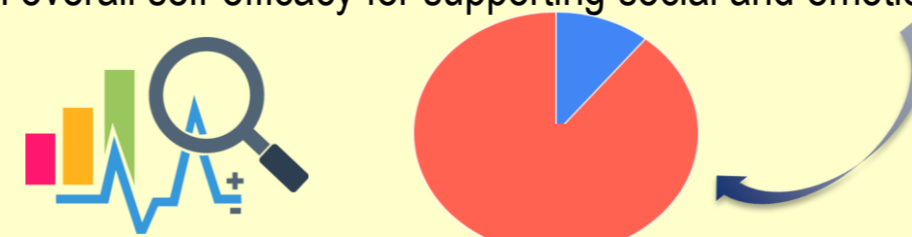
This study employed a **quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational research design.**

- 109 primary school teachers currently employed in Irish primary schools participated in this research. 
- Participants completed a demographic questionnaire to convey age, gender, and number of years of qualified teaching experience.
- Participants also completed adapted forms of the TSESSW (Teacher Self-Efficacy for Supporting Student Wellbeing) and TSESSW-S (Teacher Self-Efficacy for Supporting Student Wellbeing- Sources) scales to measure overall self-efficacy and sources influencing self-efficacy (De George-Walker, 2010).
- This information was gathered using a survey created on Microsoft forms which was circulated by emailing schools and through social media platforms.



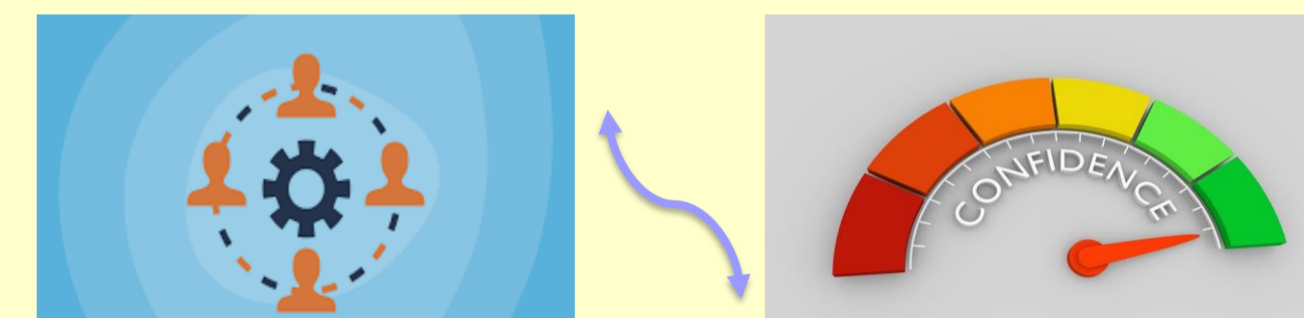
Analyses and Results

- The mean score obtained by participants on the TSESSW scale was calculated to gain an insight into the self-efficacy of Irish primary teachers in relation to supporting students' social and emotional wellbeing.
- A **mean score of 221.8** out of a total possible score of 280 on the TSESSW scale was obtained by participants, indicating that **Irish primary teachers feel highly confident** in relation to supporting students' social and emotional wellbeing.
- Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was then conducted to analyse the variance in overall teacher self-efficacy explained by the seven predictor variables.
- Of the four sources of self-efficacy, **verbal persuasion** was found to be the only significant predictor of overall self-efficacy ($p = .037$).
- Of the three demographic variables, **age** was found to be the only significant predictor of overall self-efficacy ($p = .05$).
- Overall, the seven predictor variables accounted for **10.8% of the variance** in overall self-efficacy for supporting social and emotional wellbeing.



Discussion

- The majority of participants rated their confidence in relation to supporting students' social and emotional wellbeing **very highly**.
- This contrasts with previous research, which found that the self-efficacy of teachers for supporting wellbeing was of a moderate level (De George-Walker, 2010; Shepherd et al., 2016).
- The significance of the source of **verbal persuasion** is detailed in this study, which relates to feedback or advice received from teaching colleagues or mentors, and the significance of **teacher age** is also detailed.
- This contrasts with prior research to a degree, as it was hypothesised that mastery experiences, teacher age, and number of years of qualified teaching experience would be the main predictors of teacher self-efficacy for supporting wellbeing (De George-Walker, 2010; Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009).
- Perhaps the Covid-19 pandemic influenced the significance of the source of verbal persuasion over mastery experiences, as opportunities to develop authentic teaching experiences were limited due to school closures (La Velle et al., 2020).
- Application of the findings of this research may relate to more emphasis being placed on **teaching colleagues and mentors** in enhancing teacher self-efficacy, and the apparent increased self-efficacy that **teachers of an older age** hold.



Conclusion

The social and emotional wellbeing of primary school pupils appears to be supported by **highly confident educators** in Ireland, who's self-efficacy is influenced by **verbal persuasion and age**. More emphasis should be placed on the enhancement of teacher self-efficacy through **mentoring and advice-based approaches**.

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