



**Examining Educational Psychologists' Perspectives of Their Role in the
Republic of Ireland: An Exploratory Study Using Activity Theory**

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degree of Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology (DECPsy).*

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Abstract

Background: With the 2015 change from masters to doctoral level for educational psychology training in Ireland and the 2016 change in Health Service Executive (HSE) eligibility criteria for the recruitment of psychologists to the HSE, newly qualified Educational Psychologists (EPs) are now eligible to work in additional Child Psychology settings, including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Primary Care Psychology. There is limited research exploring the experiences of EPs in the context of Ireland, including those working in Disability, CAMHS, and Primary Care Psychology. This is despite the substantial expansion of the EPs' mandate and the work environment in the Republic of Ireland.

Aims: The current research used a qualitative research design, utilising Engeström's (2001) Second Generation Activity Theory as the theoretical framework to explore the subjective, lived experiences of qualified Educational Psychologists in the Republic of Ireland.

Sample: The study recruited 20 educational psychologists in three services: Disability, School, and Child Psychology.

Methods: Data were collected from participants using semi-structured interviews and a short demographic questionnaire. Demographic data was collated and data from interviews was analysed using Template Analysis, a form of thematic analysis.

Results: The findings indicate that the unique contribution of EPs includes providing specialist knowledge of education and school systems. EPs adhere to evidence-based practice and work as scientist-practitioners, taking a systemic and holistic approach to casework.

Conclusions: This research elucidates the similarities between educational psychology and other related psychology disciplines, while highlighting the distinctive contribution of educational psychology to education and healthcare systems.

Declaration


The work has not previously been accepted for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted for any degree.

This research is being submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology (DECPsy) at Mary Immaculate College.

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. Where the use has been made of other people, it has been fully acknowledged and referenced.

I hereby give my permission for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for reading and interlibrary loans, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

Name: Eoin Hassett

Signature:  _____

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|--------|--|
| AON | Assessment of Need |
| AT | Activity Theory |
| BPS | British Psychological Society |
| CAMHS | Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services |
| CPD | Continuing Professional Development |
| CYP | Child or Young Person |
| CDNT | Child Disability Network Teams |
| DECPsy | Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology |
| DES | Department of Education and Skills |
| DFEE | Department for Education and Employment (UK) |
| DOH | Department of Health |
| EP | Educational Psychologist |
| GAM | General Allocation Model |
| HSE | Health Service Executive (Ireland) |
| JBI | Joanna Briggs Institute |
| MIREC | Mary Immaculate College Research Ethics Committee |
| NCSE | National Council for Special Education |
| NEPS | National Educational Psychological Service (Ireland) |
| NICE | National Institute for Health and Care Excellence |
| OT | Occupational Therapist |
| PDS | Progressing Disabilities |
| PSI | Psychological Society of Ireland |
| Psy | Psychologist |

| | |
|---------|---|
| PTA | Preliminary Team Assessment |
| RACE | Reasonable Accommodations at Certificate Examinations |
| SEN | Special Educational Needs |
| SENDIST | Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal |
| SENO | Special Education Needs Organiser |
| SET | Special Education Teacher |
| SLT | Speech and Language Therapist |

Chapter 1. Introduction to Thesis

1.1. Overview

With the 2015 transition from master's to doctorate level for educational psychology training in Ireland and the change in Health Service Executive (H.S.E) eligibility criteria for the recruitment of psychologists to the H.S.E in 2016, newly qualified Educational Psychologists (EPs) are now eligible to work in additional Child Psychology settings such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Primary Care Psychology. There is little research examining EPs' perspectives of their role in an Irish context, including those working in Disability, CAMHS, and Primary Care Psychology. This is despite the significant expansion in both the EP's remit and work context in the Republic of Ireland (Health Service Executive, 2016).

This thesis begins with a scoping literature review of educational psychologist's perspectives of their role within the international context. This is followed by a focused literature review exploring the EPs' perspectives of their role in an Irish context. It will then detail the current study as an empirical paper.

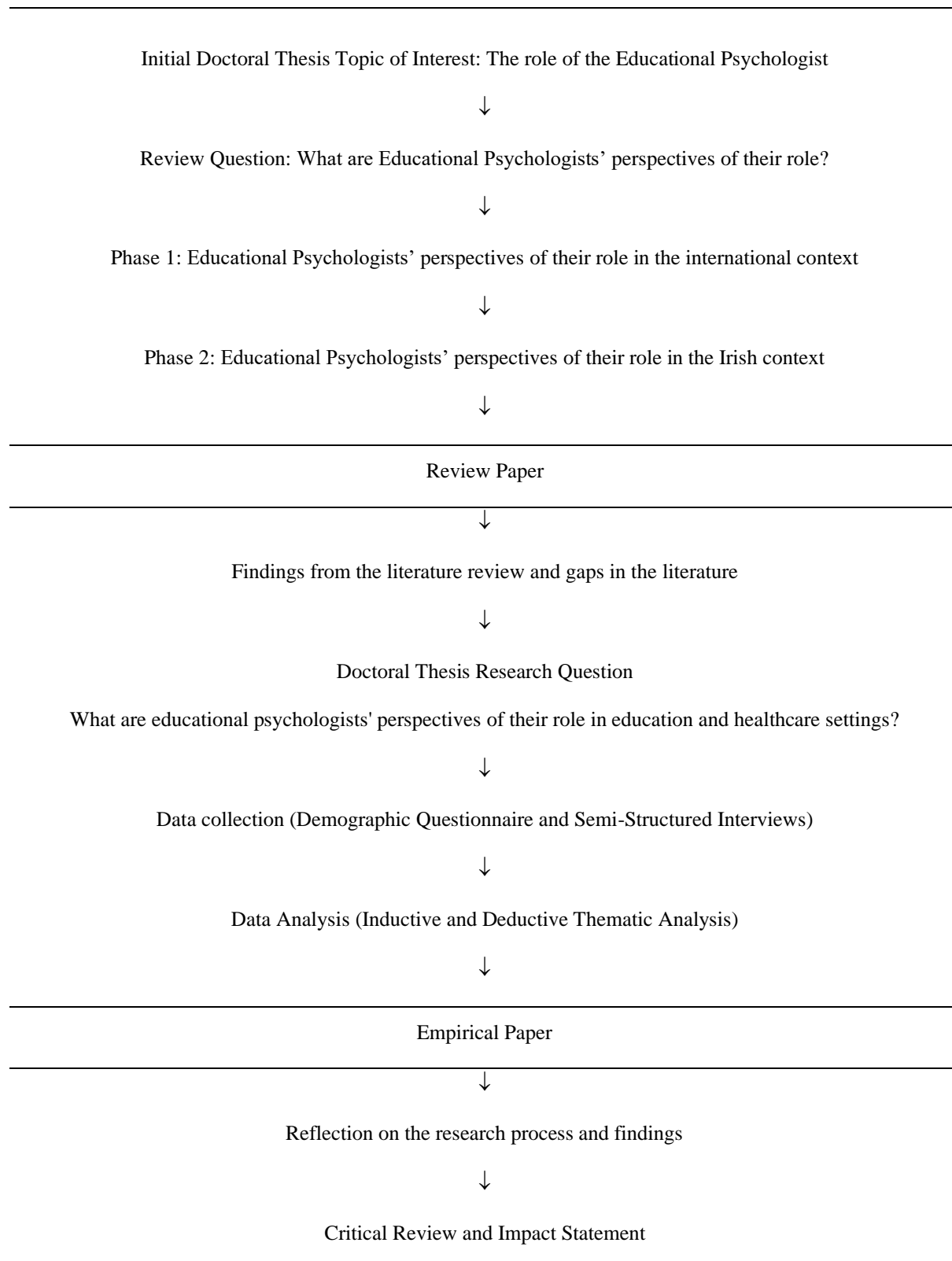
The current research used a qualitative, phenomenological research design, utilising Engeström's (1999) Second Generation Activity Theory as the theoretical framework to explore the subjective, lived perspectives of qualified educational psychologists in the Republic of Ireland. Within this framework, an "activity" includes a "subject" and an "object", mediated by an "artefact". In the case of the proposed research, each node of the Activity Theory informs both how questions were posed to explore the domains of interest and how the data was analysed. Additionally, the exploration of contradictions or tensions within and between activity systems, which can support learning and consequently facilitate change, was also conducted.

The epistemological approach of the researcher is that of critical realism. Critical realism provides a modern and clear scientific foundation for theory and practice and depends on an interpretive and social evidence base. In this way, it sits between positivist and interpretivist approaches. Critical realism accepts that there are objective realities (Archer, 2010), but also socially constructed narratives within this objective reality that are interpretivist in nature.

The study recruited 20 educational psychologists in three services: Disability, School, and Child Psychology. Data were collected from participants using a short demographic questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Data from questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics. Interviews were analysed using inductive-deductive thematic template analysis. The specific type of thematic analysis used was template analysis (King & Brooks, 2018). This type of structured thematic analysis is considered a ‘middle ground’ approach to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Template analysis is particularly suited for this research topic as it is theoretically independent and congruent with a critical realist approach. The findings from this analysis are discussed in the empirical paper. The thesis will conclude with a critical review contextualising the current study’s findings within the broader literature and a short impact statement. A visual overview of this process is presented below.

Table 1.1

Visual Overview of Thesis



Chapter 2. Review Paper

2.1. Overview

This scoping review aims to explore the research question: What are educational psychologists' perspectives of their role? This question will be answered in two phases. The first (phase 1) will include the perspectives of EPs internationally. The second phase (phase 2) will explore educational psychologists' perspectives of their role in the Irish context. The review will begin with a brief overview of Educational Psychology in the United Kingdom (UK), as the development of Educational Psychology in the UK relates to the growth of Educational Psychology in The Republic of Ireland (henceforth also referred to as Ireland). This will be followed by an overview of the development of Educational Psychology in Ireland and recent legislative changes that have influenced this development. Next will be a rationale for the current review and its methodology, followed by a mapping of the field. This will include a summary of synthesised findings across all international studies outside of Ireland deductively mapped onto the Educational Psychology core competencies as delineated by the British Psychological Society [BPS](2022). The methodological quality of each will then be critically appraised. This will lead to a focused review and synthesis of studies conducted in Ireland. The review will conclude with implications for theory and practice and gaps identified in the literature.

2.2. Educational Psychology in the United Kingdom

The first educational psychologist (EP) was appointed in the UK in 1913; Cyril Burt (later Sir Cyril) was employed as an educational psychologist by London County Council shortly after the development of this new field of psychology. Burt's role entailed examining the profile of students' needs in London schools and assisting instructors in responding to them (BPS, 2014). As part of his responsibilities, he was also expected to do research, an activity that remains an integral element of the function of EPs today. In his final years and

after his death, Burt became a contentious figure, and his work continues to be the subject of discussion. Within Educational Psychology in the UK, a notable change in recent years is increasing number of EPs providing consultation services to other professionals, mostly teachers (BPS, 2014). From one EP appointed in 1913, there are presently over 3000 working in the UK (BPS, 2014).

In 2009, the title 'Educational Psychologist' became a regulated profession in the UK. As outlined by BPS (2022), the current definition of what an educational psychologist does is to examine;

How children and young people experience life within the context of their school and home environment and how different factors in these environments interact with each other. Educational Psychologists (EPs) work with a diverse range of clients with learning difficulties, social and emotional problems, issues around disability as well as other complex developmental disorders. (para. 2)

As outlined by the Scottish Executive (2002), the primary roles of an educational psychologist encompass consultation, assessment, intervention, training, and research, all of which take place within an interactive context that may involve the settings of school or home. This is congruent with the key functions of the Educational Psychologist in England and Wales as delineated by Farrell et al. (2006), which included individual assessment, consultancy, intervention and training. A critical component of the educational psychologist's purview is to aid parents and educator in fostering the wellbeing and development of children and young people who may be experiencing difficulties (Scottish Executive, 2002).

Most EPs in the UK work in local education authorities (Squires & Farrell, 2007). There is an increasing number of EPs working within a multi-agency team as part of children's services in a community context (Boyle et al., 2017). Boyle et al. argued that this increase results from the *Every Child Matters* legislation enacted in 2004. The Department

for Education and Employment [DFEE] (2000) posited that the unique contribution of EPs in this multi-agency context is in applying models and concepts grounded in psychological theory. Similarly, Cameron (2006) argued that educational psychology and EP practitioners, bring a unique psychological perspective to problems and use evidence-based strategies to explain these problems and improve outcomes. The client's age range with which EPs work in the UK has expanded in recent years, with the 2014 Code of Practice extending clients' age range to include those aged 0-25 years.

2.3. Educational Psychology in the Republic of Ireland

The first school psychology service within mainstream schools in Ireland was founded in 1960. This service was established by The City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee (Crowley, 2007). In Ireland, EPs were first appointed to the Department of Education in 1965. However, the remit and location of their roles was restricted to post-primary settings, working with guidance counsellors and remedial (Special Education) teachers, developing standardised tests, and conducting research (Crowley, 2007).

The role of the Educational Psychologists in Ireland as defined by the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) is promoting the psychological and educational development of children and young people, as well as adult learners within educational, healthcare, and social care settings (PSI, 2022). Their work may involve providing support to individuals and their families, as well as collaborating with teachers and other support professionals. They examine how various factors, including environmental, biological, psychological, affective, and behavioral elements, influence an individual's experience of life within the context of their school, home, and community (PSI, 2022). The scope of their work includes providing preventative, assessment, intervention, and collaborative support services to improve educational, social, and emotional outcomes (PSI, 2022). Additionally, educational psychologists often participate in consultation, decision-making, and system-wide service

delivery, as well as engaging in training, research, and policy development (PSI, 2022).

Therefore, the PSI (2022) advised that doctoral training program content in Ireland should be based on the role function of the Educational Psychologist as “consultant, advisor, assessor, counsellor, educator, researcher, policy advisor, team participant, and advocate” (p. 6).

It was not until 1999 that a nationwide school-based psychological service was established in the form of the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). The Division of Educational Psychology was set up as a subdivision of the Psychological Society of Ireland in 2005. These developments coincided with changes to EP training. The Psychological Society of Ireland offered a Professional Diploma in Psychology (Educational), designed for independent study. The first university-led training programme for Educational Psychologists in Ireland was established at University College Dublin in 1995 as a MA in Educational Psychology. A similar programme was established at Mary Immaculate College (MIC) in 2010. Both programmes have evolved to level 10 doctoral programmes to align, with professional training standards across disciplines, and reflect the current training criteria required to practice as an Educational Psychologist in Ireland. However, EPs who qualified before the move to doctoral level training can still practice with a master’s level qualification or equivalent competency. The Psychological Society of Ireland (2017) has delineated accreditation criteria for Doctoral programs in Ireland related to academic content, professional placement, and research that informs training and role readiness. As the move to doctoral training for educational psychology in the Republic of Ireland is relatively new (currently on its 7th cohort of doctoral students), this is an opportune time to examine doctoral graduates’ perspectives of their EP role, as well as other established EP practitioners with alternative qualifications. This examination could shed light on how they view the expanded role of the Educational Psychologist (Health Service Executive [HSE], 2016, 2021).

2.3.1. School Psychology Services in Ireland

Educational psychologists working in school psychology settings in Ireland are typically employed by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). The NEPS is a service funded by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) that specialises in providing a psychology service to all schools across the Republic of Ireland. The NEPS psychologists work to support all pupils' academic, social, and emotional development, with a particular focus on pupils presenting with a special educational need (DES, 2019). This service is provided using a consultative approach to service delivery through a multi-tiered model, with the DES using a broader application of this in their continuum of support model.

Educational psychologists working in school psychology settings also work in Education and Training Boards (ETBs) throughout the Republic. ETB psychologists' remit is to deliver a comprehensive psychological service to schools, colleges, and centres within the ETB. They offer this service to clients across the lifespan through a combination of individual, group, and systemic direct and indirect approaches, through training, counselling, consultation, and other methods (ETB, 2019).

2.3.2. Children's Disability Services in Ireland

EPs working in children's disability services offer support to children presenting with complex and pervasive developmental, social, emotional, and psychological needs as part of a multi-disciplinary team. EPs are central members of these teams and currently work within the Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People model, which aims to provide an integrated national model that delivers health service to all children regardless of location, schooling, or nature of the presenting difficulty through a clear pathway of service delivery (HSE, 2020).

Central to the HSE's (2020) Progressing Disability Services (PDS) initiative is the reconfiguration of all HSE and voluntary organisation children's disability services. The PDS

initiative led to the establishment of 96 geographical cells called Disability Networks. The remit of each of these networks is the delivery of children's disability services within their geographical defined area. Within these areas are Child Disability Network Teams (CDNTs), whose responsibility is to provide a unitary interdisciplinary model of clinical services to children and young people with complex needs. The primary reason for the change proposed by the PDS is to remove barriers that previously precluded access to services for children. Children and young people will now no longer require a distinct diagnosis to be eligible for the services of their Disability Network Team.

2.3.3. Child and Adolescent Psychology Services in Ireland

EPs in child psychology services typically work in either Primary Care Psychology or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). EPs in Primary Care services work with children aged 0-18 years and their families and offer assessments, advice and supportive therapy for children and young people with psychological difficulty who are not eligible for a specialist service. They typically do this through a stepped model of service delivery (HSE, 2021). Based on the Progressing Disabilities model, children with non-complex difficulties receive their services at the Primary Care Services level with support, consultation, or transfer between Primary Care and Child Disability services if and when the child's needs change (HSE, 2019). Children who “(a) do not have a disability, or (b) have a mild level of developmental delay, disability or mental health problem are seen at Primary Care level” (HSE, 2017, p. 10). The CYP and their family are offered support at the least intensive tier of intervention that clinically meets their needs. When a referral is made and accepted, it is reviewed. Based on this review, a recommendation for assessment and intervention at the least intensive tier of intervention to meet the clinical needs of the CYP is made. The first focus is responding to the psychological needs as early as possible in the community setting. This can take the form of parent support clinics, online workshops, and bibliotherapy. Upon

completion of any intervention, the CYP's needs are reviewed. After this point, the CYP is either discharged from the service, offered another intervention at the same tier, or, if required, will be stepped up to Tier 2, which is typically a form of group intervention, or tier 3, which can take the form of individual intervention such as 1:1 psychological therapy.

EPs in CAMHS work through a tiered model of service delivery at either the primary (community-based services), secondary (specialist community CAMHS team), or tertiary level (Specialist tertiary CAMHS team) (HSE, 2021). Working within a multidisciplinary team, EPs in CAMHS settings provide assessment and support for children and young people experiencing moderate or severe mental health difficulties. The CYP is referred to CAMHS when treatment at the primary care level has been unsuccessful or the mental health issue is so severe and complex that it requires specialist services. CAMHS support mental health conditions within the moderate to severe range, including depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and self-harm. Treatment within this service can include intensive community-based care and talking therapy, group therapy, medication, and other specialised treatments.

2.3.4. Legislative, Policy, and Work Practice Changes

There have been many legislative and work practice changes that have affected the role of the Educational Psychologist (EP) in the Republic of Ireland. The Assessment of Need (AON) is one such piece of legislation that has significant implications for the work of EPs in children's disability services. The Assessment of Need (AON), as set out in the Disability Act (2005), stipulates that once an application for assessment has been received, the assessment must commence within three months and be concluded within a further three months. This has implications for assessment work and other roles within the remit of the EP. With a legal mandate to complete assessments within this timeframe, there is less time to engage in other EP roles such as intervention work and research. These took the form of 90-minute Preliminary Team Assessments (PTAs). There was a recent High Court ruling by Judge

Phelan against the PTA SOP adopted by the HSE related to these PTAs. Judge Phelan ruled in March 2022 that PTAs in their current form were not compliant with Disability law and that the PTA resulted in an adequate diagnosis or assessment of need (O'Faolain, 2022). This ruling again has implications for current EP practice.

Similarly, EPs working in the NEPS have seen their role shaped by legislation and policy. For EPs working in NEPS' school-based service, Department of Education Circulars are very influential documents informing Ireland's school and psychology practice. A General Allocation Model (GAM) for all mainstream primary schools was introduced in Circular 02/05 (2005), which stipulated a generalised allocation of support for pupils with learning support needs and with certain categories of high incidence special educational needs. Before 2005, pupils with assessed learning disabilities in ordinary classes in mainstream primary schools were allocated resource teaching support in accordance with the level of support applicable for that category of disability. This meant that pupils were required to receive a formal diagnosis to receive allocated resource hours. Within the general allocation model, schools get a general allocation of special education resource hours to meet the needs of pupils with “High Incidence” or less severe or more commonly occurring special needs. These special needs include specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia and borderline and mild general learning disabilities. “Low Incidence” special education resource hours were also allocated for pupils with more complex special educational needs, with a lower prevalence level among the population, such as moderate general learning disability, autism, or physical disability. The Department of Education Circular 0014/17 (2017) is a recent document with significant implications for the EP role in Ireland. Circular No 0014/2017 stipulated a revised allocation process for special education teachers to mainstream post-primary schools from the 2017/18 school year.

As such, a large proportion of EP work in the NEPS was assessment-led (Parkinson, 2004). Circular 0013/17 provided a greater degree of autonomy for schools as to how to manage and use additional teaching support within their school, based on the individual learning needs of pupils, instead of being based primarily on a diagnosis of disability which it had been previously. This change again led to changes in how EPs could engage in their role, reducing the emphasis on diagnostic assessment.

2.4. Rationale for Review

There are critical pieces of legislation and guidelines that have implications for the role of the educational psychologist. In the UK, a list of key pieces of legislation from the latter half of the 20th century is included in Appendix A. As noted by Squires et al. (2007), the role of the educational psychologist has “changed significantly” due to legislation. Therefore, it may be timely to review EPs' perspectives of their role. The *Review of the Provision of Educational Psychology Services in Scotland* (Scottish Executive, 2002) delineated five core roles of EP work. In the UK context, these core functions are assessment, intervention, consultation, training, and research. These core functions are enacted within three levels: (a) the individual child (or family), (b) the whole-school level, and (c) Local Educational Authority (LEA). These roles involve working with people from a range of age groups across different settings, including people who present with developmental disabilities, social, emotional, or behavioural challenges, as well as mental health difficulties or special educational needs (SEN).

In the last 10 years, as mentioned previously, some particularly pertinent policies and guidelines have been published within the Republic of Ireland that influence the EP role. A comprehensive list of pertinent policies and guidelines published within the Republic of Ireland is included in Appendix B. Though legislation, policies, and guidelines impact upon the remit and role of the educational psychologist, these documents do not provide qualitative

insight into the perceptions and perspectives of EPs concerning the potential change in role and duties because of these policies. Furthermore, a review of the pertinent databases (EBSCO, Academic Search Complete, PsycInfo and PsycArticles) indicates a systematic scoping review of studies that explore the perspectives or perceptions of EPs concerning their role has yet to be carried out. A systematic scoping review of EPs' perspectives of their role internationally in the current context (2011-2021) could provide rich, meaningful accounts of their role. Following on from this, a refined synthesis of studies conducted in the Irish context could further expand and elucidate the understanding of the role of the EP in Ireland.

Therefore, the review was conducted in two phases guided by the following review question.

2.5. Review Question

What are educational psychologists' perspectives of their role?

2.6. Approach to the Literature Search

Several published studies examine the experiential component of the EP role, both in Ireland and internationally. However, there has been no systematic review collating this information. This systematic scoping literature review aimed to ascertain educational/school psychologists' perspectives of their current role. A systematic literature search was conducted from June to August 2021, and regularly updated thereafter, using the databases Academic Search Complete, PsychInfo, PsychArticles, Eric, Education Full Text, Education Source, and UK & Ireland Reference Centre. The following were the criteria for a study's inclusion in this review:

- The study must be published in a peer-reviewed journal published within the last ten years, and the entire study must be published in English.
- The study must include educational psychologists' views, which are clearly identifiable and distinguishable from any other participants (e.g., teacher or parents).

- The study must examine the perspectives, perceptions, views, or experiences of qualified educational/school psychologists in areas pertaining to their role, function, job, practice or contribution.

A total of 41 peer-reviewed studies were identified through the search and inclusion and exclusion process (See appendices C and D for a list of excluded and included studies). These studies were critically appraised using the Joanna Briggs Institute Critical Appraisal Tools for Qualitative Research (Lockwood et al., 2015). Findings from all included studies were synthesised using a meta-aggregative approach similar to reviews of effectiveness carried out by the International Cochrane and Campbell Collaboration. This involved the aggregation or synthesis of findings in generating a set of statements representing that aggregation through collecting and categorizing these findings based on similarity in meaning. These categories were then synthesised to produce a comprehensive set of findings that could be used for evidence-based practice, and to identify gaps in the research area. The findings are presented in the narrative below. The summary of synthesised findings is based on the collection of hundreds of individual study findings that have been collated and grouped into categories based on thematic similarities in a sequential process. These categories were then deductively mapped onto the BPS (2022) core competencies of educational psychologists where appropriate. These core competencies form an accredited and recognisable framework for EP practice in the UK, where many of the included studies originate. A visual representation of this process is available in Appendix E. The following section highlights the key findings emerging from this review process.

Phase two of the review focuses on studies conducted in the Republic of Ireland considering the unique context within which Irish EPs work. Then, gaps in the literature, implications for theory and practice, and future research are discussed.

The search, after filters were applied, removed articles that were not written in English, not peer-reviewed, published before 2011, and did not include the search terms from Table 2 in the abstract, leaving 1,389 studies. After title and abstract screening of these remaining studies using the inclusion and exclusion criteria listed in Table 1, 78 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility. Below are tables outlining the inclusion and exclusion criteria (Table 1) for the current review, as well as the search terms used (Table 2).

Table 2.1*Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria*

| | Inclusion Criteria | Exclusion Criteria | Rationale |
|-------------------------|--|--|---|
| Type of publication | The study must be published in a peer-reviewed journal | Studies from sources other than peer-reviewed journals | Peer-reviewed publications are of a rigorous academic standard, as expert reviewers have evaluated them |
| Language of publication | The entire study must be published in English. | The whole study or parts of the study are not published in English | English is the only language the reviewer can understand fully |
| Participants | Studies where the views of EPs are clearly identifiable and distinguishable from other participants (e.g., teacher or parents) | Studies which do not include the identifiable views of Educational Psychologists | The current review focuses on Educational Psychologists' perspectives of their role |

| | Inclusion Criteria | Exclusion Criteria | Rationale |
|------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Study Design | Qualitative/ Quantitative or Mixed-Methods | Studies that are not qualitative/ quantitative or mixed methods | <p>The current review aims to explore the experiential perspectives and views of EPs in relation to their role as EP's Qualitative/mixed methods can capture these views with the appropriate richness in the data.</p> <p>Quantitative studies may also provide insights or key findings relevant to the topic</p> |
| Focus and outcome of studies | The study must examine the perspectives, perceptions, views, or experiences of qualified educational/school psychologists in areas pertaining to their role, function, job, practice, or contribution. | Studies that do not examine Educational Psychologists' perspectives, perceptions, views, or perspectives in areas that pertain to their role or function or job or practice or contribution. | The current review focuses on qualified Educational/School Psychologists' eperspectives in their role |

| | Inclusion Criteria | Exclusion Criteria | Rationale |
|------------|---|----------------------------------|---|
| Study Date | Studies published in the last ten years (since 2011) | Studies published before 2011 | This review focuses on current research on this topic |

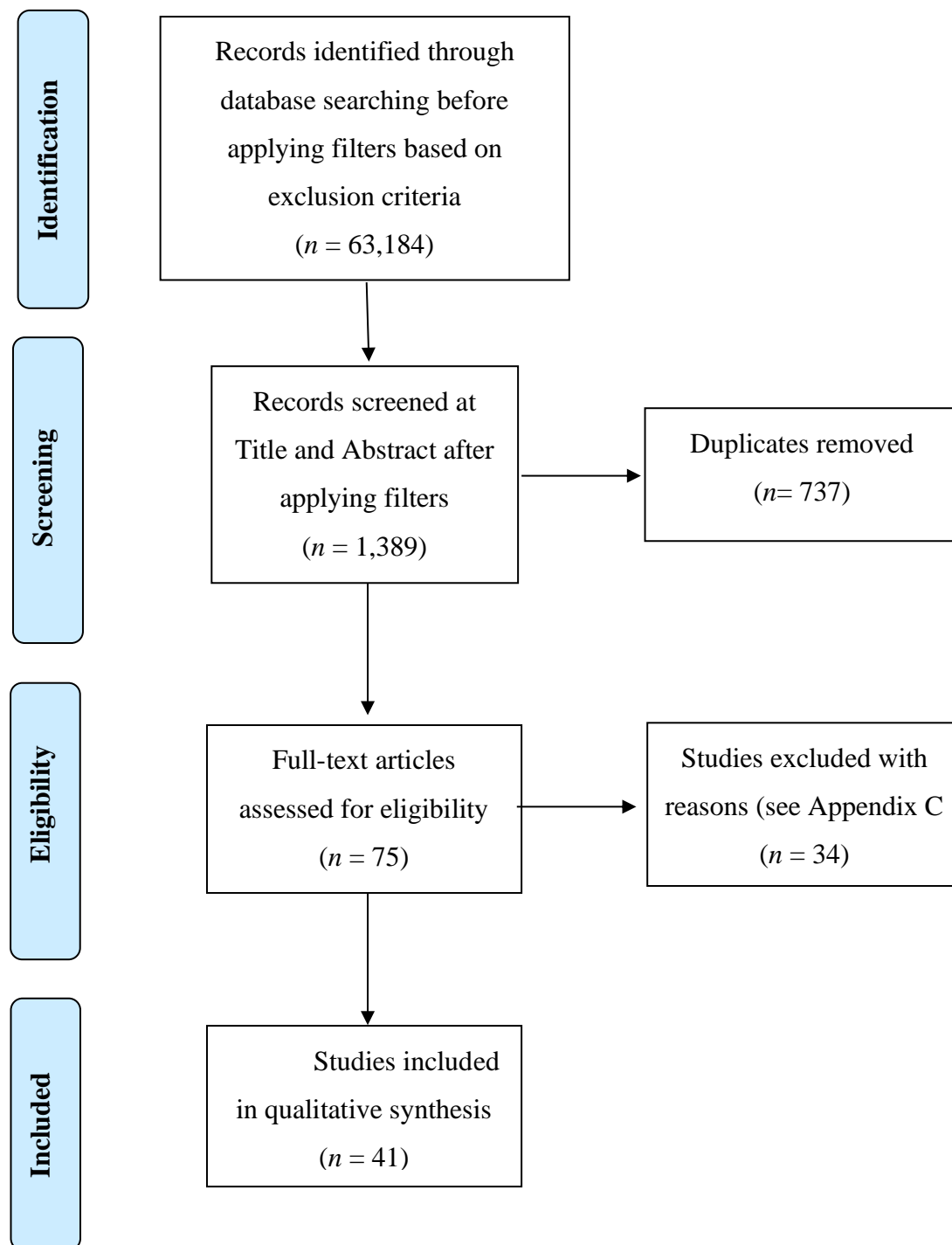
Table 2.2

Combination of Search Terms used in Online Databases

| Database | Educational Psychologist | | Perspective | | Role |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|-------------------------|
| Academic Search Complete | “educational psycholog*” | AND | perspectives or | AND | role or duty or job or |
| | | | perceptions or attitudes | | function or practice or |
| And | Or | | or experiences or views | | contribution or |
| | | | or feelings | | responsibility |
| Psych info and Psych Articles | “school psycholog*” | | | | |
| and Eric | | | | | |
| and Education Full Text | | | | | |
| and Education Source | | | | | |
| and UK & Ireland Reference Centre | | | | | |

Figure 2.1

Prisma Flow Diagram



2.7. Mapping the Field

The systematic review search identified 41 studies that are relevant to the review question. Full-text studies were excluded with reasons (See Appendix C). The titles of the studies are included in Appendix D and details of the studies are outlined in Appendices F and G.

Qualitative data were extracted from papers included in the review using the standardized data extraction method from JBI SUMARI. The data extracted includes specific details about the populations, context, culture, geographical location, data collection methods and the phenomena of interest relevant to the review question and inclusion criteria.

In the case of scoping reviews, Peters et al. (2020) argued that critical appraisal is generally not advised. A scoping review aims to ‘map’ the available evidence rather than provide clinically meaningful answers to research questions. In line with the recommended scoping review process, all studies of relevance were included, regardless of methodological quality.

2.8. Method of Data Synthesis Across all Studies

Qualitative research findings were collated using the Briggs’ (2016) method of meta-aggregation. For clarity, the findings across studies are grouped based on the British Psychological Society’s delineation of the core competencies of the EP. This document provided a useful framework to deductively map the seemingly disparate findings across studies logically and clearly. This involved the aggregation or synthesis of findings to generate a set of statements representing that aggregation through collecting and categorizing these findings based on similarity in meaning. Grounded in philosophical pragmatism, this method provides a standardized, reliable, and accurate way to report the findings of included studies (Lockwood et al., 2015). These categories were then synthesised to produce a single comprehensive set of findings that could be used to understand the current state of knowledge

in the international context concerning the role of the EP. These categories may also be used to identify gaps in the research area.

2.9. Phase 1- Synthesised Findings Across International Studies (Not Including Ireland)

The findings are presented in the narrative below and diagrammatic form in Appendix F. The summary of synthesised findings is based on the collection of hundreds of individual study findings that have been collated and grouped into categories based on thematic similarities and deductively mapped onto the BPS core competencies (BPS, 2022). These core competencies include Psychological Assessment and Formulation, Consultation, Diversity and Cultural Differences, Promoting Development and Education, Service Delivery and Organisational Change, Psychological Intervention and Evaluation, Research and Enquiry, Personal and Professional Values, and Ethics and Skills. The following sections provide a narrative synthesis of these findings.

2.9.1. Psychological Assessment and Formulation

EP views explored within this review indicate that they have experienced varying assessment methods and presenting concerns. EPs viewed working with both the family and the school as important to their assessment role. Concerning EPs' work with families and how they see their role at the family system level in England, a theme, school-based family work, was identified; schools manage referrals to EPs of children and families (McGuiggan, 2021). When the school makes the referral, they are viewed by themselves and the EP as the client who 'holds' the problem within the assessment process. EPs have pivoted away from a rigid and decontextualised mode of assessment toward one that is more ecologically based, as reflected in Woolfson et al.'s (2008) integrated framework for practice. In the U.S context, services related to testing were most common. Services provided by most participants included direct assessment and intervention, student-focused consultation, and facilitating a multi-tiered system of support and problem-solving (Castillo et al., 2016). Again, in the U.S

context, Greenspan et al. (2021) noted that data collection and data-based decision-making efforts in mental health assessment included progress monitoring, measuring outcomes, and fidelity. In the Welsh context, the most common techniques used to elicit young people's views include discussion methods, asking parents/guardians, solution-focused methods, self-report scales, and therapeutic approaches (Smillie & Newton, 2020). Participants used a combination of verbatim quotes and paraphrases to capture the voice of the CYP.

EPs noted the decision-making processes, tools, and frameworks used in assessment throughout the studies reviewed. When exploring EPs' mental health casework in English schools, Zafeiriou et al. (2020) identified a theme: joining theory with evidence. This included looking for evidence, being analytical, applying psychological knowledge, and formulating hypotheses. To support SLCN in the UK, EPs identified client-centred assessment as a way to support SLCN (Sedgewick & Stothard, 2019). These assessments included observations, screening and checklists, and specific tests (such as cognitive assessment). Data collection and data-based decision-making efforts were cited as key to assessment for school psychologists delivering mental health interventions, including progress monitoring and measuring outcomes (Greenspan et al., 2021). EPs noted challenges and barriers to assessment within the studies included in this review. When exploring EPs' work with families, findings from McGuiggan's (2021) study suggested that participants perceived barriers to the EP role. These barriers included a traded service delivery model that creates a consumer/provider relationship between the EP and the school. Participants felt schools had "ownership" of EP time as a result. Facilitators included the EP having a child and family-centred orientation to practice, rather than just school centred. When probing school psychologists' perceptions about barriers to response to intervention (RTI) implementation, Marrs and Little (2014) cited barriers and challenges such that there was identified resistance from schools and that schools favoured traditional methodologies, with

RTI being viewed as a 'fad'. Fear of change, the school viewing the psychologist as a tester/assessor, and loss of status were also barriers to RTI implementation.

In a South African setting, Moolla and Lazarus (2014) noted the challenge of differing discourses in collaborative practice and why it is important to clarify terminology and concepts when collaborating with others throughout assessment. Moolla and Lazarus acknowledged that stakeholders often have different views, assumptions, and backgrounds. Relatedly, when investigating EPs' perceptions about the impact of ethnic minority cultural factors (EMCF) on autism assessments, results from Rupansinha's (2015) study in England found that the relationship between the educational psychologist and the school is significant in that the school can both facilitate and constrain the assessment.

Cultural factors and work contexts can also be barriers to assessment within the EP role. Concerning Rupansinha's (2015) study, the client's English as an additional language affected the assessment process differently for certain participants. Rupansinha also highlighted the work context as a potential barrier to assessment in that management of services in which participants worked impacted the decision-making they were permitted to make. When exploring experiences of how school psychologists meet the needs of students with a traumatic brain injury, a barrier identified by participants was a lack of communication from parents, rehabilitation/medical personnel, or within the school regarding injury or assessment (Canto et al., 2014).

2.9.2. Consultation

In several studies (Brady & Espinosa, 2017; Saddreddini et al., 2019; Smillie & Newton, 2020; Winter & Bunn, 2019), EPs spoke about the importance of consultation as part of their role. The presenting concerns in consultation vary from learning to social-emotional and behavioural difficulties, as do the consultation models used. Within the consultation process, the role of the EP/SP in consultation includes that of mediator,

facilitator, expert, and advocate, depending on the context (Atkinson et al., 2017; Sedgwick & Stothard, 2019; Smillie & Newton, 2020).

Consultation is now viewed as a key part of the EP role. EPs cited consultation as the most common mode of assessment in examining how EPs in the UK and Ireland assess children and young people with autism, followed by observations at school, gaining the child's view, and review of records (Saddreddini et al., 2019). Consultation and attendance at multi-agency meetings were also preferred methods of working, identified by over half of the respondents in Winter and Bunn's (2019) examination of EPs' current work in special schools catering for profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). This most commonly took the form of statutory lead work and individual casework.

This review identified that EPs have several roles in the consultation process. Brady and Espinosa (2017) argued that there are multiple SP roles related to consultation and problem-solving practices in schools. The roles identified in the U.S school context included mediator, parent advocate, facilitator, expert, team leader, team member, legal authority, student advocate, and administrator (Brady & Espinosa, 2017). Though Castillo et al. (2016), again in the U.S. context, stated that services related to testing were most common for school psychologists, including direct assessment and intervention, they noted that student-focused consultation and facilitating a multi-tiered system of support and problem solving were also perceived as critical roles. Some participants also mentioned professional development and supervision, as well as family and community engagement activities as part of their services in a consultative capacity. Involvement with and buy-in from key stakeholders was central to this process (Castillo et al., 2016). EPs suggested that engaging in casework related to mental health is also supported by consultation (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020). Results suggested that EPs use two consultative methods in casework involving mental health: facilitating a secure base by offering emotional containment for parents and staff; and engaging adults in

problem-solving activities such as challenging perceptions to support changes in thoughts and behaviours. A role of the EP in the English context identified by Atkinson et al. (2017) in supporting children's access to their right to play was EPs advising or consulting at the systemic level regarding the importance of play.

EPs across studies within this review noted the perceived effectiveness of consultation as a mode of service delivery. In England, EPs frequently suggested consultation-led approaches as a method to provide support and guidance in addition to problem-solving (Winter & Bunn, 2019). Participants evaluated consultation effectiveness in Brady and Espinosa's (2017) study in the U.S. by measuring factors such as student change, teacher acceptance, parent opinions, and successful conflict management. Smillie and Newton (2020) found that in EPs' practice in gathering and representing children and young people's (CYP's) views (in a type of child-centred consultation), the theme identified was that gaining CYP's views empowers them. This leads to improved outcomes for the CYP. When exploring the experiences of EPs in Hong Kong, the theme identified was that attitude change leads to systems change. This is facilitated by indirect consultation with parents and school staff, fostering attitudinal and systems-level change (Wu, 2012). Concerning the use of coaching and its outcomes as a consultative approach in England, Fanshaw (2021) identified that it enables positive change. The coaching relationship is seen as a central factor for positive outcomes. The study concluded that the use of coaching was viewed as a holistic and future-focused approach.

The enabling factors identified as central to comprehensive and integrated school psychological services included adequate resources, graduate training, and professional development. Services provided by most participants included direct assessment and intervention, student-focused consultation, and facilitating a multi-tiered system of support and problem-solving. EPs identified consultation as key to the process of supporting Speech,

Language and Communication Needs (SLCN). Within this process, EPs cited the importance of being language-specific, particularly in gathering early development history and information on any comorbidity (Sedgwick & Stothard, 2019).

Though a key part of the EP role, several studies in this review identified challenges and barriers to consultation. Castillo et al. (2016) found that barriers related to the EP role of consultation included caseload size, inconsistent policies, and lack of stakeholder involvement. Brady and Espinosa (2017) identified barriers to effective consultation, including legal issues, parent demands, teacher concerns, and systemic constraints. In relation to U.S. School Psychologists collaborating consultatively with other sectors towards school development, a challenge identified was roles and boundaries, which included a lack of understanding of the SP role from schools (Moolla & Lazarus, 2014). Relatedly, potential barriers to consultation work in PMLD settings included a lack of a shared understanding of roles, time restrictions, statutory work, austerity cuts, and the 'culture' of special schools that cater for PMLD (Winter & Bunn, 2019). Fanshaw (2021) identified a lack of understanding of what coaching is as a barrier to coaching as a discipline. Coaching and consultation are viewed as similar and related in many respects and can be used in conjunction. Results from the study indicate that EPs' level of professional confidence in using coaching affects if and how they use coaching. Participants felt there is a place for coaching in educational psychology but that it would involve overcoming several barriers such as client dependence, time constraints, and school willingness (Fanshawe, 2021). Moolla and Lazarus (2014) found that organisational challenges can impede collaboration, both at the micro and macro levels. These challenges include poor structures, procedures, management, and lack of resources.

The processes and central facets of consultation used by EPs can vary. Though not explicitly mentioned, the linear, sequential problem-solving process of Bergan and Kratochwill (1990) was inferred to influence the process (Brady & Espinosa, 2017). Related

to the consultation process, Zafeiriou and Gulliford's (2020) exploration of EPs' mental health casework in schools identified EPs responding to adults' difficult emotions as part of the process. This included schools and parents contacting the EP when feeling 'stuck', having difficult conversations, working with difficult emotions, listening and reflecting, being present, empathising and tuning in, and using invitational language through a consultative approach (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020). Sharing hypotheses and challenging perceptions was also experienced by psychologists using consultation as part of mental health casework. This comprised identifying discrepancies in views, standing up for one's views, ensuring the child is the focus, sharing psychological knowledge, increasing empathy, being directive, reframing, upskilling the adults, and facilitating a therapeutic relationship between the adult and child (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020).

Related to professional practice frameworks that facilitate consultation processes, the frameworks identified by EPs included Appreciative Inquiry and the Constructionist Model of Informed Reasoned Action (COMOIRA) framework (Eddleston & Atkinson, 2018). Both were the most familiar and preferred frameworks to participants out of the frameworks discussed in evaluating consultation in this UK-based study. Although COMOIRA generally received higher ratings than AI, it was notable that EPs viewed it as more problematic in terms of restricting working practices and being too simplistic to capture the complexity of problems presented in practice. However, it was praised for its positive psychology and solution-focused elements. COMOIRA was viewed as helpful in facilitating the change process, reframing perspectives, supporting reflective practice, and helping to ensure accountability in terms of demonstrating changes brought about by the EP's involvement. Participants also liked COMOIRA's transparency and clear link to psychological principles (Eddleston & Atkinson, 2018).

Coaching is viewed as another increasingly popular form of consultation. When exploring EPs' views and experiences of coaching, participants mentioned it as useful because it can be done in several ways as part of a more expansive toolkit. It reminded participants of consultation (Fanshawe, 2019). It was stated that to promote professional autonomy, coaching could be integrated as an additional approach to practice. Further, the IGROW model (exploring the issue, defining a goal, finding the root cause, exploring options, and determining what's next) of coaching was viewed by participants as being transferable to consultation (Fanshawe, 2019).

Overall, EPs in this review viewed consultation and the outcomes it supports as a valuable and meaningful part of their role. The presenting concerns in consultation varied from learning to social-emotional and behavioural difficulties, similar to the consultation models or processes used. The role of the EP/SP in consultation included that of mediator, facilitator, expert, and advocate, depending on the context. The positive outcomes of consultation related to attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioural change at the individual, group, and system levels. Multiple facilitators and barriers to effective consultation were identified, as well as different forms or processes of consultation used by EPs.

2.9.3. Diversity and Cultural Advocacy

Concerning the exploration of EPs' perceptions about the impact of ethnic minority cultural factors (EMCF) on autistic spectrum condition (ASC) assessment, participants indicated the importance of shared understanding with all stakeholders with whom they had contact (Rupasinha, 2015). Consultation with parents and the adjustments made by psychologists to facilitate parents also supported this process. EPs adapted their direct work with the children in the context of EMCF to make the assessment more culturally sensitive (Rupasinha, 2015). When exploring the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of school psychologists who identified as LGBT, the theme identified by Sowden et al. (2016) was

advocacy. In the U.S., SPs identified ways they had advocated for students or positively affected pupils as school psychologists who identified as LGBT (Sowden et al., 2016). When working with students with diverse religious backgrounds, findings from Parker (2021) in the U.S highlighted multiple examples of how competencies were indicated in psychologists' detailing of their interactions with spiritual/ religious students. Most examples included competencies within the *Attitudes and Beliefs* domain; however, some examples represented competencies within the *Knowledge and Skills* domains of Vieten et al.'s (2016) competency framework for religious and spiritual competencies in psychology. Some of the participants' experiences (such as consulting with religious teachers) were less connected to the established competencies and more connected to Ingraham's Multi-Cultural School Consultation (MSC) framework, a framework to examine processes, structures, and relationships among those engaging in consultation (Parker & Hanson, 2021).

Related to both the support and expression of diversity amongst EPs pertaining to their role in an English setting, Burnham (2013) posited that there is a blurred boundary between the personal and the professional such that being a psychologist can be an expression of personal attributes. Relatedly, the aforementioned Rupasinha's (2015) study exploring EPs' perception of the impact of ethnic minority cultural factors (EMCF) on autistic spectrum condition (ASC) assessment indicated the recurring theme of EPs' individuality. All participants noted a part of themselves that impacted their engagement in the assessment, such as gender, accent, and personal preferences regarding assessment methods.

When exploring the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of LGBT-identified school psychologists in the U.S., the theme identified was the impact on the professional role. This included concerns that the participants' sexual orientation would become a label, but also positive experiences and increased professional opportunities concerning the LGBT aspect of their identity (Sowden et al., 2016). Both professional and personal relationships were

identified as stronger and more positive when the school psychologist was 'out' (Sowden et al., 2016). However, there were differences in the experiences of transgender participants and other participants in that their 'outness' was considered different from the lesbian, gay, or bisexual person as sexual orientation can be "hidden". Nevertheless, all LGBT-identified school psychologist participants reported that they demonstrated resiliency and helped support and foster resiliency in students they worked with (Sowden et al., 2016).

These findings indicate that EP/SPs view themselves as having an important role in promoting diversity and cultural advocacy, as well as an awareness of the balance between personal and professional values when working with a diverse range of clients.

2.9.4. Promoting Development and Education

EPs within this review reported that promoting development and education is an important part of their role. Atkinson et al. (2017) identified a potential role of the EP to promote children's access to their right to play, which was in advising at the systemic level and advising on play for children with SEN. Concerning EPs' practice in gathering and representing children and young people's (CYPs) views, a theme related to promoting development and education was that gaining CYPs' views empowers them. This is supported by the EP acting as an advocate. EPs understand that including the voice of the CYP is helpful for the CYP, promotes inclusion, and leads to improved outcomes for the CYP (Smillie & Newton, 2020a).

EPs identified certain processes that help to promote development and education. Gathering and representing children and young people's (CYP's) views was identified by EPs as effective and empowered the CYP; this finding included the sub-themes of the EP as an advocate, including the voice of the CYP as being helpful for the CYP, and improved outcomes for the CYP (Smillie & Newton, 2020). Available service models for EPs were cited as helpful to promote effective practice and development, as was parental knowledge of

services (Wu, 2012). In the aforementioned study, examining specifically how female educational psychologists conduct their work with regard to promoting development, participants spoke about influencing people and places. These included engaging with mentors, colleagues, role models, students, and work environments. Time management strategies, such as hard work, maximising research time, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance, contributed to the EP role (Prinz et al., 2021).

EPs in this review appear to value working systemically and collaboratively in promoting development and education. The importance of working at a systemic level has been viewed as the key role of the EP (Atkinson et al., 2017), though this can be challenging. Concerning school psychologists collaborating with other sectors toward school development, Moolla and Lazarus (2014) identified diverse discourses and differing worldviews as a challenge, including the fact that the language and jargon used vary between sectors. Regarding how EPs work with families and how they see their role at the family system level in the UK, McGuiggan, (2021) identified the theme of preschool family work; the work of the EP at the preschool level was mainly assessment based to identify SEND provision. Intervention work with preschool families was not seen as part of their role. They also identified the importance of examining the context of their role, with some participants preferring to take a 'pragmatic acceptance' position, while others were taking an 'idealistic resistance' position whereby they sought ways their role could be expanded across a child's family system (McGuiggan, 2021). In sum, EPs/SPs work systemically and collaboratively through a range of processes to promote and develop education, though they do encounter barriers in these processes.

2.9.5. Service Delivery and Organisational Change

Similar to their role in promoting development and education, EPs noted the impact and importance of systemic factors when engaging in service delivery and organisational

change. There are various enablers and barriers to effective service delivery, organisational change, and supporting children's access to services and supports. EPs/SPs collaborate with stakeholders at different system levels to support effective service delivery and organisational change. Practitioners have experience working within the legislative context at hearings and tribunals also.

When examining EPs' views on supporting children's access to their right to play, Atkinson et al. (2017) identified the potential role of EPs in advising at the systemic level about the right to play for children with SEN. Atkinson and Posada (2019), when exploring leadership supervision for managers of educational psychology services, found the political context for supervision was important, such as qualifications, socio-legislative factors, and service development. Sedgewick and Stothard (2019) noted systemic work as a process that EPs employ to support SLCN. Ideal working practices included co-construction of casework, positive relationships, and organisational-level changes supporting joint work.

There were noted enablers to educational/ school psychology service delivery and organisational change as part of the EP role within the review. Enablers to school psychological services identified in the US context were access to resources (Castillo et al., 2016). These included supports such as:

- professional association materials,
- district and community personnel support,
- sufficient campus infrastructure (such as educational/ school psychology program availability), access to technology (such as computers and software),
- access to other textbooks and readings, availability of assessment and intervention materials, and access to research materials and funding (Castillo et al., 2016).

Moolla and Lazarus (2014) found that training in intersectoral collaboration and school development enabled collaboration for school psychological services and helped

support the shift to more systemic and consultative methods. Regarding the experiences of EPs in Hong Kong, the theme identified to support effective service delivery of psychological services was the encouragement of a systemic mindset and realistic goals, such as school psychologists adopting a preventative mindset and a flexible attitude to selecting service options (Wu, 2012).

EPs from studies included within this review noted barriers to effective service delivery and the implementation of organisational change within their role. Atkinson (2017) noted the EP's restricted and reduced role in supporting children's rights due to policy and governmental factors. A barrier to facilitating school development through intersectoral collaboration, as identified by Moolla and Lazarus (2014) in South Africa, was organisational challenges, including poor structures and procedures, poor management, and lack of resources. EPs perceived these factors as an impediment to collaboration at both micro and macro levels. In the context of school psychologists collaborating with other sectors towards school development, the challenge identified was roles and boundaries, which included a lack of understanding of the SP role from schools (Moolla & Lazarus, 2014). A further challenge identified was personal and interpersonal dynamics, including power dynamics and marginalisation as two sub-themes. Finally, lack of training and development was cited as a barrier to effective intersectoral collaboration. Participants suggested that all pertinent sectors require training in intersectoral collaboration and school development.

In sum, there are noted enablers and barriers to effective service delivery and organisational change related to EP practice. EPs/SPs collaborate with stakeholders at different system levels to support effective service delivery and organisational change. Practitioners also have experience working within the legislative context at hearings and tribunals to enact change as part of their professional role.

2.9.6. Psychological Intervention and Evaluation

The current review found that from the perspective of EPs, the presenting concerns related to intervention work can vary, similar to the purpose, types, and indeed opportunities to do intervention work (McGuiggan, 2021). EPs now appear to be engaging in more therapeutic intervention as part of their role (Atkinson et al., 2011; Thomas et al., 2019).

The purpose and types of intervention work done by EPs varied across the review. Burnham (2013), in the English context, cited the over-riding importance of “making a difference” when engaging in work with clients, including intervention work. Participant EPs saw their primary role as "mediators of useful outcomes, making a difference to people's lives" rather than developers of knowledge that is generalisable (Burnham, 2013). However, in the U.S., Castillo et al. (2016) found that the most common services provided by school psychologists related to testing. Most participants' services also included intervention through consultation and facilitating a multi-tiered system of support and problem-solving. The processes EPs use to support students with SLCN, as cited by Sedgwick and Stothard (2019) include interventions that could be done at home by the parents and school-based interventions. Greenspan et al. (2021) found that school psychologists incorporate physical activity in mental health interventions.

Smillie and Newton's (2020b) study exploring how EPs gather and represent children and young people's views found that the most common techniques used to elicit children and young people's (CYP) views were discussion methods, asking parents/guardians, solution-focused methods, self-report scales, and therapeutic approaches. A part of the EPs role in intervention work can also include supporting adults' difficult emotions (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020).

Related to the types of intervention work done in practice, studies in this review noted increased opportunities for EPs to engage in therapeutic intervention work, though there were

noted limitations to therapeutic work. Atkinson et al. (2011a) first explored EPs' role in the use of therapeutic interventions through two exploratory case studies. Through SWOT analysis, they found strengths such as the range of approaches used, including CBT and SBFT, engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, the flexibility of therapeutic approaches, and the broad definition of "therapeutic intervention". This included programs such as Circle of Friends and social skills. Some of the opportunities found included the possibility of therapeutic work becoming a more significant part of the EP role in future, more collaborative working with different agencies, and supporting a positive service culture and good relationships with schools. Weaknesses included limited access to appropriate supervision to support therapeutic practice, limited opportunity to practice it in schools and to avail of specialist training, time limitations, lack of awareness from schools that EPs can engage in this type of therapeutic work, and some confusion as to what constitutes therapeutic intervention. Threats identified included anxiety over the role definition of the EP in this area, perceptions of the EP from stakeholders, and time constraints.

Da Silva and Fritz (2012) in South Africa explored the experiences of EPs who utilised ego state therapy when supporting adults with dissociation. Da Silva and Fritz noted the use of other therapies by participants to augment ego-state therapy. Furthermore, the "yin and yang" of ego-states was considered important; all participants concurred that this therapy is beneficial to adolescents with dissociation through the use of dialoguing and providing voice, thus promoting integration. Thomas et al. (2019) explored EPs' motivational interviewing (MI) practices and found that MI was utilised in various EP functions with differing clients. Thomas et al. indicated that the EPs with more experience in MI reported the greatest confidence in using MI and utilised it more frequently in practice. Participants were aware of the theoretical underpinnings of MI and concluded that EPs showcased effective practice in the use of MI, though this appeared to be mediated by the opportunity to

use MI and relevant experience, which varied amongst participants (Atkinson et al., 2011; Thomas et al., 2019).

EPs across studies noted certain barriers and facilitators to intervention work as part of their role. The primary facilitators cited across studies pertained to access to various resources and service support. Castillo et al. (2016) cited access to resources as a facilitator of school psychological services. This included the sub-themes of professional association materials and resources, district and community personnel support, sufficient campus infrastructure (such as program availability), access to technology (such as computers, software), access to other resources (such as textbooks and readings), availability of intervention materials, access to research, and funding. Some studies have noted that barriers to EPs' intervention work include time, training, and caseload-related limitations. When examining EPs' work with families and how they see their role at the family system level, they found that the work of the EP at the preschool level was mainly assessment based. In contrast, intervention work with preschool families was not seen as part of their role (McGuiggan, 2021).

2.9.7. Research and Enquiry

The evidence presented within this section suggests differing perspectives on the preferred research methodologies of EPs. Together, the studies mentioned below provide important insights into the enablers to research, such as time management strategies, access to funding and technology, and administrative support. They refer to the importance of certain ethical underpinnings, such as informed consent, transparency, and confidentiality, that should permeate practice regardless of the differing modes of enquiry.

When exploring the role of educational psychologists in research and enquiry, differing perspectives were noted (Burnham, 2013). Burnham (2013) spoke about the ambivalence of science. Though acknowledging the benefits of EP/SP practice being

grounded in models of scientific inquiry such as hypothesis testing and interactions between cause and effect, participants rejected the notion that the scientific perspective offered a more accurate, useful, or reliable view of human cognition and behaviour. Participants mentioned that scientific enquiry is susceptible to manipulation and misinterpretation as other forms of enquiry (Burnham, 2013). They also spoke about the overriding importance of 'making a difference'. Participants saw their primary role as "mediators of useful outcomes, making a difference to people's lives" rather than developers of knowledge that is generalisable. Some studies within the review noted enablers of research and enquiry as part of the EP role.

Castillo et al. (2016) cited access to resources as an important enabler. This included the sub-themes of materials and resources, district and community personnel support, sufficient campus infrastructure (such as program availability), access to technology (such as computers and software), access to other resources (such as textbooks and readings), availability of assessment and intervention materials, access to research, and funding (Castillo et al., 2016).

In terms of work practices that supported research, in an interview with German Educational Psychologists, the participants identified several factors that supported this. These included several related factors, such as having a long and focused research career, scholarly influencers, effective time-management practices, and research-management strategies (Flanigan et al., 2018).

The interviews also indicated several differences (e.g., educational training, funding opportunities, sabbaticals, administrative responsibilities, and research traditions) between the American and German research environments that can impact productivity (Flanigan et al., 2018). Relatedly an enabler to good research practice from the perspective of EPs in the US, Germany, and the Netherlands noted in Prinz et al. (2021) included research management strategies. These included being work task-oriented, collaborating, and applying writing strategies (Prinz et al., 2021). Participants cited time management strategies necessary for the

EP's research role, including hard work, maximising research time, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance (Prinz et al., 2021). Advice offered by the participants for aspiring scholars to support good research practices included choosing a personally interesting research area, exploring good research questions, striving for quality and not just quantity, collaborating, being persistent, and finding a personal rhythm (Prinz et al., 2021).

EPs noted the importance of ethical research practice. When exploring the role that practising educational psychologists in Africa perceive in promoting ethical research with children, the ethical question of harm arose (Pillay, 2014). Subthemes identified included imposing of educational psychologists' values on participants, the objectivity of the educational psychologist, the psychologist being perceived as a healer, mismatch of western and African traditions and cultures, and ineffective sustainability of support interventions (Pillay, 2014). However, the benefits cited included knowledge management; improvement of the lives of children; empowerment and capacity building of children, families, and communities; increased access to community services for children; and challenging myths in African communities (Pillay, 2014). EPs felt strongly about the importance of providing informed consent and respecting privacy and confidentiality was identified as a key role in protecting children from harm during research participation (Pillay, 2014).

In sum, there were noted enablers to research and inquiry across studies, such as time management strategies, access to funding and technology, and administrative support. There are also important ethical underpinnings, such as informed consent, transparency and confidentiality, permeating practice regardless of EPs' differing modes of inquiry.

2.9.8. Personal and Professional Values, Ethics and Skills

This review suggests that EPs are involved in various practices that support professional values and skills, including supervision. EPs/SPs within this review noted

engaging in ethically sensitive practice as a professional value and skill. Legislative work often permeates these skills.

Yates and Hulusi (2018), in examining EPs' experiences of SEN tribunals in the UK, noted that the EP participants' experiences in tribunals or SENDIST hearings were multiple. These experiences included role conflict and this type of work being perceived as distinct from their core roles, lack of mediator role from advisory services, the importance of supervision and support, and loss of locus of control in tribunal cases. Participants noted involvement in tribunal processes, which included solicitor involvement, instructional clarity, mediation, sharing of information, and decision making. The overarching theme identified was a degree of dissonance regarding participants' perceptions of their professional role as co-constructors of solutions in tribunal or SENDIST hearings.

This review suggests that EPs strive to engage in ethically sensitive practice as part of their professional values. In relation to EPs' practice in gathering and representing children and young people's (CYP's) views, a theme identified by Smillie and Newton (2020) was child-centred practice (CCP). TCCP encompasses principles including respect and adhering to ethical principles, the CYP being supported by proformas and policies, needing CYP's views to engage in the casework, and psychology supporting a child-centred approach (Smillie & Newton, 2020). EPs also engage in ethically sensitive practice when they encounter challenges when working with domestic violence, including professional sensitivity, invisibility and secrecy of domestic violence, and lack of clarity about their role in this area (Gallagher, 2014). EPs, as part of their role in promoting ethical research conducted with children in Africa, valued the importance of informed consent (Pillay, 2014). Participants in Pillay's study noted the importance of giving clear and transparent information pertaining to the research from the beginning, providing consent and gaining permission from relevant stakeholders, completing documents safeguarding children's rights in the research

process, using participants language, and being mindful of power imbalances (Pillay, 2014). Privacy and confidentiality were also cited as important factors, with subthemes including information being securely stored and participants being permitted to see the research results. The benefits of engaging in ethical research, as mentioned by participants, included knowledge management; improvement of the lives of children; empowerment and capacity building of children, families, and communities; increased access to community services for children; and challenging myths in African communities (Pillay, 2014).

Data from this review suggests that EPs perceive supervision as a skill and work practice that supports the development of professional values. Atkinson and Posada (2019), when examining leadership supervision for managers of educational psychology services in England, found that access and entitlement to supervision were important factors in the supervision process for EPs. Atkinson and Posada noted that participants indicated the purpose of this leadership supervision was to have a psychological focus, solve problems, provide a reflective space, and support HR issues. Factors that impact engagement in the process included affective components, including openness and honesty, meeting supervisory needs, and wanting personal support (Atkinson & Posada, 2019). When exploring how EPs engaged in group supervision (Rawlings & Cowell, 2015), group supervision's purpose, process, and personal needs interacted. The purpose of group supervision included being seen as productive and restorative and helping participants reaffirm themselves as psychologists. The group supervision process included the active approach of "getting in the zone" and the group "being a separate entity but working as one" (Rawlings & Cowell, 2015).

The studies discussed above indicate that various practices support professional values and skills, including practitioners engaging in supervision. EPs/SPs strive to engage in ethically sensitive practice as a professional value and skill.

2.9.9. Phase 1- Conclusions From the Review of the International Literature on EPs Perspectives of Their Role

The international literature reviewed indicates that assessment plays a crucial role for the EP and that EPs are culturally mindful when engaging in assessment. They use a range of assessment methods depending on the case. The presenting concerns for assessment vary, as can the degree of collaboration. EPs use various decision-making processes and frameworks throughout the assessment process and have different ways of measuring assessment outcomes. Practitioners encounter challenges to the assessment process, including lack of time and resources, and also certain models of service delivery such as the ‘traded’ model in the UK school context. Enablers to assessment noted by participants include the tools and frameworks available and engaging in a family-centred approach.

In relation to consultation, the presenting concerns range from learning difficulties to social, emotional, and behavioural concerns, similar to the consultation models used. The role of the EP in consultation includes that of mediator, facilitator, expert, and advocate, depending on the context. EPs strive to embrace and promote diversity when engaging in consultation. The positive outcomes of consultation relate to attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioural change at the individual, group, and systems levels. There are also barriers and limitations to the engagement in consultation practice, such as caseload size, parent and teacher demands and concerns, and some uncertainty from stakeholders as to what consultation constitutes.

Regarding intervention work, findings suggest that the presenting concerns that result in intervention work vary, similar to the specific types of intervention work. Practitioners encounter barriers to effective intervention work, such as systemic constraints like time, legal issues, and resources but also facilitators. Synthesised findings across studies suggest that there are enablers to research and enquiry for educational psychologists, such as time

management strategies, access to funding and technology, and administrative support. Ethical considerations also permeate practice regardless of the differing modes of enquiry, such as informed consent, transparency, and confidentiality. Findings suggest that the EP has an important role in promoting diversity and cultural advocacy. EPs balance personal and professional values and manage tensions that emerge. Gender and sexuality were frequently cited as two important areas in promoting diversity and advocacy.

EPs work systemically and collaboratively through a range of processes in their role of promoting and developing education, though they do encounter barriers in these processes. Likewise, there were identified barriers to effective service delivery and organisational change, but there were also enablers. EPs collaborate with stakeholders at different systems levels. Some also have experience working within the legislative context at hearings and tribunals.

Across studies, EPs discussed various practices that support their professional values and skills, the primary one being supervision. EPs strive to engage in ethically sensitive practice as a professional value. Legislative work often permeates these skills also. Involvement with key stakeholders and with other professionals working as part of a team influences differing job roles of the EP (such as mediator, facilitator, expert, advocate, and team member) at any one time. These findings provide an international perspective on the role of the educational psychologist. Considering the variability in the scope and operationalising of the EP role across different countries as well as the unique role factors in the Irish context, it is important to take a closer look at the literature on the role of the EP in Ireland.

Chapter 3. Focused Literature Review

3.1. Phase 2: Focused Literature Review of Studies Featuring EPs Based in Ireland

Following phase 1, a review and synthesis of all included studies internationally (outside of the Republic of Ireland), studies set in the Irish context, or those that included EPs working in Ireland were extracted from the search results, and a focused literature review of studies was conducted to explore the Irish context of the EP role.

3.2. Synthesis of Studies in the Irish Context

Within the published studies conducted in Ireland, the main areas examined relating to the role of the EP included individual and group consultation (Nugent et al., 2014; O'Farrell & Kinsella, 2018), assessment procedures pertaining to autism (Sadreddini et al., 2019), intervention practices including therapeutic interventions (Hoyne & Cunningham, 2019; Robinson et al., 2018), research activities in an academic setting (Griffin, 2018), and offering continuing professional development to school staff (Davey & Egan, 2021). See Appendix G for additional details of these studies. A synthesised review of the findings is detailed below.

3.2.1. Assessment and Intervention

Assessment procedures have been explored in relation to the context of the EP role in Ireland. Sadreddini et al. (2019) explored how EPs working in the NEPS in Ireland and EPs in the UK (though a delineation between EPs in Ireland and the UK was not made) assess children and young people with autism. Nineteen of the participant EPs were based in Ireland. Results from participants showed that EPs spend about 25% of their caseload time on children with autism, either through assessment, intervention, or both. When exploring how EPs in the UK and Ireland assess children and young people with autism, the most frequent modes of assessment used included consultation with parents and teachers, observations at school, gaining the child's view, and reviewing previous reports. When examining how EPs

in the UK and Ireland assess children and young people with autism, the factors that most influenced assessment choices were the individual child's needs, the evidence base for the tool, school factors, and the child and parent views. The factors that most often influenced decision-making on the choice of assessment for participants were individualised assessment, matching the assessment to the needs of the child, the purpose or referral questions/concern, and contextual factors. In terms of collaborating with other professionals, participants most frequently noted working with teachers and Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) out of any other profession (Sadreddini et al., 2019). These findings indicate that EPs work collaboratively and use a range of assessment methods as part of their role.

Intervention practices amongst EPs in Ireland have also been examined. Robinson et al. (2018) explored the intervention practices of 13 EPs in the NEPS in Ireland (with the remaining EP participants based in in the UK) when working with children and young people with autism. Participant EPs reported that 30% of their caseload included implementing interventions for students with autism. The most used interventions by participants were visual support, social stories, reinforcement, antecedent-based training, prompting, modelling, and social skills training. Other frequently mentioned evidence-based interventions (EBIs) by participants were:

- Social communication,
- Emotional regulation and transactional support [SCERTS] (Prizant et al., 2005),
- Treatment and education of autistic and communication-related children [TEACCH] (Mesibov et al., 2005),
- The National Autistic Society's Earlybird and Earlybird Plus (Shields, 2001),
- Attention autism (Davies, 2013).

The child's individual needs and the school context were cited most frequently as factors influencing EPs' decisions about which intervention to implement (Robinson et al., 2018). The most critical factors in participants' approach to intervention planning were collaboration, personalisation, developing school capacity, and assessment-informed intervention (Robinson et al., 2018). These findings suggest that EPs engage in many collaborative and assessment-informed interventions as part of their role.

The use of therapeutic intervention has also increased, particularly amongst EPs working in the Irish school system with NEPS. Hoyne and Cunningham (2019) explored the different therapeutic approaches employed by EPs in this Irish school psychology context and the factors EPs viewed as barriers and facilitators to this provision. The therapeutic approaches most used by participants were cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and solution focused brief therapy (SFBT). The facilitators perceived by participants as impacting therapeutic practice included: service support (supervision, peer support, CPD, flexibility of EP role, material resources, NEPS strategy and management support), intervention outcomes, media interest, and school factors (school support and awareness, teacher involvement, large schools, EP integration into school). The barriers to therapeutic interventions related to time (time available for delivery, energy, caseload, the limited number of NEPS EPs), government policy (resource-driven system, education budget reductions), school factors (school attitude, competing demands, lack of awareness, small rural schools), training (inadequate initial training, lack of availability of suitable CPD), and the EP role, in that it was not clear to participants concerning service policy what the role of the EP is in therapeutic practice. The findings indicated that EPs' experiences of using therapeutic approaches are generally positive though there are barriers to this engagement.

3.2.2. Consultation

Individual (O'Farrell & Kinsella, 2018) and group (Nugent et al., 2014) consultation was the focus of two studies in an Irish context. O'Farrell and Kinsella explored the perceived efficacy of consultation as a model of service delivery for educational psychologists. Nugent et al. developed a pilot project to evaluate and explore group consultation in Irish schools and EPs' experience of the process. Concerning exploring the perceived efficacy of consultation as a service delivery model for educational psychologists, O'Farrell and Kinsella (2018) found that participant psychologists noted that consultation is a more effective use of time and resources, though it has not necessarily reduced their workload. Participants noted that managing other stakeholders' expectations and assumptions about the consultation is a part of the role and that EPs are 'not the experts' in the process; rather, they are there to build capacity. They can be directive and give advice, but they view the teacher as having ownership in relation to the formulation of strategies. Participating EPs in the study also noted the request for more systemic consultation from schools and how it was seen as valuable, though there can also be resistance from some schools. The efficacy of co-construction between stakeholders of individual behaviour plans within consultation to support the delivery of programmes was viewed as effective by EPs (Davey & Egan, 2021). This involved working in partnership and sharing expertise (Davey & Egan, 2021).

Nugent et al. (2014) found that 80% of consultations were about individual pupils, while 20% were about groups of children or general queries. The mean age of children discussed was 8.3 years, with 82% of cases being boys and only 18% being girls. Over 74% of cases are related to behavioural and emotional difficulties. Most of the cases brought to group consultation were complex, with referrals pertaining to emotional and behavioural difficulties, learning, home life, and social skills. Several cases discussed in mainstream schools related to Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or suspected ASD. There was consensus

amongst EPs that the pilot project for group consultation was working well and that teachers valued the format and process. Other comments highlighted that the focus on behavioural challenges was viewed as positive ($n = 2$), teachers valued the access to advice, information, and strategies ($n = 5$), and that consultation was a valuable use of psychologists' time ($n = 3$).

3.2.3. Diversity and Cultural Advocacy

EPs in the studies included in this review noted that an essential part of their role was to promote diversity and cultural advocacy. This was elucidated through Robinson et al.'s (2018) study that explored EPs' intervention practices with reference to pupils with autism in Ireland (and from the UK, though distinctions between EPs in UK and Ireland was not made in the study). Three of the most important factors in participants' approach to intervention planning were collaboration, personalisation, and developing school capacity, all of which support diversity of learning and advocacy for pupils with autism (Robinson et al., 2018a). This promotion of diversity was also evident in assessment practices.

3.2.4. Service Delivery and Research

As part of their role, Ireland Educational Psychologists regularly offer and engage in training and continued professional development (CPD) opportunities. Davey and Egan (2021) sought to explore the continuing professional development experiences offered to teachers by NEPS psychologists during an Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management programme (IYTCM). Three overarching themes emerged from data analysis from both the EPs and teachers.

The first was the importance of customising programme delivery. This includes the tailoring of strategies and the tailoring of programme content. Using role-plays and presenting vignettes were considered a challenge. Knowledge of the school context supported the EPs' ability to work with teachers and deliver the programme successfully at a whole school level, which is the preferred level at which to deliver the program for the EPs. The

second theme from the data was the efficacy of co-construction of individual behaviour plans. This was supported by working in partnership with stakeholders and sharing expertise. The final theme was the effectiveness of sustained support. The study concluded that EPs in NEPs effectively facilitated the CPD of teachers through offering training in IYTCM and that it was an effective mode of service delivery for EPs. EPs suggested establishing a community of practice to further facilitate the support offered to teachers, both formal and informal (Davey & Egan, 2021).

Regarding EPs' perspectives of lecturing and research as part of their role, there was one identified published study. In contrast to study findings in the international context, the role and remit of one educational psychologist, as noted by Griffin (2018), using a personal narrative design, including lecturing and research. Activities mentioned included lecturing a diverse range of trainee teachers and psychology students and travelling to supervise trainee teachers and educational psychologists. It also included office-based work such as module design, supervision of research, other administrative duties, and the authors' own research, which involved completing a peer-reviewed article for submission.

3.3. Phase 2 – Conclusions From the Review of the Irish literature on EPs Perspectives of Their Role

The Irish literature reviewed suggests that EPs spend about 25% of their caseload time on children with autism through assessment, intervention, or both (Sadreddini et al., 2019). When exploring how EPs in the UK and Ireland assess children and young people with autism, the modes of assessment used the most included consultation with parents and teachers, observations at school, gaining the child's view, and reviewing previous reports.

Regarding intervention practices relating to children with autism, Robinson et al. (2018) found that participants preferred visual support, social stories, reinforcement, antecedent-based training, prompting, modelling, and social skills training. EPs appear to be

conscious of promoting diversity and cultural advocacy in the intervention process, with Robinson et al. (2018) noting that three of the most critical factors in participants' approach to intervention planning were collaboration, personalisation, and developing school capacity, all of which support this diversity of learning and advocacy for pupils with autism. The use of therapeutic intervention amongst EPs working in the Irish school system with NEPS has also increased, with Hoyne and Cunningham (2019) noting enablers and barriers to therapeutic intervention practice. In relation to consultation, O'Farrell and Kinsella (2018) found that EPs viewed consultation as a more effective use of time and resources, though it has not necessarily reduced their workload. EPs noted that managing other stakeholders' expectations and assumptions about the consultation process is a part of the role and that EPs are 'not the experts' in this process; instead, they are there to build capacity.

Concerning the perspectives of training and service delivery as part of EPs' role, Davey and Egan (2021) concluded that EPs in the school setting of NEPs effectively facilitated the CPD of teachers through training in the Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management (IYTCM) and that it was an effective mode of service delivery for EPs. Furthermore, EPs suggested establishing a community of practice to continue facilitating the support offered to teachers (Davey & Egan, 2021). Finally, a study explored the experience of an EP in an academic setting and noted the extensive lecturing and research as part of this role.

3.4. Implications for Theory, Practice and Future Research Based on the Findings from Phase 1 and Phase 2

To the author's knowledge, this scoping review was the first review to gather findings from studies internationally that pertained to EPs' perspectives of their role. These findings were deductively mapped onto the BPS core competencies of the EP role, which include assessment, consultation, intervention, research, service delivery, and professional values.

Furthermore, it is the first review to collate findings across studies of EPs in an Irish context relating to their perspectives of their role as EPs (this was done in Phase 2 of the review). As such, this review contributes to the literature on the role of the educational psychologist and may provide implications for theory, practice, and future research, as discussed below.

Some general implications and conclusions can be drawn from the methodological choices of all the included studies in this review, both internationally and in the Irish context. 20% of included studies made explicit reference to the researcher's influence on the research and vice-versa, this low percentage being a methodological shortcoming across the remaining 80% of included studies. Also, 40% of included studies did not provide evidence of ethical approval by an appropriate body or evidence of adherence to ethical guidelines. These findings suggest a gap in the literature's reference to researcher positionality and ethical procedures. Therefore, future research in this area should address researcher positionality and explicitly reference the ethical guidelines adhered to throughout the research.

As is clear from this review, few published studies have explored EPs' current perspectives of their role in an Irish context. Nugent et al. (2015) explored teachers' and educational psychologists' perspectives of group consultation. As previously discussed, O'Farrell and Kinsella (2018) explored each group's perceptions of engaging in consultation in Ireland using semi-structured interviews with teachers, parents, and three EPs. Griffin (2018) provided a personal narrative account of their work as an EP in an academic setting. Hoyne and Cunningham (2019) explored, using semi-structured interviews with a sample of 12 EPs working in one region of the National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS), enablers and barriers to their use of therapeutic interventions. Davey and Egan (2021) sought to explore the continuing professional development experiences offered to teachers by NEPS psychologists during an Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management programme.

This review has highlighted EPs' use of consultation and therapeutic interventions within the Irish context. The current review also demonstrates the different modes of assessment EPs use in practice. This collation of findings may help practitioner EPs to think and reflect on the range of assessment and intervention options available to them, as well as help, support, and refine their current practice. However, it should be noted that the perspectives of therapeutic practice in Hoyne and Cunningham's (2019) study were taken from a group of EPs working within one region of an Irish school psychological service. Therefore, it may not necessarily be generalisable to EPs nationally or those working in other types of services such as disability or child psychology. Future research should explore the therapeutic practices of EPs working in different settings across different regions of Ireland.

This review also highlights additional gaps in the research. Though studies explored EPs' perspectives of assessment, there is a gap in the research, both internationally and in the Irish context, examining EPs' experiences of psychological case formulation as it relates to assessment. Regarding research and enquiry as a key role of the EP, though this review highlighted studies that explored EPs' views on research internationally and in the Irish context, the EPs in those studies were working in academic settings. As such, there appears to be a gap in the research in terms of gaining the perspective of practitioner EPs as it relates to research and enquiry as part of the EP role. A further gap identified by this review is the dearth of research from EPs' perspectives on how governmental policy and legislation may impact the EP role. This is despite significant legislative and policy changes such as the Assessment of Need, Progressing Disabilities, and Department of Education Circulars.

Furthermore, there is little research beyond the included studies examining EPs' holistic perspectives of their wider role in an Irish context, including those working in Disability, CAMHS or Primary Care Psychology. Many of the included studies in an Irish context focus on EPs in school psychology settings, some from one service. This is despite

the significant expansion in both the EP's remit and place of work in the Republic of Ireland (Health Service Executive, 2016). Future research should explore the EP role across settings.

Additionally, there is a lack of data detailing how the EP role may differ across settings.

There is a lack of data on how EPs in an Irish context perceive aspects of their role, such as working as part of an interdisciplinary team, how EPs engage with the community, and their perceptions of whom they view as the client. Future research may elucidate these gaps. There is also a distinct lack of research on how EPs evaluate the outcomes of their role in an Irish setting. Additionally, this review brings attention to the paucity of research in an Irish context of EPs perspectives regarding their experience of diversity and cultural advocacy and personal and professional values, ethics, and skills.

With the 2015 change from Master of Arts to Doctorate level educational psychology training in Ireland and the 2016 change in Health Service Executive (H.S.E) Eligibility Criteria for Recruitment of Psychologists to the H.S.E, newly qualified EPs are now eligible to work in additional Child Psychology settings such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Primary Care Psychology. EPs who qualified prior to the doctoral level can also work in these contexts if they complete/have completed a 60-day placement in said environment or demonstrate relevant competency. As the move to doctoral training for educational psychology in the Republic of Ireland is relatively new (currently on its 7th cohort of doctoral students), this would be an ideal time to examine doctoral graduates' perspectives of training and how they view the "expanded role" of the educational psychologist, as noted in a study by Squires and Dunsmuir (2011). With newly qualified educational psychologists now eligible to work in both child disability and child psychology H.S.E. settings, this is reflected in the additional and extended placement of current and future trainees. As such, recent graduates and established practitioners' perspectives and perspectives of educational psychologists' expanded roles and settings could provide us with

rich, informative findings that could ultimately support the continuing development of educational psychology in Ireland. This could help educational psychologists to continue to “become a powerful, positive force for change in the lives of children and young people” (Monsen et al., 1998, p. 124). With these changes, there is a need to examine the changing role of the educational psychologists in Ireland.

At this time, no other studies examine the expanded role of the educational psychologist in Ireland from a holistic perspective, capturing all the key functions of the educational psychologist as delineated by Farrell et al. (2006). Further research is warranted and could explicate the similarities between educational psychology and other related professions, while also bringing further awareness to the distinctive contribution of educational psychology to education and healthcare systems.

3.5. Conclusions from Phase 1 and Phase 2

The objective of this scoping literature review was to ascertain the educational/school psychologists’ perspectives of their current role. A systematic literature search was conducted from June to August 2021 and updated in January 2022. A total of 41 peer-reviewed studies were identified through the search and inclusion and exclusion processes. These studies were critically appraised using the Joanna Briggs Institute Critical Appraisal Tools for Qualitative Research (Lockwood et al., 2015). Findings were synthesised using a meta-aggregative approach similar to reviews of effectiveness delineated by the international Cochrane and Campbell Collaboration.

Synthesised findings across studies suggest that perspectives of consultation include EPs viewing their role in this process as mediator, facilitator, expert, and advocate, depending on context (Brady & Espinosa, 2017; Saddreddini et al., 2019; Smillie & Newton, 2020; Winter & Bunn, 2019). EPs strive to embrace and promote diversity when engaging in consultation (Rupasinha, 2015; Smillie & Newton, 2020). The positive outcomes of

consultation relate to attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioural change at the individual, group, and systems levels (Wu, 2012). There are also barriers and limitations to consultation practice.

The EP has a key role in promoting diversity and cultural advocacy. EPs balance personal and professional values and manage tensions that emerge (Burnham, 2013; Sowden et al., 2016). EPs are culturally mindful when engaging in differing assessment methods (Rupasinha, 2015). The presenting concerns for assessment vary, similar to the degree of collaboration (McGuiggan, 2021; Sadreddini, 2019; Smillie & Newton, 2020). EPS use varying decision-making processes and frameworks throughout the assessment process (Eddleston & Atkinson, 2018; Greenspan et al., 2021; Sedgewick & Stothard, 2019; Zafeiriou et al., 2020). Practitioners experience challenges and barriers throughout the assessment process (Canto et al., 2014; Marrs & Little, 2014; McGuiggan, 2021; Rupasinha, 2015).

Regarding intervention work, findings suggest that the presenting concerns and types of intervention work vary. Practitioners face barriers to effective intervention work, such as systemic constraints like time, legal issues, and resources, but also facilitators (Atkinson et al., 2011; Brady & Espinosa, 2017; Hoyne & Cunningham, 2019). EPs work systemically and collaboratively through various processes as part of their role promoting and developing education, though they encounter barriers in these processes and to effective service delivery (Atkinson et al., 2017; Moolla & Lazarus, 2014; Prinz et al., 2021).

Across studies, EPS discussed various practices supporting their professional values and skills, primarily supervision and ethically sensitive practice (Castillo et al., 2016; Gallagher, 2014; Pillay, 2014; Yates & Hulusi, 2018). Involvement with key stakeholders and collaborators influences the saliency of their differing job roles (e.g., mediator, facilitator, expert, advocate, and team member) at any time. In terms of research and enquiry, findings

suggest that there are enablers to research and enquiry for educational psychologists (Castillo et al., 2016; Flanigan et al., 2018; Pillay, 2014; Prinz et al., 2021).

3.6. Research Question

The following research question emerged in relation to the identified gaps in the literature in the Irish context: What are educational psychologists' perspectives of their role in education and healthcare settings?

Chapter 4. Empirical Paper

4.1. Introduction

Educational psychologists (EPs) support children and young people in the context of school and home life environments. EPs work with children, young people, and their families to promote their cognitive, emotional, and social development through the systematic application of psychological principles and evidence-based practice (BPS, 2019). They work with parents, teachers, and other professionals to help support children's needs at home and school (BPS, 2022).

Currently, in the Republic of Ireland, EPs typically engage in approximately 10 years of study and clinical experience, including three years of doctoral-level professional training, to work as an educational psychologist (HSE, 2021). This 10-year period typically entails an undergraduate degree in psychology, relevant research experience or level nine postgraduate qualification, and clinical work experience, followed by doctoral training. Practitioner EPs are trained to develop competency in assessment, intervention, formulation, and report writing, research, training and development, ethical practice, and other transferrable skills to successfully practice as EPs. As such, they are competent to work with various stakeholders in both education and healthcare settings. Table 4.1 illustrates the range of roles and settings where EPs currently work in the Republic of Ireland, as well as the qualifications required depending on the year of qualification.

There has been a gradual move towards expanding the remit of psychology towards providing psychological support and interventions at the community level to promote mental health and wellbeing, as influenced by the community psychology movement in the UK (Crowley, 2007). Historically, educational psychologists in Ireland worked in two settings: School Psychology and Child Disability. Due to the 2015 transition from masters to doctoral level for educational psychology training in Ireland, and the change in Health Service

Executive (H.S.E) eligibility criteria for the recruitment of psychologists to the H.S.E in 2016, newly qualified EPs are now eligible to work in additional Child Psychology settings. These additional settings include Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Primary Care Psychology. EPs who qualified before the transition to doctoral level training can also work in these settings, provided they complete/have completed a 60-day placement in said setting or can demonstrate relevant competency in this area.

4.2. Irish Context for Educational Psychology

EPs in Ireland primarily work in one of the three settings: School Psychology, Children's Disability Services, or Child Psychology Services. Table 4.1 provides a description of each service. The use of the title of 'Educational Psychologist' is currently unregulated in Ireland, though educational psychologists are currently in the process of attaining statutory regulation from CORU, Ireland's multi-professional health regulator is responsible for the regulation of health and social care professions and the HCPC equivalent body for Irish healthcare professionals. CORU is currently developing criteria for professional psychologists to register. The Psychological Society of Ireland (2017) has delineated accreditation criteria for doctoral programs in Ireland that inform training and role readiness. Qualified EPs are currently eligible to register for chartered membership with the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI), which allows members to use the title of 'Chartered Psychologist'.

Table 4.1*Description of Main Services in Ireland Where EPs Work*

| | School Psychology | Children’s Disability Services | Child Psychology Services |
|---------------|---|--|--|
| Main employer | Ireland's NEPS employs school psychologists (NEPS). ETBs nationwide also employ school psychologists. | The HSE is the main employer of Children’s Disability Services though staff are also employed through charitable organisations such as Enable Ireland and Brother of Charity | The HSE is largest employer of Child Psychology Services in Ireland. . . |

| | School Psychology | Children’s Disability Services | Child Psychology Services |
|------------|---|--|---|
| Role/Remit | NEPS provides psychology services to all Irish schools and is funded by the Department of Education and Skills. NEPS psychologists help all students, especially those with special needs, academically, socially, and emotionally. | Their primary responsibility is to provide an interdisciplinary model of clinical services to children with complex needs. EPs are central members of these teams. | EPs in Primary Care Psychology and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services work with children aged 0-18 years. They offer assessments, advice and supportive therapy for children and young people presenting with psychological difficulty. EPs in CAMHS provide assessment and support for children and young people experiencing moderate or severe mental health difficulties |

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|---|---|
| <p>Model of Service Delivery</p> | <p>NEPS uses the Department of Education's continuum of support model's consultative approach to service delivery. ETB psychologists serve schools, colleges, and centres. In this setting, EPs work across the lifespan and provide individual, group, and systemic direct and indirect services through training, counselling, and consultation.</p> | <p>Progressing Disability Services for children and young people (PDS) aims to provide an integrated national model that delivers health services to all children regardless of location, schooling, or the presenting difficulty. The PDS initiative led to the establishment of 96 geographical cells called Disability Networks. Within these areas are Child Disability Network Teams (CDNTs), Central to the Health Service Executive's (HSE) Progressing Disability Services (PDS) initiative (2020) is a reconfiguration</p> | <p>EPs in Primary Care typically engage with clients or service users through a stepped model of service delivery (HSE, 2021). The CYP and their family are offered support at the least intensive tier of intervention that clinically meets their needs. EPs in CAMHS through a tiered model of service delivery at either the primary (community-based) or secondary (specialist community CAMHS team) levels. CAMHS support mental health conditions within the moderate to severe range, including depression, anxiety and eating disorders. Treatment within this service can include</p> |
|----------------------------------|--|---|---|

| | | |
|-------------------|--|---|
| School Psychology | Children's Disability Services | Child Psychology Services |
| | of all HSE and voluntary organisation children's disability services. | intensive community-based care and talking therapy |

4.3. Activity Theory as a Framework to Explore Perspectives and Influencing Factors Within a Service or System

Engeström's Second Generation Activity Theory (2001) is an effective framework for exploring how people work within an organisation, service, or wider system (Kelly et al., 2016). Activity Theory has been used in previous research, including the exploration of the role of the EP (Soan, 2012), how teachers and EPs mediate consultation practices through various tools or artefacts (Leadbetter, 2004), and the relationship between individual professionals and the organisation or service in which they engage in their professional role (Gaskell & Leadbetter, 2009). Additionally, Activity Theory has been used to compare EPs' roles in multi-agency teams and educational psychology services (Curtin, 2020; Sheerin, 2019).

4.4. Research in the Irish Context Regarding EP Perspectives of Their Role

Within the published studies conducted in Ireland, the main areas explored relating to the role of the EP included individual and group consultation (Nugent et al., 2014; O'Farrell & Kinsella, 2018); assessment procedures pertaining to autism (Sadreddini et al., 2019); intervention practices, including therapeutic interventions (Hoyne & Cunningham, 2019; Robinson et al., 2018); research activities in an academic setting (Griffin 2018); and offering continuing professional development to school staff (Davey & Egan, 2021).

4.5. Rationale for the Current Research

A National Psychology Project Team report by the Health Service Executive (2021) acknowledged the growing demand for psychologists in all aspects of health provision. The report acknowledged increased mental health difficulties in children and adolescents. It noted a 53% supply gap between the current staffing in psychology compared to the number of posts recommended in *A Vision for Change* (HSE, 2006). Led by a Recovery Model of mental health, the HSE (2006) noted growing requests from service users for better access to

a "more holistic, collaborative and person-centred psychological and social understanding of mental health difficulties" (p. 23). Additionally, in "Sharing the Vision- A Mental Health Policy for Everyone", the Health Services Executive (2022) concluded that there is an increased demand for specialist psychological therapeutic support and intervention.

With the transition from masters to doctoral level training for educational psychologists in Ireland in 2015, coupled with the 2016 Health Service Executive (HSE) review that delineated changes to the eligibility criteria for the recruitment of psychologists to the HSE, newly qualified EPs are now eligible to work in additional Child Psychology settings such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Primary Care Psychology. EPs who qualified before the transition to doctoral level can also work in these settings, provided they complete/have completed a 60-day placement or can demonstrate relevant competency in these care groups (See Table 1). With these changes, there is a need to examine the role of the educational psychologists in Ireland from the EP's perspective.

Further research could elucidate the similarities between educational psychology and other related psychology discipline, while also bringing further awareness to the distinctive contribution of educational psychology to education and healthcare systems. Therefore, the following research question guided this study:

What are educational psychologists' perceptions of their role in education and healthcare settings?

4.6. Methodology

4.6.1. Research Design and Paradigm

The study employed a qualitative research design with data gathered using a short online demographic questionnaire followed by individual semi-structured interviews. Thematic Analysis (TA), specifically, Template Analysis was used to analyse data from interviews. Thematic Analysis involves identifying "themes and patterns of meaning" within

the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006), with the analysis being “guided by an existing theory” or framework, as well as the researcher’s own epistemology. The researcher used Second Generation Activity Theory supplemented by BPS Core Competencies for Educational Psychologists (2022) as a theoretical framework to support data collection and analysis. Quantitative demographic data were analysed quantitatively (See sections 4.6.6 and 4.6.6 for details of Sampling, Participants and Measures, and Data Analysis).

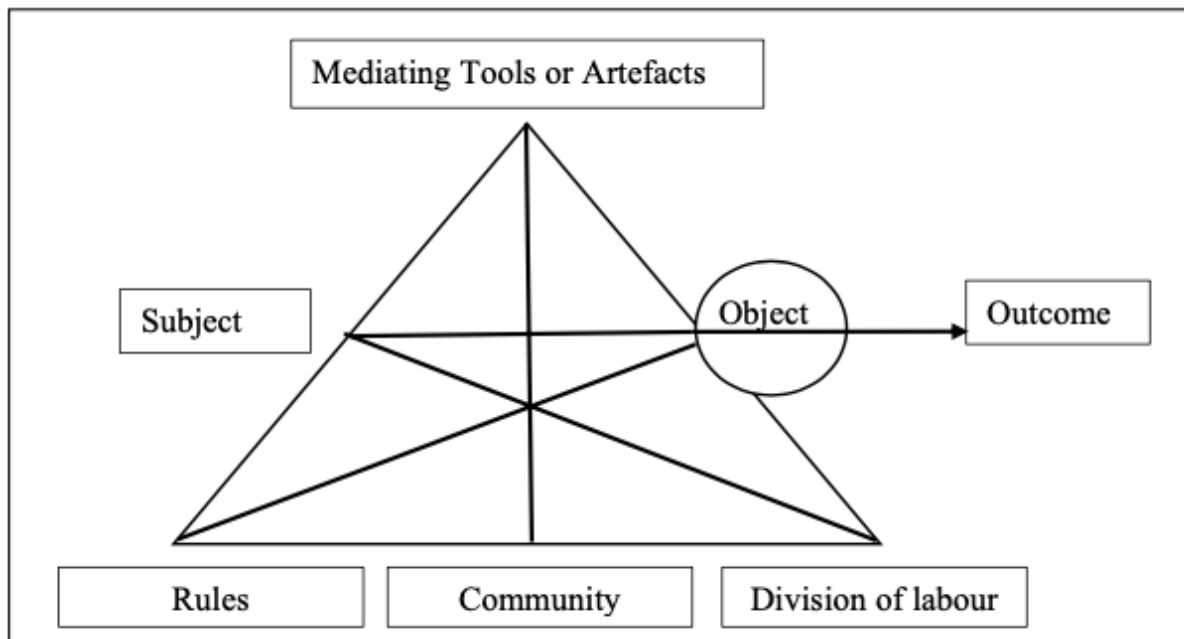
The epistemological approach of the researcher is that of critical realism. Critical realism provides a modern and clear scientific foundation for theory and practice and depends on an interpretive and social evidence base (Bhasker, 2013). In this way, it sits between positivist and interpretivist approaches (Zhang, 2022). Critical realism accepts that there are objective realities (Archer, 2010), but also socially constructed narratives within this objective reality that are interpretivist in nature.

4.6.2. Theoretical Framework

The study's theoretical framework is Engeström’s (2001) Second Generation Activity Theory. An “activity” includes a “subject” and an “object”, mediated by an “artefact”. Engeström’s second generation of this model also places importance on the socio-cultural and historical variables. In the case of the proposed research, each node of the Activity Theory informs questions posed to explore the domains of interest, including subject (whose perspective), object (what are they working on), outcome (to achieve what?), rules (what supports or constrains the work?), community (who else is involved?), division of labour (how is the work shared?), and tools/ artefacts (what is being used?).

Figure 4.1

Second Generation Activity Theory



A review of previous research shows the application of Activity Theory across various studies (Daniels et al., 2007; Gaskell & Leadbetter, 2009,) including in examining the role of the EP (Sloan, 2012). Leadbetter (2017) delineated the five core principles underpinning Activity Theory, which are set out below in Table 4.2 and incorporated throughout the research.

Table 4.2

Core Principles of Activity Theory

1. The main unit of analysis is a system that is ‘collective, artefact mediated and object oriented’.
 2. There are multiple viewpoints within an Activity System.
 3. Historicity, that is, investigating the historical aspects of systems, is very important.
 4. Contradictions, which are sources of tension, disturbance, and eventual change, are integral to understanding Activity Theory.
 5. The nature of Activity Theory is transformative. New patterns of working can be established by questioning older, established ones.
-

The Activity Theory framework was supplemented using the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2022) core competencies for educational psychologists to further explore each node of Activity Theory as they relate to the core roles of the educational psychologist. It was also employed as the PSI does not yet provide a clear competency framework for EPs as it is currently being upgraded. They have, as previously mentioned, published accreditation criteria for doctoral programs in Ireland that inform the training and role readiness of trainee EPs (PSI, 2017). As such, the BPS core competencies are used as a framework to support evaluation of trainee EP performance on placement in Ireland by training colleges. For example, when exploring the Tools node of Activity Theory, this exploration was supported by questions pertaining to the BPS core competencies of psychological assessment, intervention, and research and enquiry as ‘Tools’ used in the role of the EP (Fallon et al., 2010).

4.6.3. Positionality

The researcher's current position as an educational psychology trainee and doctoral student may have impacted the data collection questions and the data interpretation.

However, positionality is common in qualitative research, and these potential constraints were addressed using "Personal and Epistemological Reflexivity" (Willig, 2013). This involved the researcher iteratively reflecting on their own personal, political, and social attitudes and how these may influence and impact various stages of the research process, from the genesis of the research idea to data collection and analysis by using reflective journaling. (See Appendix I for a sample of the reflective journal used).

4.6.4. Contradictions

Contradictions or tensions can be explored within an activity system when Activity Theory is used as an analytic tool (Engeström, 1999). An exploration of contradictions or tensions can support learning and consequently facilitate change (Leadbetter, 2017). The current research examined primary contradictions between the two Activity Systems (EPs in healthcare settings and EPs in education settings) for each node. Between any nodes of an activity system, primary contradictions can emerge (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). Primary contradictions within each node of the individual Activity Systems were also explored and if identified they were included in the analysis. These contradictions were identified through observation of any interactions and conflicts both within and between activity systems (Engeström, 2001), as well as and through reviewing transcripts and analysis of the activity systems during the coding process.

4.6.5. Sampling, Participants and Measures

Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants. Participants were identified and recruited via targeted emails to Educational Psychology Special Interest Groups (Psychological Society of Ireland Division of Educational Psychology) and psychologists

working at the NEPS. Additionally, the researcher's network of mentors and former colleagues was used, via conversation, email, and phone, to identify potential participants within the identified population.

Furthermore, purposive snowball sampling was used to gain access to participants. Twenty psychologists participated in the study (Complete demographic information is included in the results section). Participants classified as working in an education setting comprised those working in the NEPS, and participants classified as working in a healthcare setting included those working in either a Disability or Child Psychology service. In the results section, participants are described using (S=school, D=disability, C=child) + Psy + participant number). For data analysis, two distinct Activity Systems were constructed to represent participants from either education/ school settings or healthcare (disability and child psychology) settings to highlight shared and contrasting perspectives across services.

The researcher constructed a demographic questionnaire and semi-structured interview schedule, with feedback from the research supervisors and pilot administration. Semi-structured interviews have been utilised in previous research to examine perceptions of professionals' roles (Atkinson & Posada, 2019; Hoyne & Cunningham, 2019). Interview questions were constructed using the theoretical framework of Second-Generation Activity Theory (Engestrom, 1999) and BPS (2022) core competencies for educational psychologists as guides. As such, questions were based on the distinct nodes within the activity system, with specific questions on assessment, intervention, training, and research as per core competencies (BPS, 2022). The questionnaire and interview schedule (see Appendix J) were the primary modes of data collection for the current research.

4.6.6. Study Design and Data Analysis

The study employed a qualitative research design, exploring the subjective, lived perspectives of qualified educational psychologists in the Republic of Ireland. This study

design is cogent and suitable to capture subjective perspectives (Howitt, 2016). Before data collection, participants read the information sheet provided (see Appendix K) and signed the required consent form (see Appendix O). All participants were told that participation in the study was voluntary and reminded they could withdraw at any stage without explanation. The participants were offered no inducements for participation.

Data were collected using a short online demographic questionnaire followed by individual semi-structured interviews. Qualitative data were analysed using Thematic Analysis (TA), specifically, Template Analysis. This involves identifying “themes and patterns of meaning” within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006), with the analysis being “guided by an existing theory” or framework, as well as the researcher’s own epistemology. The researcher used Second Generation Activity Theory supplemented by BPS (2022) core competencies for educational psychologists as a theoretical framework to support data collection and analysis. Quantitative demographic data were analysed using descriptive statistics.

The specific type of Thematic Analysis used was Template Analysis (King & Brooks, 2018). This type of structured thematic analysis is considered a ‘middle ground’ approach to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2021). Template Analysis is particularly suited for this research topic as it is theoretically independent and congruent with a critical realist approach (Brooks et al., 2015). The distinction between Template Analysis and traditional thematic analysis is when themes are developed (*a priori* rather than post hoc) and the type of coding process (more structured rather than less structured). However, themes and codes can also be developed inductively and mapped onto the *a priori* themes or nodes, making it a structured yet flexible approach to analysis. Braun and Clarke (2021) noted that Template Analysis as a form of thematic analysis is particularly useful for exploring the perspectives of different

groups within organisations and for exploring participants’ perspectives of a phenomenon (King & Brooks, 2018), both of which the current research aimed to do.

Table 4.3

Stages of Template Analysis, Detailed by King (2012) and Brooks et al. (2015) and Used by the Researcher

| Stages | How this was done by the researcher |
|--|--|
| 1. Become familiar with the data | Reading interview transcripts and noting initials thoughts and themes in reflective journal |
| 2. Engage in preliminary coding, which includes deductive or a priori coding, and inductive coding | Highlighting anything in interview transcripts that contributes toward understanding of the research question |
| 3. Organise themes into meaningful clusters (nodes of Activity Theory) | Developing hierarchical relationships, with narrower sub themes nested within broader ones |
| 4. Define a coding template | Developing an initial coding template having engaged in preliminary coding of 5 interviews (Brook et al. 2015) (see Appendix L for a sample) |

| | |
|--|--|
| 5. Apply the template to further data using inductive and deductive coding and modify it if necessary | Taking the coding template developed applying it to another three transcripts and modifying template if needed. |
| 6. Use the final template to code and interpret all remaining data and write up the findings (see Appendix L for sample coding template) | Define the final coding template (Appendix M) and apply it to all the data and use findings from analysis for write up |

In line with the stages above, the approach to data analysis for the current study involved a two-stage sequential method, beginning with an initial inductive stage of code generation (see Appendix M for Sample Inductive Coding Process and Appendix N for sample of annotated sections of a participant transcript). This was followed by deductively mapping the identified codes and subsequent themes onto the BPS (2022) core competencies for educational psychologists (such as assessment, formulation, intervention, consultation, ethics and values, service delivery, training and development, and research) and the seven nodes of Second-generation Activity Theory as a form of Template Analysis. To mitigate researcher bias, a sample of data was also coded by an independent coder (Braun & Clarke, 2006). If major or consistent disparities occurred between the researcher and the independent coder, these would be discussed, and revisions were completed where appropriate. In the case of the current research, neither major nor consistent disparities were highlighted (Guest et al., 2012).

4.6.7. Researcher Reflexivity

Morley (2014) contended that critical reflection is a crucial component of qualitative research, as the researcher is not a ‘passive observer’, but rather an ‘active participant’ (Braun

& Clarke, 2006). As such, I, the researcher, recorded my thoughts, feelings, and decision-making in a research journal to mitigate any potential bias and promote self-awareness throughout the research. An extract from this journal is available in Appendix I.

4.6.8. Procedure

Ethical considerations were considered regarding confidentiality, consent, and care when designing the study and an ethics application was subsequently completed. The Research Ethics Committee at Mary Immaculate College (MIREC) granted ethical approval for the study. The NEPS Research Advisory Committee (NRAC) also approved the study through a separate application process. All participants prior to participation provided written informed consent (Appendix O). The first stage of the data gathering involved a pilot study with one participant. Because of the narrow target population, this research used piloting within the sample, as recommended by Robson and McCartan (2015), to trial the semi-structured interview schedules. The pilot study was conducted with the first person to participate in the semi-structured interview with informed consent obtained prior to participation. No modifications were made to the interview schedule based on the results of the pilot study.

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants online via Microsoft Teams or WebEx, depending on each participant's preference. The interviews were conducted at a date and time that was most suitable to each participant. Interviews ranged from 50 to 90 minutes and were audio recorded for transcription. Verbatim transcription was completed post-interview.

Google forms were used to gather data from the demographic questionnaire, with data collected being anonymous and not linked to the participants' email. Questionnaire data was downloaded and password protected to the researcher's external hard drive. Audio recordings were stored on an encrypted hard drive until transcribed when they were then deleted.

Transcriptions were stored on the researcher's encrypted MacBook within the NVivo software. Paper data, including the research diary and consent forms, were stored in a locked filing cabinet.

4.7. Results

This section begins with demographic data about the participants, followed by a qualitative analysis of the data arising from the semi-structured interviews designed to address the research question, restated below:

What are educational psychologists' perceptions of their role in educational and healthcare settings?

4.8. Demographics

Demographic information collected from participants is shown in Table 7. Findings indicate that participants had varying levels of experience and training. To note, all participants in education settings were recruited from the same national organisation, though the participants were based in different regions. 13 participants indicated a Doctorate/ PHD as the highest level of education achieved and seven indicated a Masters Degree/Professional Diploma. The range of years of experience working as an EP varied amongst participants and ranged from 0–5 years ($n=9$), 5–10 years ($n=2$), 10–15 years ($n=3$), 15–20 years ($n=4$), 20–25 years ($n=1$), and 25–30 years ($n=1$).

Table 4.4*Details Of Interview Participants*

| Participant code | Current role | Current setting |
|------------------|--------------------------|---|
| DPsy1 | Staff Grade Psychologist | Healthcare (Child Disability) |
| DPsy2 | Staff Grade Psychologist | Healthcare (Child Disability) |
| SPsy3 | Staff Grade Psychologist | Education |
| DPsy4 | Staff Grade Psychologist | Healthcare (Child Disability) |
| SPsy5 | Staff Grade Psychologist | Education |
| DPsy6 | Staff Grade Psychologist | Healthcare (Child Disability) |
| SPsy7 | Regional Director | Education |
| SPsy8 | Senior Psychologist | Education |
| DPsy9 | Staff Grade Psychologist | Healthcare (Child Disability) |
| SPsy10 | Senior Psychologist | Education |
| SPsy11 | Staff Grade Psychologist | Education |
| DPsy12 | Senior Psychologist | Healthcare (Child and Adult Disability) |
| SPsy13 | Staff Grade Psychologist | Education |
| CPsy14 | Staff Grade Psychologist | Healthcare (Child Psychology) |
| DPsy15 | Staff Grade Psychologist | Healthcare (Child Disability) |
| DPsy16 | Senior Psychologist | Healthcare (Child Disability) |
| SPsy17 | Senior Psychologist | Education |

| | | |
|--------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| SPsy18 | Senior Psychologist | Education |
| SPsy19 | Senior Psychologist | Education |
| CPsy20 | Staff Grade Psychologist | Healthcare (Child Psychology) |

4.9. Qualitative Results

Findings relating to the research question are discussed below, with an accompanying table delineating the thematic mapping of codes to generate themes and sub-themes.

Participants are described using the following notation:

(S=school-education, D=disability, C=child) + Psy + participant number) Example: Text

(SPsych3) = Psychologist in School (Education) setting, participant number 3.

4.10. RQ: What are Educational Psychologists' Perspectives of Their Role in Education and Healthcare Settings?

There are several interrelated factors that EPs working in education and healthcare settings identified or perceived as influencing their role. These factors are discussed as themes and sub-themes below. Table 8 details the nodes of the activity system with operational definitions specific to the current research.

Table 4.5*Nodes of the Activity System and Operational Definition*

| Node | Operational definition used in this study |
|--------------------|--|
| Subject | The individual or group whose perspective is being examined. In the case of the current research, this is EPs' experience of their distinct contribution across services |
| Rules | Pertains to the regulations, norms, and conventions that influence the EP role, such as ethics, legislation and philosophical orientations |
| Community | Who else is involved, including EPs' perspectives of working with other community services, including the different levels of community work, the changes, the barriers and the hopes for the future regarding community engagement. |
| Tools | The abstract or physical tools used to mediate engagement between the subject and object to produce an outcome, that is, the tools EPs use as part of their role. These tools include assessment and intervention tools, frameworks for practice, technology, research and enquiry, and therapeutic perspectives |
| Division of labour | How work is allocated to EPs within an activity system. For the current research, this comprises a discourse surrounding the title of "educational psychologist", the importance of boundaries in practice, other professionals' perceptions, working as a team, service structures, and role challenges |

Outcomes Relates to what EPs hope to be achieved as part of their role. For the current study, this pertains to what EPs consider the Outcome to be and how they are measured and also report writing as an outcome of their work.

Object What is being worked on? In the case of this research, the Object relates to whom EPs view as the client as part of their role.

4.10.1. Subject Node Theme: EPs in both Education and Healthcare Settings Provide Several Contributions in their Role

Participant educational psychologists in this study detailed several distinct contributions they provide in their role. EPs have specialist knowledge of education and school systems and child development. In this way, they ‘bridge the gap more easily between education and health’ (DPsy2). EPs also work as scientist-practitioners and take a systemic and holistic approach to casework. EPs act as advocates for the child and family and provide a key role in providing emotional support to these stakeholders. EPs often act as decision makers or diagnosticians in the assessment decisions concerning children and young people. Details of sub themes and supporting quotations are in the Appendix P and Q, followed by a narrative discussion of sub-themes thereafter.

4.10.1.1. Sub-Theme: Specialist knowledge of education and school systems. EPs perceived themselves as having specialist knowledge of education and school systems. The benefit of a year of professional placement, specifically in school psychology settings such as the NEPS for trainee educational psychologists, has supported this development of specialist knowledge of the school system and “impacted positively” on the role of the EP. EPs

working in healthcare settings also identified a detailed understanding of the education and school system and noted that this helped them provide tailored recommendations to schools.

4.10.1.2. Sub-Theme: Specialist Knowledge of Child Development. EPs viewed themselves as having specialist knowledge of child development, including learning/cognition, social, emotional, and physical development. This helps an EP act as an “advocate for the child or young person” (SPsy17) and also in “bringing realism to what is affecting children”. This knowledge was developed through specialised placements.

4.10.1.3. Sub-Theme: EPs as Scientist-Practitioners. Many participants viewed their role as that of a scientist-practitioner. Participant EPs felt their role is to apply psychology rather than be a “super teacher” (SPsy17). This applying psychology can often involve using psychoeducation and consultation skills to challenge conventional narratives about behaviour, and the attributions school staff may have about the presenting problem.

Related to the scientist-practitioner position, EPs spoke about striving to engage in evidence-based practice. This involves making decisions based on evidence and “theoretical perspectives” (SPsy17). SPsy10 articulated: “I’m using psychology in practice based on the evidence.” The same EP spoke about having “a link back into your psychology”. Participants noted that the consumption of evidence-based research was “central” to their role.

4.10.1.4. Sub-Theme: A Systemic and Holistic Approach to Casework. Participant EPs spoke about taking a systemic approach to casework and policy with a holistic view of the child or young person. This holistic view is also reflected in wider national policy, particularly relating to wellbeing policy:

Participants mentioned both the Biopsychosocial Model and Bronfenbrenner’s Eco Systemic Theory as frameworks that support this holistic and systemic view of the CYP: SPsy13 noted the importance of “integrating” data from various sources at different system levels to “make sense of messy situations”. They noted that this holistic view offers a more

useful formulation of the CYP's strengths and areas of need rather than simply labelling or giving them concurrent diagnoses, which can result in the CYP being 'pathologised'. SPsy18 suggested that EPs' ability to think systemically was one of the distinct contributions EPs bring to casework.

4.10.1.5. Sub-Theme: Advocates for the Child and Family and Provide a Key role in Providing Emotional Support. Participants noted that EPs work helps to foster relationships, mediate tensions, and reframe problems. This is supported by the EP engaging as an objective third party, "taking people where they're at". A participant EPs in a Child Disability healthcare setting noted that EPs provide a 'holding' role for families throughout the assessment process. EPs provide an emotional support role, support 'relationship building' (SPsy8) between stakeholders and 'mediation', and act as a key advocate for the child and family. Across services, several participants mentioned one of the distinct roles of the EP was acting as an 'advocate' for the CYP and their families. This includes supporting the rights of the CYP and changing mindsets without this being overshadowed by the EP's own beliefs.

4.10.1.6. Sub-Theme: Move to More of a Consultative Approach when Engaging with Stakeholders. Participant EPs working in education and healthcare settings observed that they now engage in a more consultative approach when doing casework, where recommendations provided are mediated through the parents/caregivers or teachers. They use collaborative problem solving, without taking an 'expert' stance, to facilitate shared understanding and sometimes reframe the attributions of stakeholders. This is done to change the dialogue and narrative about the child or young person. This move towards a consultative approach has been attributed to changes in legislation and department of education circulars, reducing the need for a cognitive assessment to access resources and the 'gatekeeper' role. This consultative approach was also evident amongst EPs working in healthcare settings.

(DPsy2) noted: “My generation of psychologists are very much, our emphasis is on consultation, not so much (standardised) assessment.”

4.10.1.7. Sub-Theme: EPs as Decision Makers or Diagnosticians. EPs specifically working in healthcare settings often act as the key ‘decision maker,’ ‘tie breaker,’ or ‘diagnostician,’ with these roles often being regarded as the ‘unique contribution’. This can include, despite the changes as mentioned earlier to legislation and circulars, the view of the EP being in a ‘gatekeeper’ role in relation to resource access. Participants felt this was linked to their role, often constituting that of “primary assessor”. Participant EPs reported that the responsibility of managing clinical risk usually rested with them.

4.10.1.8. Subject Node Contradictions. During data analysis, tensions or contradictions were noted both within education and health care settings and between education and healthcare settings pertaining to the Subject Node theme. Appendix R illustrates these contradictions.

Primary contradictions within the Subject Nodes but between both Activity Systems include EPs in healthcare settings perceiving themselves as diagnosticians of neurodevelopmental and mental health disorders, particularly Disability and CAMHs. This is in contrast to education settings, with results suggesting more of a needs led model of service delivery with less emphasis on diagnosis. This is illustrated by the following excerpts:

We are the diagnosticians. you know we are the ones who are going to make that diagnosis. (DPsy4)

You could put five or six diagnoses on some children. They're not very helpful. I think there's a lifelong implication. And really, it's about how best to meet the young persons or a family or school is about meeting someone, how best to meet the needs because I think sometimes some stuff can be very quickly pathologized. (SPsy13)

There were a number of primary contradictions within the Subject node for psychologists working in healthcare settings. These included changes in diagnostic practice versus engaging in formal diagnosis. A further contradiction recognised in healthcare settings was that EPs identify as scientist-practitioners, but find it difficult to consume or conduct research due to certain barriers, such as time and waitlist demands. This is illustrated by the following excerpts:

But like ultimately I consider myself a scientist practitioner. (DPsy2)

So formal research, it's not part of my role, and I wish it was, but that would be probably my favourite part of the job, I mean. I love research. But it's just not possible like our wait lists are just years, years-long. (DPsy2)

The same contradiction was observed for EPs in education settings, who also identified as scientist-practitioners, but found it difficult to consume or conduct research outside of the Working Groups within the service.

4.10.2. Rules Node Theme: Perspectives of Rules that Support or Constrain the EP Role

This node pertains to the conventions, norms, standards, and regulations that enable or constrain actions within the activity system (Engestrom & Sannino, 2017). The experience of rules that support or constrain the role of the EP was a central theme drawn from the psychologists' data. Participant EPs cited multiple rules as factors they perceived to influence their role. These included ethical dilemmas, the importance of ethical practice, legislation, and the philosophical orientations that guide practice. Details of sub themes and supporting quotations are in Appendices S and T, again followed by a narrative discussion of sub-themes thereafter.

4.10.2.1. Sub-Theme: The Importance of Ethical Practice Amongst EPs.

Participants spoke of the regular ethical dilemmas they face. Relatedly, they highlighted the importance of codes of ethics as a 'framework' to support ethical decision-making. They

addressed the ‘tension’ between certain legislation, such as the Preliminary Team Assessments and ethical guidelines. Participants discussed the importance of engaging in ethical practice throughout all components of practice and that many ethical principles were ‘internalised’. Some key ethical principles mentioned explicitly included adhering to confidentiality, honesty, consent, and acting within the limits of competence. These ethical dilemmas are not always binary as to right or wrong, but they can be grey areas. The ethics of fair economic representation within the profession was also highlighted, with the fees for doctoral-level training cited as a barrier to diversity within the profession. In education settings, the importance of codes of ethics for EPs was cited as particularly important, especially for newly qualified EPs who are new to practice. Codes of ethics act as ‘guardrails’ that provide ‘security’ and also supports keeping clients safe.

4.10.2.2. Sub-Theme: Legislation. For legislation in healthcare settings, the importance of Children First and being a mandated person was noted. EPs in healthcare settings noted the significant change due to the Progressing Disabilities (PDS) legislation that it is “probably the main one” (DPsy6), which is leading to more family-centre practice, with EPs hoping it brings more consistency and equitable access across services. Likewise, in education settings was the importance of Children First and being a mandated person: “So first and foremost is Children’s First and as mandated professionals, that’s you know at the forefront when we’re working with children and families” (SPsy5). The lack of proper implementation and legal mandate of certain acts was noted as frustrating. However, EPs spoke about how recent legislative changes have benefitted practice, despite perceived flaws, allowing for more diverse casework that isn’t driven by assessment as access to resources.

4.10.2.3. Sub-Theme: Philosophies Guiding Practice. Across settings, the philosophical orientations of participants were cited as guiding rules that influence practice. These included understanding all behaviour as communication (DPsy15), being an advocate

for equality, inclusion and social justice, and being strengths-based and non-judgemental. It also included taking a holistic, biopsychosocial approach to presenting problems, not engaging in an 'expert' model of practice, and being trauma and attachment informed. The values of professionalism and being open, creative, and flexible concerning casework were also mentioned as overarching philosophies guiding practice. Other participants noted the influence of social constructivism (DPsy2) with an underlying critique of the limitations of 'labelling' or giving a CYP a diagnosis to meet certain criteria or agendas. Participants preferred viewing presenting concerns as challenges rather than deficits as guiding philosophies for practice. Participants felt strongly about equality and inclusion, emphasising social justice and the importance of the child's voice.

4.10.2.4. Rules Node Contradictions. Primary contradictions within the Rules Nodes but between both Activity Systems include PDS being the key document or legislative piece that shapes practice for EPs in healthcare settings, compared to the Department of Education Circulars as key documents that shape practice for EPs in education settings. This is illustrated by the following excerpts:

I think PDS is probably the one that impacts on my work the most. (DPsy2)

The circulars rule all. The circular, the Irish exemption circular massive one. The assistive technology circular, massive one. The other ones you mentioned are all More services specific like progressing disabilities... it doesn't necessarily impact my work.

(SPsy19)

A primary contradiction within the Rules Node but for EPs in healthcare settings was the perceived contradiction between ethical practice compared to the service guidelines provided to practitioners. This is illustrated in the following point:

But it's important to note as well that at times the guidelines, what's laid out in the guidelines, can be, UM, it can contradict with, you know, legislation and

governmental guidelines as well so it can pose a range of ethical dilemmas for professionals in terms of, particularly, I suppose in relation to conducting PTA's because as we know, the PSI, you know, has issued several statements around, you know whether, that that isn't best practice, so it is very much that we are informed, though by the principles of, the core principles of the PSI guidelines. So, in terms of working within our limits of competency is really important. (DPsy9)

Within education settings, a primary contradiction identified included the perceived tension between departmental policy and professional psychological opinion. A psychologist discussed that:

Sometimes there's a tension between (being) an officer of the department of education. The Department wants you to implement departmental policy. But equally, you're a psychologist, and you're there to give your psychological professional opinion. (SPsy8)

Appendix U provides complete details of the Rules Node contradictions.

4.10.3. Community Node Theme: Community Factors EPs Perceive as Influencing their Role

The varying levels and types of community engagement that influence the EP role, based on participants responses, are detailed below. This includes changes and barriers to this community engagement, as well as the hopes for the future. Appendices V and W detail the identified sub themes and supporting quotations. This is followed by a narrative discussion of said sub-themes.

4.10.3.1. Sub-Theme: Barriers and Hopes for the Future for Community

Engagement for EPs. In healthcare settings, EPs spoke about the barriers to engaging with the wider community beyond the child and family. DPsy6 noted that they felt that child disability services are 'guarded' and can be difficult for families to access. DPsy15 indicated

that the “community comes to us (the service)” and that this unidirectional engagement can obstruct engagement with the wider community. EPs in education settings stated they “would like to engage and maybe work on collaboration a little bit more with the HSE” (SPsy8). The importance of “more interagency collaboration” in the future and a “more integrated” approach to service delivery to reduce the “duplication of services within our community, and education and health services” (SPsy17) was noted.

4.10.3.2. Sub-Theme: EPs Work at Different Levels of the Community and Changes to Community Engagement. EPs working in child disability and child psychology services identified working predominantly at the child and family level, with greater engagement with schools and the wider community since the establishment of Progressing Disabilities and family-centred practice. EPs in education settings identified working at different levels of the community. They noted working primarily at the school level, with engagement with local support services through direct work or signposting to services. Regarding types of engagement, EPs described the importance of localised rather than just centralised supports: “Local know what local needs” (SPsy8). EPs in school psychology settings mentioned the importance of offering community support in the event of a critical incident, noting that when they arise, EPs are ‘heavily involved’ (SPsy10) in working with the wider community.

4.10.3.3. Community Node Contradictions. During data analysis, tensions or contradictions were noted both within education and health care settings and between education and healthcare settings pertaining to the Community Node theme. Appendix X details these contradictions.

Primary contradictions within the Community Node but between both Activity Systems include EPs in healthcare settings perceiving themselves working predominantly at the family level versus EPs in education settings view of working mainly at the school level.

This contrast is shown by the following points made by participants in healthcare (child disability and child psychology) and school settings:

A lot of the time, you would just maybe check in with school as well just to see that everything was going OK. You know, but my role is definitely less within the community than it is with the family. (DPsy4)

So, I suppose there is linking in with those services (voluntary organisations in the community) as well ... but like the school, probably schools less so. (CPsy14)

I see my role as like with school community. (SPsy7)

A primary contradiction or tension within the Community Node for EPs working in healthcare settings includes the view that EPs want to engage more with the community versus the time it takes to build relationships and partnerships in the community. A similar contradiction or tension was noted amongst EPs in education settings, with data suggesting they want to engage and collaborate with other community services even though this can be difficult.

4.10.4. Tools Node Theme: Tools of Assessment, Intervention and Research EPs Perceive as Influencing their Role.

The varying tools used by EPs, which influence their role, include assessment methods and changes, intervention methods and changes, professional practice frameworks, technology, research and enquiry, and therapeutic orientations. Details of sub-themes and supporting quotations are within Appendices Y and Z, followed by a narrative discussion of sub-themes thereafter.

4.10.4.1. Sub-Theme: Assessment methods and Changes for EPs. EPs noted the importance of assessment and that it should be based on hypotheses testing, multi-modal, holistic, using evidence-based methods, with integrated triangulation of data, and include the voice of the child.

There appears to be less emphasis on within-child assessment measures such as cognitive assessment and more on engaging with consultees to effect change for the clients. Another EP (DPsy2) noted: “My generation of psychologists are very much, our emphasis is on consultation, not so much (standardised) assessment.” Though “historically EPs have carried out cognitive assessments” (DPsy9), EPs noted the reduction in the use of standardised assessment, including cognitive assessment, as also being driven by changes to resource allocation for children, in some cases meaning they no longer require a diagnosis to access supports, and because of changes related to Progressing Disabilities. EPs told how assessment has expanded to include a focus on more complex social and emotional difficulties: “Our role has broadened to do more assessment in relation to social, emotional, behavioural needs” (DPsy9).

EPs in education settings likewise noted that although cognitive assessments still form part of their role in assessment, they have decreased in favour of a more consultative approach. Participants noted this can be attributed to policy changes such as the General Allocation Model (GAM). Participants emphasised how there is currently more emphasis on social and emotional assessment.

4.10.4.2. Sub-Theme: Intervention Methods, Barriers, and Changes. EPs described the importance of intervention work as part of their role. Regarding the types of intervention done, informed by assessment and formulation, EPs often incorporate an eclectic, tiered approach that is evidence-based and adapted to the needs of the client.

EPs noted the importance of delivering interventions that are evidence-based and adapted to the needs of the clients. EPs in healthcare settings often deliver or co-deliver parent-mediated training for common concerns such as toileting, sleep, anxiety, social skills, challenging behaviour, and starting school. EPs recounted the value of group-based training, such as providing support to a wide range of clients and the social support aspect of parents

meeting other parents. EPs also reported the limitations, including that group-based interventions might not be suitable for some families.

Other barriers to intervention include time due to waitlists, which was cited by many participants. EPs in education settings noted similar barriers to delivering individual interventions such as time and caseload size and that many interventions are parent or teacher mediated. SPsy5 described how they would like to deliver more interventions with teachers: “So we should be co-facilitating. We need to be getting the hands-on experience”. SPsy7 said it was important that interventions conducted in a school setting support the person to “engage with learning and achieve outcomes in an education setting”.

Regarding changes in the types of interventions either delivered or recommended, EPs stated there has been a shift from delivering interventions solely related to literacy, numeracy, and wider learning, to an emphasis on social, emotional, and behavioural interventions. In terms of types of interventions, they noted they would be therapeutically informed and person-centred, emphasising psychoeducation for teachers and parents.

4.10.4.3. Sub-Theme: Professional Practice Frameworks. EPs cited frameworks for practice across settings as tools supporting their role, including engaging in assessment, formulation, intervention, and supervision. EPs often used these frameworks implicitly or intuitively rather than explicitly in written form. The Biopsychosocial and Bronfenbrenner’s Eco-Systemic Models are cited as the overarching frameworks for many participants, as well as the NEPs problem-solving model for EPs in education settings. The Interactive Factors Framework, the NEPS problem-solving model, and the 5 P’s were also frequently mentioned. Other frameworks mentioned included the Comoira framework, the Monsen problem solving, and the reflective practice frameworks such as the Gibbs Model.

4.10.4.4. Sub-Theme: Technology as a Tool that Supports and Enables the Role of the EP, though it has Limitations. EPs across settings noted several advantages and

disadvantages regarding the increased use of technology during the COVID-19 pandemic. Advantages included enabling remote working, centralised access to resources, increased transparency of work practices or ‘paper trail’ of actions and increased accessibility for service users because of teleconferencing that previously required in-person attendance. There are also barriers to its use and a degree of reticence towards technology use for casework. The disadvantages of the increased use of technology included lack of access for certain families, difficulty establishing rapport through video calls, and technical difficulties that can arise. In terms of technology enabling their role, the Psymis system was noted as an effective way to log casework activity and support the move to paperless working.

4.10.4.5. Sub-Theme: Research and Enquiry. Research and enquiry are seen as an essential part of the role of the EP across settings, particularly when adhering to the scientist-practitioner model, though there were noted barriers to engaging in research. EPs stressed the importance of evidence-based practice supported by CPD opportunities, working with trainee educational psychologists and participants’ own doctoral studies. Doctoral study was considered ‘superb’ in helping practitioners develop their critical thinking skills and comprehend the latest research findings. Though there are working groups that conduct and produce research within their services, participants recounted that they are generally consumers rather than producers of research. Barriers to research and enquiry included lack of time, with many EPs describing reading journal articles in their personal time. They also suggested that certain areas are under-researched, such as people with Moderate, Severe, or Profound ID, which leads practitioners to rely on practice-based evidence rather than evidence-based practice due to the dearth of research in certain areas. A lack of confidence in conducting research was also cited, with one recommendation for future practice being increased links with third-level institutions to support more research in practitioner settings (for example, for statistical analysis). Case study designs and evaluation of training programs

were noted as being particularly amenable to research production. Other EPs in healthcare settings hope that the move to Progressing Disabilities will be conducive to EPs “being involved in more research projects.” (DPsy2)

EPs in education settings noted the value of opportunities afforded by engaging in one of the many Working Groups in the NEPS organisation. Each Working Group has a particular area of research interest whereby they conduct and disseminate research. Having trainee educational psychologists on placements with the service was also cited as an enabler to conducting and disseminating research.

4.10.4.6. Sub-Theme: Therapeutic Orientations. Data from participant interviews indicates that EPs across services use evidence-based therapies tailored to the client's needs. EPs draw on a range of therapies and deliver them eclectically, rather than adhering to one specific type or a manualised program. Therapies or therapeutic techniques are used for both assessment and intervention. Types of therapy used by participants in practice across settings include Motivation Interviewing, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Psychodynamic, Systemic, Person Centred, Attachment Focused, Trauma Informed, Mindfulness, Solution Focused Brief Therapy, Personal Construct Psychology, and Dialectical Behavioural Therapy. The therapeutic models cited by EPs in education settings included CBT, Family systemic, person-centred, psychodynamic, solution-focused, and trauma-informed. EPs noted that experience acquired in child psychology placements during doctoral training supported the development of skills required to deliver these therapies confidently.

4.10.4.7. Tools Node Contradictions. During data analysis, tensions or contradictions were noted both within education and health care settings and between education and healthcare settings pertaining to the Tools Node theme.

Primary contradictions within the Tools Node but between both Activity Systems include a greater use of diagnostic tools in healthcare settings versus less use of diagnostic

tools in education settings and more frequent use of screening tools for mental health and neurodevelopmental disorders. The data also suggests that professional practice frameworks used differs across settings with EPs in healthcare settings frequently citing the use of the 5 Ps model compared to EPs in education settings who cited the use of the NEPS Problem Solving Model.

Another contradiction identified was that EPs in healthcare settings more frequently delivered individual and group based therapeutic psychodynamic interventions such as DBT and CBT, compared to EPs in education settings who, while sometimes delivering said individual and group interventions, more frequently provided teacher or parent-mediated interventions. This is illustrated by the following excerpts from participants in healthcare (child psychology) and school settings:

I've been doing quite a lot of individual work. (CPsy14)

It's going to be a block of six weeks (of intervention with the child or young person. (CPsy20)

So, my role as an educational psychologist then is obviously changed. In terms of I'm less involved over time with the same student and less intensely involved and more kind of sparsely involved with a greater number of schools. (SPsy3)

In the main, our jobs are not to do interventions. As an EP, what we're doing is supporting the interventions through the school and through the parents, so we might recommend say, like a parenting course or behavioural outcomes within a parent. (SPSy10)

However, a primary contradictions identified within the tools node for psychologists working in education settings was that some EPs in these settings were eager to do therapeutic individual or group intervention work while some felt that this should be teacher mediated. Relatedly, another contradiction identified was some EPs in education settings

preferring to deliver teacher or parent-mediated interventions versus other EPs in the same setting preferring to deliver direct individual or group interventions. This contrast is illustrated by the following points:

You know, we're training up teachers as well, getting them to do it, so it's great that we're training up everybody. All the teachers at this sort of whole class whole school approach. But we also need to move up the NEPs continuum of support ourselves and start doing hands-on work as well. (SPsy5)

I suppose there's a lot of pressure for the individual intervention... And I suppose I think education psychology is far more about supporting the teachers that they have an ongoing relationship with, to have a relationship of trust with the child and support the child. (SPsy7)

A further contradiction between healthcare and education activity systems was that research opportunities, particularly conducting research, appear to be scarcer in healthcare compared to education settings, who support research through Working Groups. A primary contradiction identified within the tools node for psychologists working in healthcare settings was that technology use was viewed as both an enabler and a barrier in practice, particularly video conferencing platforms. Appendix AA illustrates these contradictions.

4.10.5. Division of Labour Node Theme: The Division of Labour and EPs' Perspectives of Role Demarcation and Task Allocation that Influence their Role

The division of labour was identified as a factor that influences the EP role and includes discourse pertaining to the appropriate job title for EPs, the importance of boundaried practice, other professionals' perceptions, the influence of the organisational structures, and team-based working. Appendices BB and CC detail the identified sub-themes and supporting quotations. This is followed by a narrative discussion of said sub-themes.

4.10.5.1. Sub-Theme: Job Title. The role and title of the EP appear to be influenced by the type of service in which one is employed. EPs working in other settings (for example Disability Services) felt they were perceived, and to some extent identified more as "Psychologists" rather than specifically "Educational Psychologists". Some participants felt the "child" part of some doctoral training programs was paramount and should have more of an emphasis, such as "Child and Educational Psychologist" or "Educational and Child Psychologist."

Many participant EPs in educational settings readily identified as "Educational Psychologists", though some thought the 'child' component should be part of the title as they felt the term 'Educational Psychology' can 'pigeonhole'. One participant remarked that there is a "huge identity issue in educational psychology" (SPsy5) right now related to the embracement of the educational and child components of the role.

4.10.5.2. Sub-Theme: The Importance of Role Definition and Boundaries about the Role. The data suggest that EPs perceive the role of the educational psychologist as broad and sometimes ambiguous. Therefore, EPs feel it is important to explicitly define their role and be more boundaried as to their remit and what they are willing to do within the boundaries of their professional competency. EPs in education and healthcare settings had similar perceptions related to role definition and boundaries while being clear on taking 'ownership of (their) professionalism and (their) expertise' (SPsy10).

4.10.5.3. Sub-Theme: Other Professionals' Perceptions of the EP Role (according to EPs). When asked what other professionals' perceptions of the EP role might be, the responses in healthcare settings included: assessor, diagnostician, gatekeeper, decision maker, team lead, problem solver, tie breaker, and knowledgeable person about schools and educational psychology. They noted that others perceived almost all behavioural queries and referrals to be the remit of psychologists. They felt that there was possibly a perception that

because psychologists are paid more than other disciplines, psychologists should then have ‘more responsibility’.

4.10.5.4. Sub-Theme: Working as a Team. EPs across healthcare services worked as part of a team. In school psychology settings, they predominantly work in a unidisciplinary way. In healthcare settings, they work as part of a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary team. EPs highlighted the advantages of working as part of a team, including that it helps EPs to challenge their own assumptions and supports their own learning. Relatedly, the move in healthcare settings from multidisciplinary teams to interdisciplinary because of Progressing Disabilities means that EPs must be more ‘au fait’ with what other disciplines do and adapt some of their work practices accordingly so that the different disciplines complement each other.

EPs in school settings felt that though they work independently and autonomously, the opportunity to engage in teamwork for a joint case or co-delivery of training was highly valuable. The benefits of teamwork mentioned included that it empowers other team members, facilitates a supportive culture of knowledge sharing, and promotes self-care amongst EPS. EPs in school psychology settings noted that they would welcome more opportunities to engage in more multidisciplinary work to counteract potential bias or ‘groupthink.’

4.10.5.5. Sub-Theme: Role Challenges. This subtheme relates to the challenges that EPs in healthcare settings face as part of their role. This included barriers to effective practice, including long client waitlists and a lack of time and psychologists. This can lead to a ‘reactive’ way of working (DPsy15). EPs in healthcare also noted that the bureaucratic structure of services can act as a challenge to the role and that because of this, it can be difficult to advocate both for the discipline of educational psychology itself and for what clients require.

EPs working in school psychology settings likewise noted challenges to the EP role. Bureaucratic factors related to organisational structure were noted as a challenge, with one EP noting that the organisation is a “little bit more hierarchical in terms of the top-down piece” (SPsy17). It was reported that as a psychologist working in the NEPS school or education setting, they are also civil servants who ultimately serve the Department of Education and Skills. This was contrasted by EPs working in healthcare settings in the HSE, who were perceived as being ‘allowed to speak out a lot more’ (SPsy5) regarding policy changes. Related to policy changes, it was perceived that due to changes to RACE and the teacher allocation model, referrals are now much more complex, emphasising social-emotional difficulties, which require more follow-up support.

4.10.5.6. Division of Labour Node Contradictions. During data analysis, tensions or contradictions were noted both within education and health care settings and between education and healthcare settings pertaining to the Division of Labour Node theme. Complete details of these contradictions are in Appendix DD.

Primary contradictions within the Division of Labour Node but between both Activity Systems include contradictions across settings as to what the job title for EPs should be, whether ‘Educational Psychologist,’ ‘Child Psychologist,’ or a combination of the two. These different perspectives amongst participants across different settings is highlighted in the excerpts below when participants spoke about what their title should be:

See, that's the thing. I'm not an educational psychologist... so I would. I'd see a massive issue with that, too, because I feel we still want to keep our identity to some degree. But just maybe that title (Educational Psychologist) doesn't explain fully what we do. (DPsy2)

I think if you're CAMHS or primary care or disability services or you're a private psychologist, I think you're a child psychologist. I think if you're working with NEPS, then you're an educational psychologist or a school psychologist. (DPsy2)

I feel like I'm a psychologist. I don't feel like I'm specifically an educational psychologist or anything else like that. (CPsy14)

An educational psychologist informed by psychology. (SPsy7)

A further contradiction was that EPs in education settings perceived themselves to be civil servant, compared to EPs in healthcare settings such as the HSE identifying as public servants. A final identified contradiction between settings was the perception of more team working on casework in healthcare settings versus working more individually on casework in education settings.

There were primary contradictions identified within this same node for EPs in healthcare settings. These included the participants' perception of having expertise but reticence in being viewed as an 'expert'. In disability settings (within healthcare settings), the move from working as a multidisciplinary team to working as an interdisciplinary team and the related changes in expectations was identified as a tension or contradiction. This move is demonstrated in the following point:

I suppose it's changed a little bit 'cause I suppose now like teams that probably were more multidisciplinary are becoming more interdisciplinary. You know, so you're. Yes, we all are trained in our own backgrounds and disciplines, but you kind of have to be au fait or a bit adept as well with what the other clinicians kind of cover and what they take the lead on, you know. I suppose being interdisciplinary, there is an expectation that you can kind of. You have a fair idea of what the other disciplines do to an extent, you know. (DPsy6)

Similarly, within education settings, there were several primary contradictions identified. Like EPs in healthcare settings, there was the contradiction or tension of EPs having expertise but reluctance to be viewed as the ‘expert’. Relatedly, there was the identified perception that teachers viewed EPs as the ‘experts’ though EPs likewise expressed reticence about this position. Another contradiction within this setting was the view of engaging in teamwork for some role activities such as training and development, compared to working predominantly at the individual level for casework. Relatedly, a final contradiction identified was the perception of EPs in education settings working in a uni-disciplinary way versus wanting to engage in more multidisciplinary working.

4.10.6. Outcome Node Theme: Outcomes as an Influencing Factor

Participants regarded outcomes of EP involvement as an influencing factor in the EP role. This included the sub-themes of how outcomes are measured and report writing as an outcome. Details of sub-themes and supporting quotations are in Appendices EE and FF and in a narrative discussion of sub-themes below.

4.10.6.1. Sub-Theme: Measuring Outcomes. There was a lack of consensus or contradictions regarding measuring outcomes across settings. A barrier cited to measuring outcomes mentioned is that the therapeutic relationship, which ‘cannot be underestimated, is “very difficult to measure” (DPsy9). The barriers to measuring outcomes named by participants included lack of time due to busy caseloads and that outcomes can be blurred due to the complex and transient nature of the client’s environment.

Many EPs mentioned qualitative ways of measuring outcomes, including feedback and check-in with parents, teachers, and other team members, as well as progress reviews. Other qualitative measures of outcomes include examining change over time across the developmental domains of the CYP, with Psy1 alluding to the importance of gradual, incremental changes: “even a little change can... And that's what we're working towards are

very gradual, small changes” (DPsy1). Other EPs spoke about quantitative ways of measuring outcomes which include pre- and post-measures in relation to casework as measured by standardised screeners and questionnaires, pre- and post-measures to support the evaluation of training programs and workshops delivered. EPs in these healthcare settings spoke about the IFSP as a method that supports measuring outcomes, as it entails established goals that are determined by the needs of the family and CYP.

EPs in education settings spoke about recent changes they believe will support the evaluation of outcomes. EPs in school psychology settings noted the recent rollout of Psymis, an online case management system, as something that “will shift us towards the monitoring of outcomes” (SPsy11). Other EPs in education settings noted the importance of determining if the CYP is happier in school and better able to engage in learning as an important outcome.

4.10.6.2. Sub-Theme: The Importance of and Changing Nature of Reports. A psychological report (and the recommendations included within it) was named as an outcome of involvement concerning casework, with report writing being an important part of their role as EPs. Participants across settings spoke about the principles of report writing, ways report writing has changed, and barriers to report writing.

The principles of report writing cited by participants include accuracy, truth, and respect for the client, adapting reports depending on the audience and whom the report is for, collating myriad information into a concise formulation, and providing meaningful and realistic recommendations. EPs also need to capture the child and the presenting concerns and influencing factors ‘holistically’. They also noted the importance of treating report writing as an iterative process and viewing the report itself as a live, working document used to tell the client's story.

The ways report writing has changed for EPs are multiple. Reports are now shorter, with some EPs preferring to write a 2–3-page summary letter to increase readability. To keep

up with this change, EPs now include less psychological ‘jargon’ in their reports with less technical terms while ensuring reports adhere to professional standards:

There were several barriers to report writing as mentioned by participants, including time navigating policy changes to ensure they are reflected in the report and ensuring the reports are child friendly yet also delineating the presenting concerns in sufficient detail to ensure access to relevant resources where appropriate. Depending on the referral, many reports for diagnostic purposes require explicit reference to DSM V, which uses deficit-based criteria. As such, it can be difficult for EPs to write strengths-based reports:

A lot of the criteria we used to diagnose, for example, the DSM and I go back to autism because it's probably what I worked the most with at the moment. But it's deficit-based criteria. So, if we want to say that we think a child has autism, we were constantly saying they don't do this. They can't do that. (DPsy1)

4.10.6.3. Outcome Node Contradictions. Below are details of the primary contradictions of the Outcome Node within activity systems. Throughout the analysis, tensions or contradictions were identified both within education and health care settings pertaining to the Outcome Node theme.

Amongst EPs in healthcare settings, a primary contradiction identified was differing views regarding the use of either formal or informal methods of measuring outcomes while still delivering a quality service to stakeholders. This is illustrated in the following points made by two different EPs in healthcare settings:

I, I suppose for my own work I measure my own outcomes based on my feedback from my clients and the families that I work with. (DPsy12)

Formally, and informally, a lot of the time, particularly in disability, goals can be ...change can be quite gradual, and so sometimes it's faster than others, but very often it's very gradual changes. It can be changes in perception of the situation,

changes in understanding of a child's diagnosis. They are difficult things to measure.

So sometimes I think, so you know supplementing qualitative descriptors and feedback with things like scaling and sometimes formally. (DPsy1)

Relatedly, a further contradiction identified included the importance of measuring outcomes versus lack of time to do so. A contradiction or tension identified within education settings included writing reports that are child-centred and strengths-based, while also ensuring sufficient detail of presenting concerns or 'labelling' to ensure resources. Details of these contradictions are in Appendix GG.

4.10.7. Object Node Theme: The client(s) as an Influencing Factor in EPs' Perceptions of their Role

Participant EPs discussed the varying perspectives as to whom they view as the client in their role and the variance across services about this variation. They also discussed 'uncertainty' with regards to who the client or clients are. Details of sub-themes and supporting quotations are in Appendices HH and II , and in a narrative discussion of sub-themes below.

4.10.7.1. Sub-Theme: Whom EPs Consider the Client(s): Changes and Views. There were differing perspectives across settings regarding who EPs viewed as the client or clients. Some view the client as the child or young person (CYP), others as the CYP and the family, and others as the CYP and the family. EPs in child psychology services noted that the client is primarily the child or young person, though the work with the CYP is mediated by involvement with the parent or guardians, consistent with a systemic and holistic approach. EPs working in child disability settings viewed the CYP and family as the client, with the CYP as the focus.

One EP working in a child disability setting was clear the client was not a school teacher, noting that school staff may feel they are a client due to the title of 'educational

psychologist.’ This again highlights the differences in the role of EP depending on the service in which the EP is employed. EPs in child disability settings noted the influence of PDS on shifting who the client is, with more of a focus now on the family unit as well as the individual CYP.

In education settings, some viewed the client as the child or young person (CYP), others as the CYP and the parent or guardian, and others as the CYP, parent/guardian, and the referring agent, such as the school. Furthermore, some participants viewed the minister of the Department of Education as a client. It was noted that though whoever is viewed as the client can vary, ultimately, EPs adhered to a ‘child-centred’ approach.

4.10.7.2. Sub-Theme: A Degree of Uncertainty. EPs in healthcare settings note there has been a change in who is regarded as the client. This change EPs suggest is predominantly as a result of Progressing Disabilities, which posits a family-centred approach.

Consequently, many participants have noticed a shift towards viewing the family as the client rather than just the referred child or young person. This is reflected in changes to the name of many of these services to “Child and Family Service”. This change is further cemented in Disability Settings, whereby clinicians support families, rather than specifically the child or young person, using Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs).

In education settings, while all agreed that CYP was undoubtedly their primary client and “raison d’etre” (SPsy8), there was the perspective that EPs have ‘multiple clients’ which can include the parents/guardians, teachers and other school staff. There is also ambiguity in relation to who the client is on a ‘day-to-day basis’ (SPsy5) or ‘from case to case’ (SPsy19), and this is a ‘shifting piece’ (SPsy19), which is contingent on multiple factors, including the child’s age and the referral reason. EPs stated there can be ‘tension’ concerning whom the client is in a particular case noting that it can be a ‘grey area’ (SPsy8) and that it is dependent on the EP to navigate this tension as part of their role. This remit is enacted while being

cognisant of the differing 'agendas' and 'various situations' (SPsy13), occurring concurrently around the CYP. Participants noted they would value more clarity in their roles as to who exactly the client is.

4.10.7.3. Object Node Contradictions. Primary contradictions within the Object Node but between both Activity Systems include uncertainty as to who the client is for EPs in education settings versus healthcare settings, with EPs in healthcare settings appearing more certain about this; either the child or child and family. This contrast is illustrated in the following excerpts between EPs in education and healthcare settings when asked who they considered the client or clients to be:

That's a great question. The answer is I don't know. OK, because is the child the client who can't give consent because they're referred by a school and then signed off by a parent or not signed off by a parent? So, is it the school is the client? Is it the child who's a client? Or is it the parents who are a client? Or is it the Department of Education is a client because we're providing a service? (SPsy10)

I don't know Eoin the answer to that really, but definitely my priority is the child. (SPsy3)

That's a really good question. I don't know. Who is it? The principle? Is it the child is it the parents who give their consent? I don't know. And I'm 'gonna just I'm going to leave it at. I don't. I don't know. I work from the assumption; I work from the point of view that it's the child or young person. Uhm? You know? And it's, you know, I think. I think sometimes it's a bit of a shifting piece. (SPsy19)

This is contrasted with participants in healthcare settings who appeared more certain as to they consider the client to be:

So, the clients are the children and families who are attending the service. So, it's child and family. (DPsy16)

So, the client is the children. (CPsy20)

Relatedly, a primary contradiction identified within the Object node for psychologists working in healthcare settings was that there was variation among EPs in said settings as to whom they consider the client or clients to be with some viewing the school as a client whilst others disagreed. Similarly, within EPs in education settings was the contradiction or variation as to who they consider the client to be and who the EP is working for, whether the CYP, or the school. Details of these contradictions are in Appendix JJ.

4.10.8. Summary of Findings

Overall, the results from this research indicate that EPs provide specialist knowledge of education, school systems, and child development. They adhere to evidence-based practice and work as scientist-practitioners and act as a "problem solver" or solution facilitator. EPs take a systemic and holistic approach to casework. Relatedly, EPs have moved towards more of a consultative approach when engaging with stakeholders and conducting assessments. Results suggest that EPs act as capacity builders (for schools and families) who support positive change and advocate for children and young people. They see a key part of their role as "taking people where they are at" and providing the "holding" role for families, particularly when working in Child Disability settings. EPs felt that the perception of their role from team members and other professionals ranged from that of "decision-maker", de facto team leader, 'expert,' to change agent.

The role and title of the EP appear to be influenced by the type of service in which one is employed. EPs in school psychology settings readily identified as "Educational Psychologists". EPs working in other settings (for example Disability Services) felt they were perceived, and to some extent identified more, as "psychologists" rather than specifically "educational psychologists". Some participants felt the "child" part of some doctoral training

programs was paramount and should have more of an emphasis, such as "Child and Educational Psychologist" or "Educational and Child Psychologist".

EPs use various assessment and intervention tools as part of their role to support this work. EPs consider the voice of the child and young person and strive to be child-centred in their assessment approaches. EPs in the school setting see a move away from assessment as a means of accessing resources due to legislative changes. EPs across settings see the value of taking an eclectic approach, adapting interventions for certain populations, while adhering to evidence-based practise and strengths-based approaches. EPs are now more confident and competent in delivering therapeutic interventions. Though research was cited as integral to informing their evidence-based practice, participants viewed themselves as consumers and disseminators of research, rather than 'producers' of research. Participants wanted to be involved in or conduct more research as part of their role, but felt restricted due to time constraints and the service demands relating to casework.

Working at the family and school levels were cited as the most frequent levels for EPs. They noted the value of inter-agency working and barriers to this process. Many EPs would like to engage further with other community-level supports. EPs felt they worked as part of a team, but this was more prominent for EPs working on multi-disciplinary teams. EPs in school settings emphasised working as part of a team for support and development work, but working more individually for casework. There was a lack of certainty from EPs in all settings as to who the client is. Some view the client as the child or young person (CYP); others as the CYP and the family; others as the CYP, the family, and the referring agent, such as the school. Participants noted they would value more clarity in their roles as to who exactly the client is.

4.11. Discussion of Findings

This research aimed to explore EPs' perspectives of their role within the Republic of Ireland in both healthcare and education settings. Figures 4.2 and 4.3 below provide a visual representation of the key findings, which, in conjunction with key identified contradictions will now be discussed.

Figure 4.2

EPs in Healthcare Settings' Activity System, Themes, Sub-Themes and Contradictions

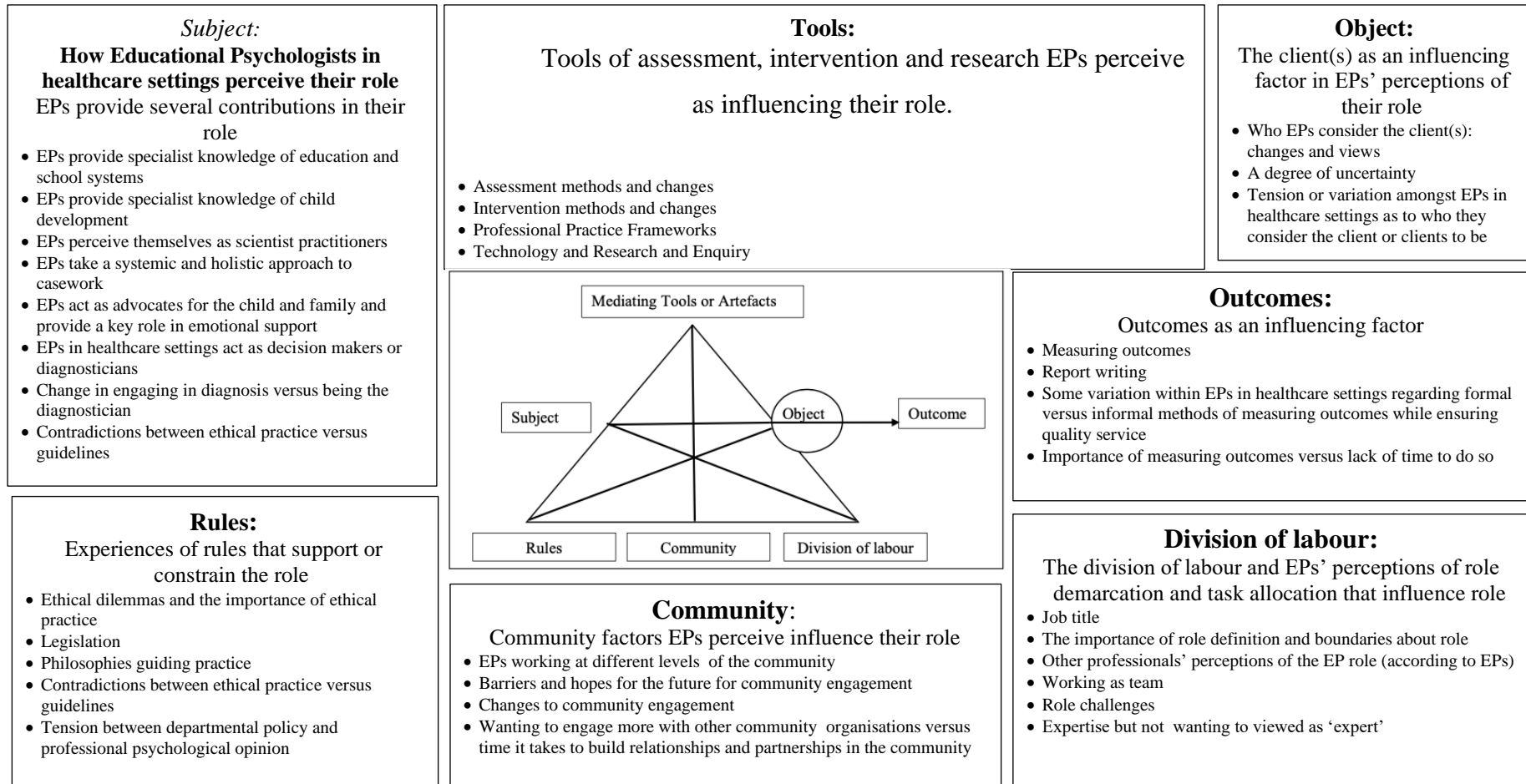
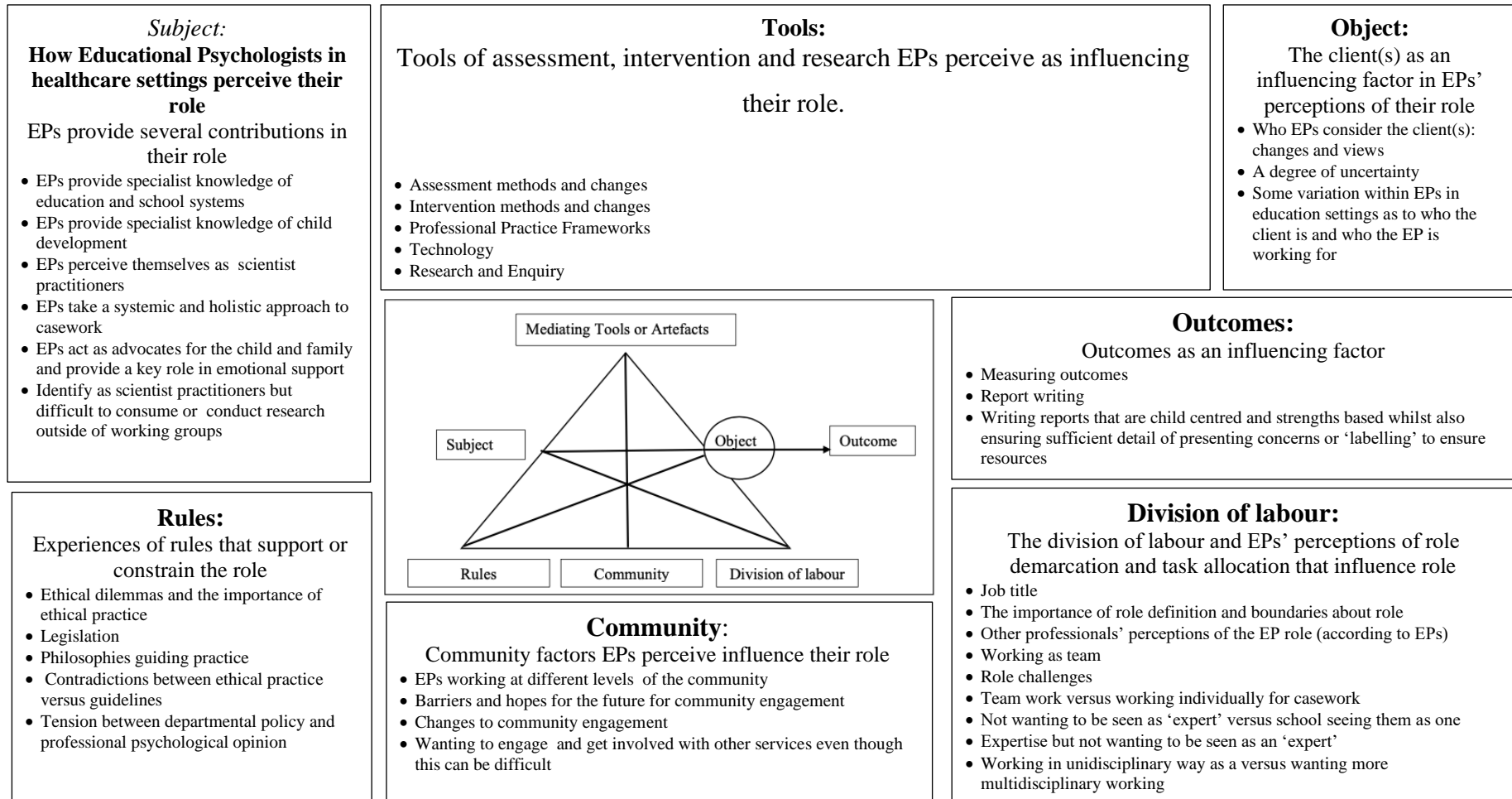


Figure 4.3

EPs in Education Settings' Activity Systems, Themes and Sub-Themes and Contradictions



EPs discussed several contributions they make to stakeholders and services as part of their role. The results of this study indicate that EPs have specialist knowledge of education and school systems. They also have detailed and comprehensive knowledge of child development. This knowledge and related competencies support EPs to ‘bridge the gap’ between education and health. Participants indicated that professional practice placements support knowledge development in these domains in child settings throughout postgraduate training. EPs take a systemic and holistic approach to casework, exploring the presenting concerns of the CYP and other related factors within the context of the system they are in. This is consistent with both Engel’s (1979) Biopsychosocial Model and Bronfenbrenner’s (1979; 2001) Ecological Systems Theory. It also corroborates the ideas of Curran et al. (2003), who argued that EPs’ work has the potential to effect change at the individual, organisational, and systems levels.

Overall, the findings suggest that currently, in EP practice in Ireland, there is a move away from a complete within-child focus via cognitive and behavioural assessments to working with the network of people around the child via consultation. The findings also suggest that EPs now engage more in a consultative approach with casework and work with stakeholders. This supports previous research by Nugent et al. (2014) regarding the use of consultation as a method of service delivery. Through consultation and other processes, EPs act simultaneously as “problem solvers” or solution ‘facilitators’ to build capacity within schools and families while supporting positive change and advocating for children and young people. This increased use of consultation contrasts with an earlier emphasis on individual assessment as the primary mode of service delivery.

The current study’s results indicate that EPs view themselves as scientist-practitioners, consistent with the position set forth by Fallon et al. (2010) and Hagstrom et al. (2007), who posited that EPs employ scientific principles and methods, such as hypothesis

testing and validity checking in their role as scientist-practitioners. However, there were contradictions or tensions identified regarding this perception. Though participants identified as scientist-practitioners, they noted it was difficult to both consume and conduct research unless done in their own personal time due to time constraints and full caseloads.

This finding of EPs as scientist practitioners (particularly as it relates to the use of evidence based practice) is consistent with research by Gaskell and Leadbetter (2009) in the UK context. Gaskell and Leadbetter (2009) used Activity Theory to explore the professional identity of EPs in two different services. Regarding the “distinctive role of the EP”, they identified five themes: use of psychology, developing a holistic view, evidence-based practice, interpersonal skills, and experience of working in the education system.

Furthermore, the findings of the current study revealed contradictions regarding the job title of EPs, with many participants in educational settings readily identifying as “Educational Psychologists”, though some thought the ‘child’ component should be part of the title. This is again consistent with findings from Gaskell and Leadbetter (2009) who found that while some participants in their study identified as EPs, some no longer wished to identify as such, with one stating: “I very much see myself as a psychologist, particularly a child psychologist” (Gaskell & Leadbetter, 2009, p. 105).

For EPs in the school setting, this reduction in the administration of individual assessments is attributed to legislative and departmental circular changes such as the General Allocation Model. This reduction in individual assessments relates to the position of Farrell et al. (2006), who concluded, in their review of the role of the EP in England and Wales, that there is a reduced emphasis on the EPs’ role in completing statutory SEN assessments. Throughout all casework involvement, EPs in the current study consider the child's or young person's voice and strive to be child-centred in their assessment and intervention approaches. This relates to research from Smillie and Newton (2020) who found that EPs strive to capture

and communicate the CYP's views accurately and sensitively through child centred practice. This practice is in keeping with Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which states that children and young people voices should be heard and that they have a say in decisions that affect their lives (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009).

A key role revealed by EPs across settings is EPs 'taking people where they are at' and providing the 'holding' piece for families. The concept of 'holding' relates to Winnicott's (1960; 2016) concept of providing a safe space and environment for the CYP and family. It also echoes Bion's (1962; 2019) concept of 'containment', which is understanding the emotional communication of clients without being overwhelmed by it and communicating this back to the client in a way that supports the client. The concept of EPs 'taking people where they are at' in the current study is also consistent with Roger's (1995) idea of unconditional positive regard for the client.

EPs specifically working in certain healthcare settings often act as key 'decision maker', 'tie breaker' or 'diagnostician'. This was a key contradiction or tension identified between the Subject node of EPs in healthcare settings compared to EPs in education settings. EPs in healthcare settings viewed themselves as diagnosticians of neurodevelopmental and mental health disorders, particularly in Disability and CAMHS settings. This is consistent with Report of the Psychology Review Implementation Group which outlined how psychologists in healthcare settings are required to undertake diagnostic assessments (Health Service Executive, 2017b) In contrast, EPs in education settings highlighted a reduced emphasis on diagnosis and a focus on needs-based working. There were, however, EPs in healthcare settings who noted a move towards more needs-led assessment compared to previous assessment approaches, which were more diagnostic-led.

Participant EPs discussed several factors that influence their role, which are discussed below.

4.11.1. Perspectives of Rules that Support or Constrain the Role

Participants spoke about several ‘hard’ and ‘non-negotiable’ rules that shape their role and ‘soft’ rules, such as their own philosophies and belief systems that inform their practice. The ‘hard’ rules include the absolute adherence to ‘non-negotiable’ legislation, such as child protection and Children First. Relatedly, EPs noted the importance of being a mandated person. Participants voiced the importance of ethical practice regarding ethical codes such as the PSI code of ethics. However, EPs in healthcare settings noted that there can sometimes be a conflict between adhering to ethical practice and following legislative practice, such as the Assessment of Need or Preliminary Team Assessments.

A key contradiction or tension was identified between the Subject node of EPs in healthcare settings compared to EPs in education settings. EPs in healthcare settings detailed the influence of Progressing Disabilities (PDS) policy on their professional role, whereas EPs in school settings did not feel particularly influenced by this policy. Rather, they felt bound by the Department of Education Circulars as key documents that shaped their practice.

Related to adherence to legislation were the implicit rules amongst the school psychology setting participants, who noted having the ‘dual role’ of being an educational psychologist and a civil servant. Some EPs noted feeling ‘constrained’ in this regard, as they felt that being in a civil servant capacity somewhat constrains their ability to voice concerns. EPs within the education setting in the study also identified tensions between conducting their work in congruence with departmental policy and their professional psychological opinion.

Concerning the philosophies and belief systems cited by EPs, it was noted as an important and under-asked question, with the importance for EPs being clear on their

philosophies being stressed. The overarching philosophy most often described by EPs was taking a biopsychosocial or system-level approach to casework. That is, EPs are cognisant not to situate any presenting concerns solely ‘within’ the child but to explore each case within the context of the ecological systems in which they reside. This is consistent with the earlier finding about EPs taking a holistic approach to casework. EPs noted the influence of social constructivism as an epistemology that informs practice, as well as speaking about the importance of promoting social justice, the child’s voice, equality, and inclusion. These results accord with the position of Cameron (2006), who posited that the EPs bring a ‘psychological perspective’ and see problems as ‘interactive’ rather than single factors.

4.11.2. Community Factors EPs Perceive Influence their Role

EPs acknowledged working at the family and school levels the most frequently, though there is also engagement at other levels. However, this is generally less frequent. This finding contrasts somewhat with findings from Castillo et al. (2016), who found that school psychologists community engagement activities as part of their services. Between EPs in both settings (healthcare and education), there were noted differences in the level of this community engagement. EPs in healthcare identified working predominantly at the family level compared to EPs in education working mainly at the school level.

EPs across settings noted the value of inter-agency working and a desire for greater community engagement, but also noted barriers to this process. Relatedly, EPs noted the importance and benefit of engaging with localised rather than just centralised supports, encapsulated by a quote from one participant stating: “local know what local needs”. Many EPs noted wanting to engage and collaborate further with other community-level supports.

4.11.3. Tools EPs Perceive as Factors that Influence their Role

EPs noted various tools they use as part of their role as EPs, including assessment tools, intervention tools, problem-solving tools, technology tools, and research as a tool.

Speaking of assessment as a tool, participants appeared keen to challenge the perception that EPs are cognitive assessment focused. Rather, participants argued that cognitive assessments are only used when there is a clinical reason and are used in conjunction with various other assessment tools. These include consultation in its differing models, observation behaviour charts, standardised screeners, and questionnaires. There were differences across settings regarding types of assessment tools used, such that EPs in healthcare felt they used more diagnostic tools for mental health and neurodevelopmental assessments (such as the ADOS for autism assessments), while EPs in school settings reported using more screeners rather than diagnostic tools.

Regarding tools to support intervention, EPs value incorporating an eclectic approach rather than strict adherence to one method or approach. This eclectic approach is adapted for certain populations and clients' needs while following an evidence-based practice. EPs also value strengths-based approaches in intervention work. Specific therapeutic orientations used as tools to support intervention work cited include CBT, ACT, solution-focused, family systemic therapy, PCP, and person-centred.

There were differences or contradictions across settings regarding EPs' perspectives of engaging in intervention. EPs in healthcare described personally delivering both individual and group-based therapeutic interventions compared to EPs in school settings. While some EPs in school settings spoke about engaging in direct intervention work, many EPs felt that their role was to support teachers or parents with interventions. However, there were EPs in this setting, who wished to engage in more direct intervention work. This finding highlights both similarities and differences between the participants' perspectives in the current study and those expressed by Hoyne and Cunningham (2019) regarding EPs working in Irish school psychology settings' use of therapeutic interventions.

Concerning problem-solving tools to support their role, particularly concerning case formulation, EPs spoke of the intuitive nature of this process as practitioners gain experience. As such, they suggested that this problem-solving process is intuitive, being a process that is conducted implicitly rather than explicitly. Specific problem-solving frameworks for practice noted most frequently by participants included the 5Ps, the interactive factors framework, and the NEPS problem-solving model. There were differences across settings in relation to the types of frameworks used. However, EPs in education settings preferred the NEPs problem-solving framework, in contrast to EPs in healthcare settings favouring the 5Ps framework. Other frameworks mentioned included the Monsen problem-solving framework and the Comoira framework. These results corroborate some of the findings of the previous work in Kelly (2006) exploring the usefulness of the Monsen framework.

Participants spoke about how the use of technology as a tool to support their work has increased. EPs noted the use of technology can both enable and constrain practice. Technology facilitated remote practice during the COVID-19 lockdown, but some mentioned reluctance to use technology, citing difficulties with establishing rapport remotely. This also accords with recent findings by Sivers and Schnackenberg (2021) exploring EPs' use of a webinar series during COVID-19 pandemic.

Though the research was cited as integral to informing their evidence-based practice, participants viewed themselves as consumers and disseminators rather than 'producers' of research. Many participants wanted to be involved in or conduct more research as part of their role, but they felt restricted due to time constraints and the service demands relating to casework. These findings relate to the position put forth by Keith (2008) that school psychologists incorporate three research roles in practice: consumers, distributors, and conductors of research. Regarding tensions or contradictions identified between the activity

systems of EPs in education settings and healthcare, research opportunities, particularly conducting research, appear to be scarcer in healthcare compared to education settings.

4.11.4. The Division of Labour and EPs' Perspectives of Role Demarcation and Task Allocation That Influence Their Role

A major tension or contradiction identified in this study suggests that the role and title of the educational psychologists who partook in this study appear to be influenced by the type of service in which they are employed. EPs in school psychology settings readily identified as “Educational Psychologists”. EPs working in other settings (for example Disability Services) felt they were perceived and identified more as "psychologists" rather than specifically "educational psychologists". Some participants felt the "child" part of some doctoral training programs was paramount and should have more emphasis, such as “Child and Educational Psychologist”.

There were further identity differences relating to job title and role identified with this study; EPs in education settings also identified as civil servants and the tension the dual role of EP and civil servant can have. This self-identification as a civil servant did not emerge amongst participants in healthcare settings. There was also a view that other stakeholders perceived EPs across settings as ‘experts’. Though EPs readily acknowledge their skills and competencies in educational psychology, they appear uncomfortable with the ‘expert’ perception. Rather, they prefer to be seen as ‘facilitators’. This is consistent with findings from O'Farrell and Kinsella's (2018) study in the Irish context, who found that EPs did not view themselves as the ‘experts’ in the consultation process; instead, they are there to build capacity amongst stakeholders.

Regarding teamwork, EPs felt they worked as part of a team, but this was more prominent for EPs working on multi-disciplinary healthcare-based teams. There was a noted shift in services for EPs in healthcare settings, with a shift from multidisciplinary to

interdisciplinary working. This has brought about certain changes regarding expectations amongst practitioners in that they now feel they are expected to be more 'au fait' with knowledge from other disciplines. EPs in school settings emphasised working as part of a team for support and development work but working more individually for casework. EPs felt that the perception of their role from team members and other professionals ranged from "decision-maker" to de facto team leader to change agent. EPs in education settings noted working in a uni-disciplinary way and would value greater multidisciplinary working.

Concerning supporting casework and their division of labour, EPs felt that formal and peer supervision supported their work practice by providing a safe space that facilitated case formulation and reduced uncertainty. EPs who supervised trainee educational psychologists cited significant value in this process, viewing it as reciprocal in the exchange of knowledge and certain skills. This is consistent with the cyclical models of supervision proposed by Page and Wosket (1994), particularly the 'space' component that promotes collaborative working.

4.11.5. Outcomes as an Influencing Factor

Participants felt that the systematic measuring of outcomes for the client and service users should improve. An often-cited measure of outcomes was that it was an informal "check-in" with parents or schools. Participants across settings identified the importance of measuring outcomes of their involvement compared to the lack of time allocated to do so. However, some participants felt that policy changes meant less emphasis on assessment to access resources, which in turn allowed more time to review and follow up on casework outcomes. This is consistent with findings from a scoping review by Muller et al. (2021), who concluded that measurement of the effects of educational psychology services, or outcomes, has not been a focus despite its importance to school psychology practice as set out in guidelines.

Some participants perceived a psychological report as an outcome of case involvement to be a live document subject to revision following review rather than a static entity. EPs valued the changing practice of producing shorter reports or, in some cases, summary letters that were consumer-friendly with less psychological jargon. This finding broadly supports the work of Lichtenstein and Ecker (2019), who advocate a ‘consumer responsive’ approach to report writing underlined by similar principles such as conciseness and readability. There were tensions identified regarding report writing amongst EPs in education settings. It was noted that EPs must balance writing reports that are child-centred and strengths-based whilst also ensuring sufficient detail of presenting concerns or ‘labelling’ to ensure resources.

4.11.6. The Client(s) as an Influencing Factor in EPs’ Perceptions of Their Role

There are differences or contradictions amongst participants as to who the client is, which is dependent on the service in which they work. There appeared to be greater uncertainty as to whom EPs regard as the client in education settings. Indeed, there was variation among EPs in education settings as to who the client is and whom the EP is working for. This was compared to EPs in healthcare settings (either child or child and family), who appeared more certain. EPs in healthcare settings noted a tension in that schools sometimes felt they were clients due to the ‘educational’ component of the EP title. However, EPs in this setting did not agree that schools were a client, which can result in tension. In education settings, some view the client as the child or young person (CYP); others as the CYP and the parents/guardians; and others as the CYP, the parents/guardians, and the referring agent, such as the school. Regarding this uncertainty, particularly in education settings, participants noted they would value more clarity in their roles as to who exactly the client is. As an attempt to reconcile these disparate views, it would be prudent to consider Fisher’s (2014) position, which suggested that, rather than trying to answer the singular question of who the clients

are, it might be better to ask, “What are my ethical responsibilities to each of the parties in this case?” (p. 183)

4.11.7. Methodological Considerations of the Current Study

It is prudent to delineate the methodological strengths and limitations of the current study to contextualise the findings discussed above.

Table 4.6

Overview of the Strengths and Limitations of the Study

Strengths

1. The current study sample had a diverse range of EPs with different ranges of experience and working in different services. This helped to capture similarities, differences, and tensions or ‘contradictions’ within the profession. Utilising Activity Theory as the theoretical framework for this study supported this. As Activity Theory is both a descriptive and analytical framework, it supports exploring EPs’ perspectives through the various nodes of the framework and describing and analysing EPs’ responses. Furthermore, applying an inductive-deductive approach to analysis ensured that findings not directly related to a predetermined theory were identified and explored. The comprehensive nature of the interview schedule and wider methodology of the study supported the exploration of all key components of the EP role, which supported the generation of many rich and pertinent findings of EP practice.

Limitations

1. As non-probabilistic purposive sampling was used to recruit participants, the findings of this study may not be representative of the perspectives of other Educational Psychologists. Though the current study had a sample size of 20 participants, a limitation of the current study is that the number of participants working in child psychology services was small (n=2) relative to participants from school psychology (n=10) and child disability services (n=8). Furthermore, due to time constraints, this study did not explore the perspectives of EPs working in private settings. Future research should consider examining EP perspectives in this setting. It is also important to note that all EPs in this study within the education settings are currently employed in one organisation, and so their views may not be representative of EPs in other education settings.

4.12. Conclusions and Implications for Policy, Practice and Future Research

The current study contributes to the empirical literature as the first to explore the perspectives of educational psychologists across the settings of Disability, School, and Child Psychology in relation to their role within the Irish context. The current study generated

findings that could support the continuing development of educational psychology in Ireland. Findings from this research, based on the perspectives of EPs across settings, could potentially support the continuing development of educational psychology in Ireland, both in training and in practice.

This research provides insight into educational psychologist's attitudes and perspectives and how these shape their professional identity as practitioners. This research elucidates aspects of the distinctive contribution of educational psychology to education and healthcare systems. This piece of research could be applied to the continued development of doctoral training programs in educational psychology. It also provides knowledge of the discipline of educational psychology for both qualified practitioners and trainees in Ireland, adding a practical and applied value to this study. Implications for policy, practice, and future research are outlined below.

4.13. Implications for Educational Psychology Practice

These findings may help us understand that the EP role has changed to become more holistic, systemic, consultative, and collaborative, with specialist knowledge of child development and school systems. This should help both psychological services explain their role to service users and support schools in identifying referrals and addressing concerns.

The findings suggest that cognitive assessments, though an important component of diagnostic assessment, no longer play such a central role in the assessment, and changes to educational policy partially explain this. This finding has important implications for the type of assessment work conducted by EPs, with many EPs noting more assessments pertaining to social and emotional difficulties.

The results of this research indicate some uncertainty about who the client is, particularly in the education setting. This should be clarified for practitioners by the governing authorities in services, as well as the ethical responsibilities to all stakeholders

involved in a particular case, to ensure efficient use of time and resources. This finding may have important implications for the role of the EP in practice as it could have an impact on where and with whom the work of the EP should be focused. It could also impact models of service delivery. For example, uncertainty as to who the client is may have implications for referral pathways, consent/assent processes, delivery of feedback, and responsibility for interventions.

The current research results suggest there are barriers to practitioner EPs conducting and consuming research. It is recommended that EPs across services be granted protected time to engage in both the conduct and consumption of research to contribute to and be informed by the evidence base. The establishment of Research Working Groups in healthcare settings, like those in the education setting included in this study, may further support an increased engagement in research. Increased working alliances with researchers and educational psychology trainees from third-level institutions could support these research links and encourage more research.

EPs in education settings noted working in a uni-disciplinary way and would value greater multidisciplinary work such as working with SLT, OTs, or other healthcare professionals. Increased opportunities for multidisciplinary work should therefore be considered. This finding relates to a recent NCSE demonstration project related to tiered delivery of occupational and speech and language therapy support in schools (Lynch et al., 2021). This project concluded that their professions welcome the opportunity for 'inter sectoral engagement' consistent with findings from the current study

Previous research from Hoyne and Cunningham (2019) and Moolla and Lazarus (2014) have highlighted the lack of understanding amongst stakeholders as to what constitutes the EP role and what EPs can provide as part of their role concerning school development and therapeutic interventions. The current study's findings should help elucidate

this understanding and provide greater clarity to future stakeholders regarding the services and skills EPs can provide.

The current study highlighted tensions in how some participants feel about the dual role of being both an educational psychologist and a civil servant. This position should be addressed by the relevant psychological services to ameliorate this tension and reconcile these dual roles.

4.14. Implications for Educational Psychology Training

Findings across the current study may have implications for the future accreditation of Doctoral Training Programs in Educational Psychology in Ireland. Specifically, findings relating to the tools used by EPs in their role (such as assessment, intervention, technology, and research as ‘tools’) may be incorporated as accreditation criteria for future trainee EPs. Many EPs are now incorporating more therapeutic interventions into their role, particularly in healthcare settings. It is recommended that EPs in training receive continued input in this area to support competency development. Participants cited the economic barrier to doctoral training as being unethical and inequitable. As such, reviewing the funding of doctoral training for educational psychology is recommended. The findings suggest that EPs value shorter, more consumer-friendly psychological reports. This has implications for how report writing is taught in training programs.

4.15. Implications for Policy

One of the issues emerging from this study relates to the professional title of ‘Educational Psychologist’ and the degree to which it reflects an EP’s role within a particular setting. As EPs seek registration with CORU, it is recommended that the professional title should be considered so that it is reflective of the services EPs can provide and therefore enhance the public and other professionals’ understanding of the EP role. This consideration could take the form of EP members from different settings registered with the PSI Division of

Educational Psychology congregating to discuss the role title and the wider developing role of the EP in Ireland.

Ethical concerns were raised regarding current practices dictated by legislation, such as time obligations arising from the Assessment of Need requirements and Preliminary Team Assessments. It is recommended that the aforementioned service delivery components should be re-evaluated in the context of the current findings. This finding support the recent review of AONs and PTAs in light of recent court orders in 2022, deeming that they do not fulfil the requirements of the Disability Act 2005.

As mentioned above, the findings suggest that EPs value shorter, more consumer-friendly psychological reports. This has implications for service guidelines that may require particular wording in a report to deem the client eligible for certain resources. This should be reviewed.

The findings indicate that the measuring of outcomes can vary. It is advised that services support the systematic evaluation of outcomes of EP work. This evaluation of outcomes could be supported by various methods as recommended by Dunsmuir et al. (2009), including the increased use of target monitoring and evaluation (TME) based on goal attainment scaling (GAS), single case studies, pre and post assessments and ecologically valid assessments. Many of these methods are currently part of Educational Psychology Doctoral Training.

Chapter 5. Critical Review

5.1. Reflections on the Research Process

Since my initial undergraduate studies, I was always fascinated by educational psychology as a branch of psychology. This interest was heightened during my previous role as a student support worker for students with disabilities at an Irish university. I was interested in how psychological theory could be applied to support students' learning and social-emotional development at school and at home.

I often wondered how educational psychologists did this work in practice. As I commenced my doctoral studies in Educational and Child Psychology, I quickly developed a broader and deeper understanding of what educational psychologists do, the rapid changes within the profession related to how EPs were trained, and the type of work they were now doing.

However, during my readings, I found there was a lack of research detailing the perspectives of EPs concerning their role within an Irish context, and at the time, almost nothing on the experience of trainee educational psychologists in Ireland. Initially, I had hoped to conduct my thesis on trainee EPs' perceptions of doctoral training. This topic of interest stemmed from my position as a trainee EP. The progress on this topic led to a full systematic review of previous research in the area, a full research proposal, and a panel presentation. However, questions related to the feasibility of pursuing this topic arose.

I then pivoted to exploring the perspectives of EPs working in the Republic of Ireland regarding their role. This interest was prompted by recent changes to the EP role in Ireland. These changes included the transition to doctoral level training for educational psychology in Ireland, in line with training requirements in England and the training of clinical psychologists in Ireland. Additionally, a directive by the HSE in 2016 meant that EPs in Ireland were now eligible for posts in child psychology settings, such as Primary Care or

CAMHS, leading to an expansion in the types of services in which EPs could now work. Furthermore, because of legislative changes to resource allocation, such as the General Allocation Model or GAM (Circular No 0013/2017 and Circular No 0014/2017), there was emerging anecdotal evidence that the role of the EP had consequently changed, with less time now spent on cognitive assessments to support diagnoses that secured resources. These developments, taken together, led me to question what EPs' perspectives of their role in the context of these changes were. An initial literature review led me to discover that, though the perspectives of EPs regarding the various aspects of their role have been explored internationally, there was a dearth of research in an Irish context. There was, therefore, a gap in the literature for the current research.

As a result of this research, my attitudes and beliefs have both broadened and deepened. I have a much more holistic view of the role of the EP now. I believe that, through the findings in the current research, I have a more nuanced understanding and appreciation of the unique contribution EPs bring to practice. I understand the facilitators and enablers of their role and the barriers, tensions, and contradictions practitioner EPs face.

5.1.1. Reflections on the Epistemological Position

5.1.1.1. Critical Realism Position. Critical realism contends that there is an objective and observable reality and acknowledges the role of subjective perspectives, mediated by perceptions and thoughts that support the exploration of this reality. Kelly et al. (2016) argued that the epistemological position of critical realism is the most relevant for educational psychology, offering a middle ground between the constructivist and positivist orientations. Critical realism acknowledges that the world is real, there are universal laws, and that knowledge can be produced and measured objectively, like the positivist position. Critical realism also acknowledges the salience of subjective experience, the importance of discourse, and that some knowledge is socially constructed through shared meaning, like the

constructivist position. Critical realism is taken in the current research insofar as the research acknowledges the existence of ‘objective’ realities in the context of educational psychology practice, but also acknowledges the importance of socially constructed knowledge and shared meaning and discourse gathered from participants’ perceptions and perspectives .

5.1.1.2. Strengths of the Critical Realism Position. The position has several strengths. It offers a scientific explanation of social phenomena and, as mentioned, a reconciliation of the positions posited by positivism and relativism (Creswell & Poth, 2016). In this way, it supports a pluralist appreciation of qualitative and quantitative approaches as modes of inquiry and reconciles individuals' subjective, socially constructed perspectives within the context of an objective reality. This position was useful for the current research as I explored the subjective perspectives of EPs within the objective parameters of services and organisations. In helping to explain and comprehend the work of educational psychology, Kelly et al. (2016) contended that critical realism is of ‘crucial importance’ in explaining values, concepts, and changes within the profession, making it particularly well suited for the present study. Critical realism supports positive change by offering a framework for exploring the complex nature of social and educational contexts. Further, Kelly et al. (2016) suggested that critical realism provides an overarching framework to generate and evaluate professional practice frameworks, such as the Activity Theory used for the present study.

5.1.1.3. Limitations/ Critique of the Critical Realism Position. The position of critical realism, like any epistemological position, is not without its limitations. Some argue that critical realism is too value-laden, focusing on ontology (Archer, 2016). As it offers a middle ground between constructivism and positivism, it could be considered by constructivists as being too realist in its search for ‘objectivity’ and not being realist enough by positivists who may contend it puts too much emphasis on socially constructed knowledge (Archer, 2010; Zhang, 2022).

5.1.1.4. Alternative Positions that May Have Been Employed. The positions of pure interpretivism and positivism were considered but rejected. Interpretivist approaches believe there can be multiple, socially constructed realities to increase understanding of subjective experiences (Bryman, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2016). Interpretivism was considered as it supports the exploration of qualitative data and the socially constructed nature of experiences. However, it was rejected as it was felt that it did not appropriately acknowledge the possibility of an 'objective' reality. Conversely, positivism was considered as it contends that there is an observable and objective reality. It supports historical comparisons but fails to consider the socially constructed nature of experience (Barker et al., 2015; Howitt & Cramer, 2007). Furthermore, it fails to acknowledge the role of the researcher in interpreting data.

5.1.2. Reflections on the Research Framework

5.1.2.1. Activity Theory. In the case of the current research, each node of Activity Theory informs questions asked in the semi-structured interviews (SSI), including the subject (whose perspective), object (what are they working on), outcome (to achieve what?), rules (what supports or constrains the work?), community (who else is involved?), division of labour (how is the work shared?), and tools/ artefacts (what is being used?). Relatedly, Second Generation Activity Theory's framework informed how inductive themes generated from data gathered through the SSI's were mapped deductively onto the nodes of the framework. Additionally, as Leadbetter (2008) outlined, Second Generation Activity Theory includes the examination of historicity, contradictions, transformations, and change, all pertinent to this research.

5.1.2.2. Strengths of Adopting Activity Theory as a Theoretical Framework. A strength of Activity Theory is that it facilitates the examination of nodes and any potential contradictions or tensions between them, making it a useful descriptive and analytic framework (Engeström, 1999). As it can be used both descriptively and analytically, it

thereby helps both to explain the phenomenon of interest and to critique it. It is particularly well suited for exploring perspectives within an organisation or system as it provides a framework to explore relevant components of the organisation through its multiple nodes. It supports the exploration of tensions or contradictions within the system and the historicity in which the system is situated. Activity Theory provides a systematic framework that supports deductive analysis based on the predetermined nodes but also supports inductive inquiry, making it well suited for the inductive-deductive data analysis approach chosen by the researcher. Activity theory enables the examination of various mediating variables (such as rules and division of labour) between the subject and the social reality in which they are situated. It also offers a non-reductionist approach due to its appreciation of dialectics between the 'subject' and the 'object' (Roth & Lee, 2007).

5.1.2.3. Limitation/Critique of Adopting Activity Theory as a Theoretical

Framework. Second generation Activity Theory, the version adopted for the current research, is adept at describing and analysing a single system or interactions between systems (Daniels et al., 2007; Leadbetter, 2017). Additionally the current research aimed to explore contradictions within and between systems. Second generation Activity Theory has been critiqued for not accounting for individual agency within a given system (Stetsenko, 2020). However the current research aimed to mitigate this limitation by capturing individual perspectives of EPs using semi structured interviews and including these perspectives through the use of direct quotations. If future research in this area was to explore organisational development on shared objects then third-generation activity theory may be more appropriate. Third-generation activity theory supports the examination of interactions between systems on shared objects to promote organisational development (Leadbetter, 2017). This version of Activity Theory was considered but rejected as it was incongruent

with the current research, which aimed to explore interactions and contradictions within and between educational and healthcare systems.

5.1.2.4. Alternative Theoretical Frameworks That May Have Been Used. An alternative framework considered was the Bioecological Model of Development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), which expands Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecosystemic Theory. This theory supports examining a person's development within the context or system of complex relationships, including the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. It is a systemic approach to development and may have been a helpful framework to explore how EPs work within the different systems. However, it could be contended that there is a lack of focus on tensions and mediating factors within Ecosystemic Theory, which Activity Theory supports very well. Also, the distinction between the different levels of exosystemic theory is not as clear in reality as in theory. For example, a person can be part of someone's microsystem and mesosystem (for example if they are someone's relative and schoolteacher). Furthermore, the Ecosystemic Theory was originally developed to examine human development within various systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As this research explored EPs' perspectives concerning their role, not specifically human development, it was felt that exosystemic theory was not the most appropriate framework for the current research.

Appreciative inquiry was also considered a potential theoretical framework for conducting the current research. Appreciative inquiry is a solution-focused approach to problem-solving and organisational development that focuses on what is already working well (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2007). It is a method for studying and changing social systems (groups, organisations, communities) that advocates for the collective inquiry into "the best of what is, in order to imagine what could be" (Bushe, 2013, p. 1). It is grounded in social

constructionism and consists of five key facets or stages: the definition phase, discovery phase, dream phase, design phase, and delivery/destiny phase.

The benefits of appreciative inquiry include: it is strength-based and supports collaborative engagement and creativity amongst participants. However, a limitation of appreciative inquiry in the context of the current research is that it is primarily used with groups (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2007), not individual participants, which the current study used. Additionally, to remain true to the philosophy of appreciative inquiry, participants usually select the topic of investigation. As the researcher already defined the current research topic, this is another reason appreciative inquiry was not used and thus rejected as a theoretical framework.

Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) was the final conceptual framework considered for the current study. SSM is “an action-oriented process of inquiry into problematic situations in which users learn their way from finding out about the situation to taking action to improve it” (Checkland & Poulter, 2010, p. 191). It is particularly suited for exploring ill-defined, applied problems (Checkland & Poulter, 2010). It has been used to support a range of complex problems within educational settings (Fredrickson, 1990). SSM includes seven steps, which are:

1. The problem situation is unstructured.
2. The situation was analysed to develop a ‘rich picture.’
3. Define relevant systems and root definitions.
4. Develop a conceptual model.
5. Compare step 4 with step 2.
6. Discuss feasible and desirable changes.
7. Apply or implement changes.

Part of these steps involved conducting a CATWOE analysis, which includes defining the Customers (problem owners), the Actors (problem solvers), the Transformation (aims/objectives), the Weltanschauung (world view), the Owner (power holder), and Environmental barriers involved in the problem (Checkland & Poulter, 2010). Though SSM has certain advantages, including that it helps define a rich picture of ill-structured problems and a preferred conceptual model through its structured approach, it was rejected as a theoretical framework for the present study. This was because SSM is primarily used to investigate and solve “problem situations” (Checkland & Poulter, 2010, p. 191), whereas the current research was not focused on a problem situation.

5.1.3. Reflections on the Literature Review

This thesis employed the use of a scoping literature review for the Review Paper. Peters et al. (2020) noted that a scoping review aims to ‘map’ the available evidence on an underexplored topic rather than provide clinically meaningful answers to research questions. Furthermore, while systematic reviews aim to address a very precise, targeted research issue, scoping reviews are typically far larger in scope (Munn et al., 2018). As this was the first review to collate the perspective of EPs in Ireland and internationally as to the broad facets of their role, a scoping review was considered appropriate for this underexplored topic.

One of the strengths of the scoping literature review is its ability to provide an overview of the existing research on a topic, allowing researchers to identify gaps and inconsistencies in the literature (Peters et al., 2020). Additionally, scoping literature reviews can be useful for identifying key concepts and themes within a field, as well as for identifying the most relevant and influential studies (Munn et al., 2018). This was useful considering a literature pertaining to this particular topic was limited.

A limitation of scoping literature reviews is that they are not as specific as other types of literature reviews, such as systematic reviews (Munn et al., 2018). Scoping literature

reviews typically involve a less rigorous selection process for studies and may not include a comprehensive search for all relevant literature (Peters et al., 2020). However, the current research aimed to mitigate this potential lack of rigor by including clear inclusion and exclusion criteria as well as comprehensive search terms so as to omit potentially relevant studies. Another limitation of scoping literature reviews is that they do not typically include a formal assessment of the quality of the studies included, which can lead to a lack of rigor in the review (Munn et al., 2018). However, this purpose of the current review was not to ascertain the methodological quality of the studies in the same way one might for an assessment of studies examining the efficacy of an intervention. Rather, the purpose of this review was to map and synthesize the available findings related to EPs subjective perspective of different aspects of their professional role.

5.1.4. Reflections on the Research Design, Data Collection and Sample

5.1.4.1. Research Design. The current research adopted a qualitative research design, exploring the perspectives of qualified educational psychologists in the Republic of Ireland, and included a demographic questionnaire of participants that were analysed using descriptive statistics. The primary mode of data collection, however, was individual semi-structured interviews. This research design aligns with critical realism and previous research in this area.

5.1.4.2. Strengths of the Research Design. The use of a qualitative design was a strength of the study and appropriate for the research question as it facilitates the capturing of the participants' subjective and lived perspectives (Bryman, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2016; Howitt & Cramer, 2007). Qualitative research provides a voice to groups that may not feel represented (Reeves et al., 2015). The researcher engaging in reflexivity through journaling throughout the research was also a strength, as was the acknowledgement that the researcher himself was an active participant (Barker et al., 2015; Bryman, 2016). The purpose of

keeping a reflective journal was to mitigate potential bias and promote self-awareness throughout the research. The use of Activity Theory as the theoretical framework for this research was also a strength of the research design as it supported both data collection and data analysis. The researcher also supported the dependability and confirmability of the research by keeping an audit trail and describing the steps taken throughout the research process, from topic generation to data analysis (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

5.1.4.3. Critique of the Research Design. Due to the smaller sample size in qualitative research relative to quantitative research, there is limited generalizability, a concept typically used in quantitative research. Thus, it is difficult to generalise findings due to the relatively small sample size (Barker et al., 2015; Bryman, 2016; Howitt & Cramer, 2007). However, as the current research was qualitative, the researcher aimed for transferability within this qualitative research, and this was supported through a ‘thick’ description of the research process and the context in which it was conducted. Another limitation of a qualitative research design is that replicability of the study and the findings is also more difficult (Bryman, 2016). Future research in this area could incorporate a national survey that could include more participants and support qualitative and quantitative data collection, if appropriate.

5.1.4.4. Data Collection Methods. Individual semi-structured interviews were used as the primary mode of data collection. In short, online demographic questionnaire was also used to collect information on current service location, the number of years working as an EP, and previous education and employment experience relevant to educational psychology.

5.1.4.5. Strengths of the Data Collection Methods Employed. The use of interviews was a strength of the data collection. Interviews are the most widely employed method for gathering qualitative data (Donalek, 2005), with Howitt and Cramer (2007) asserting that qualitative interviews “generally generate extensive and rich data from participants in the

study” (p. 61). Furthermore, individual interviews allowed the researcher to capture similarities and differences amongst participants and across services. Also, semi-structured interviews allowed participants the freedom to express their views and perspectives and provided the researcher with comparable data. Individual interviews are the preferred method for discussing sensitive issues and are less affected by group biases than focus groups (Creswell & Poth, 2016). They also provided flexibility when topical trajectories in the conversation arose. Semi-structured interviews also allowed flexibility to probe deeper when appropriate and enabled more complex questions to be asked (Barker et al., 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2016).

Conducting interviews online at a time and date that suited them was the preferred method for all participants. This is most likely because participants could participate in the study from a location that made them feel comfortable. This was a strength of the study as data collection is improved when participants are relaxed and comfortable. It is apparent that this method helped foster rapport with each participant.

Due to the data collection method chosen (that is conducting 20 individual semi-structured interviews), data saturation was achieved; the point at which no new information was gathered during data analysis. This data saturation yields greater support and validity for generating themes from the data (Bryman, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2016).

5.1.4.6. Critique of the Data Collection Methods Employed. As the current research used one primary data collection method, interviews in conjunction with a short demographic questionnaire, data source triangulation (Patton, 1999), was not achieved. This lack of data triangulation may affect the internal validity of the study. Future studies should consider the triangulation of data, which can be supported using multiple sources of data collection, including diary logs and field notes from observations. Though rejected due to time constraints and the nature of the research objective, to gain in-depth data on EPs perspectives,

a qualitative questionnaire could be considered an addendum to future studies in this area as it can facilitate the collection of data from a greater number of participants. Additionally, the anonymity afforded to participants via a survey could also support the collection of potentially sensitive or controversial data.

The researcher considered using focus groups as the primary method of data collection. However, this was rejected as this study aimed to explore the view of EPs' individually rather than in a group setting to minimise group-based biases, such as the halo effect, the dominance effect, or groupthink (Nyumba et al., 2018). Recommendations for future studies could include a hybrid approach, comprising individual interviews with possible follow-up focus groups.

Social desirability and acceptability biases may have influenced participants' interview responses (Howitt & Cramer, 2007). However, to counter these biases, participants were assured that their responses would be kept confidential, thus encouraging participants to speak freely from a position of anonymity. Additionally, the researcher avoided using leading questions that may have influenced participants' responses (Bryman, 2016).

Though individual interviews have advantages, as mentioned above, they are not without limitations as a data collection method. Conducting interviews is time-consuming, not just for the researcher but also for participants. Therefore, all participants were told they were free to withdraw participation at any time. It was also quite time-consuming to transcribe all 20 interviews verbatim. However, the researcher used this task as an opportunity to become immersed in the data, as per the recommendations of Braun and Clarke (2006), with the researcher writing notes and observations during transcription.

5.1.4.7. Research Sample. The study sample included EPs with varying degrees of experience working across different services, including child disability, school psychology, and child psychology settings. Non-probabilistic purposive sampling was used to recruit

participants. Participants were identified and recruited via targeted emails to educational psychology special interest groups (Psychological Society of Ireland Division of Educational Psychology) and psychologists working at NEPS, where people could choose to partake in the study. Additionally, via conversation, email, and phone, the researcher's network of mentors and former colleagues was used to identify potential participants within the population.

5.1.4.8. Strengths of the Sampling Approach Adopted. The use of non-probabilistic sampling is regarded as a suitable method of sampling in qualitative research, particularly in exploratory research (Bryman, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2016), as it is conducive to a faster response rate and is practical. Another strength of the sampling approach was the balance between EPs in Disability and School Psychology settings. Additionally, the sample included participants with a diverse range of years of experience, ranging from less than one year to 30+ years. A further strength of the sampling approach was that it facilitated data saturation. The researcher believes that the current study achieved data saturation from the sample obtained as the data collection reached a point where no new information was being obtained, and there was a particularly strong recurrence of themes. The data from each interview was analysed and data collection continued until no new themes were identified and all the data collected was repetitive, indicating that data saturation had been reached.

5.1.4.9. Critique of the Sampling Approach Adopted. The subjective judgment of the researcher influences non-probability sampling selection more than probability sampling (Barker et al., 2015). However, the population of EPs practising in Ireland is small and therefore not conducive to random probability sampling. An additional potential sampling limitation was that the study consisted of a small sample of EPs in child psychology ($N = 2$) relative to the number of participants in child disability ($N = 8$) and school psychology ($N = 10$) settings. However, this is not necessarily a limitation in qualitative research as, unlike

quantitative research, where statistical power is used to make representative claims from the data, qualitative research involves engaging in data saturation to determine when no new findings occur (Barker et al., 2015; Bryman, 2016). Furthermore, due to time constraints, this study did not explore the perspectives of EPs working in private settings. Future research should consider examining EP perspectives in this setting.

5.1.5. Reflections on Data Analysis

5.1.5.1. Methods of Data Analysis. Thematic Analysis (TA) was used to evaluate qualitative data. It entails detecting "themes and patterns of meaning" within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006), with the analysis "directed by an existing theory" or framework, as well as the researcher's epistemology. The researcher supported data collection and analysis with Second Generation Activity Theory augmented by BPS (2022) core competencies for educational psychologists. By using descriptive statistics, quantitative demographic data were analysed.

Template Analysis was the specific type of thematic analysis employed (King & Brooks, 2018). This type of thematic analysis is called a "middle ground" method (Braun & Clarke 2021). Template Analysis is ideal for this research issue since it is theoretically independent and compatible with a critical realist methodology. Template Analysis differs from standard thematic analysis regarding when topics are formed (a priori as opposed to post hoc) and the sort of coding technique (more structured rather than less structured). However, themes and codes can also be generated inductively and mapped onto a priori themes or nodes, making this a structured yet adaptable method of analysis.

5.1.5.2. Strengths of the Data Analysis Methods Employed. An inductive-deductive approach, rather than a purely deductive approach, allowed for generating themes beyond those consistent with Activity Theory. The generation of inductive themes allowed them to then be mapped deductively onto the different nodes of Activity Theory. Braun and Clarke

(2021) noted that Template Analysis as a form of thematic analysis is particularly useful for exploring the perspectives of different groups within organisations and for exploring participants' perspectives of a phenomenon (King & Brooks, 2018), both of which were the goals of the current study.

Member checking was conducted during the interviews, with the researcher reiterating to participants the interpreted meaning of what was said after each section of the interview schedule (Bryman, 2016). This helped to ensure valid interpretation of data; ensure that the researcher and participants' interpretations of responses were congruent. The entire dataset of all 20 interviews went through a thorough and systematic coding process using NVIVO software. The advantages of using software like NVIVO are that it supports the searching and analysis of large data sets and supports the creation of nested hierarchical codes and subsequent themes.

The researcher was reflexive throughout all stages of the research, including data analysis. Reflexivity is regarded as essential to good thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This was important as the researcher's current position as a trainee educational psychologist, and a doctoral student may have implicitly impacted the questions asked in data collection, and subsequent data analysis. However, positionality is common in qualitative research, and these potential constraints were mitigated through iterative reflection and awareness of any potential bias throughout all stages of the research process in a process known as "Personal and Epistemological Reflexivity" (Willig, 2013). This included iteratively reflecting on my own beliefs and attitudes and how these may influence and impact various stages of the research process, including data analysis. This reflexivity was supported by keeping a reflective diary throughout the research.

Using descriptive statistics to collect demographic information from participants was also an advantage of the study, as it allowed ordinal data to be collected in a way that was

conducive to collation and analysis. Based on the study design, there were no inferential statistics required.

5.1.5.3. Critique of the Data Analysis Methods Employed. Berends and Johnston (2005) argued that using multiple coders can reduce flexibility in the iterative nature of coding and implies that coders should agree for a code to be valid, which somewhat undermines the spirit of qualitative research. Conversely, it is argued by some researchers that a second coder should independently code all transcripts to reduce any researcher bias (Nowell et al., 2017). Therefore, it was decided that a sample of data would be coded by another doctoral student in the same program as the researcher. It was agreed that where required, any differences in coding results would be discussed and adapted (though no significant differences occurred). Analysis of results and development of codes was also supported through supervision.

Due to the iterative nature of the thematic analysis, particularly with a data set consisting of 20 interviews, it was an extremely time-consuming process to engage in line-by-line coding of the data set and subsequent generation of themes.

5.1.6. Reflections on Ethical Considerations

5.1.6.1. Ethical Considerations Employed. Dual ethical approval was granted from Mary Immaculate College and the NEPS. Ethical guidelines were adhered to throughout the research based on the Psychological Society of Ireland [PSI] (2010) code of ethics criteria.

A pilot interview was conducted to ensure appropriate and considered phrasing of questions for participants. Though the interview schedule included closed questions, much of the interview schedule consisted of open-ended questions to reduce bias or influencing participant responses. Further, the use of closed questions was used only to probe open ended questions further e.g. ‘Has this changed? If so, how?’

This study went through a rigorous ethical process at Mary Immaculate College and the National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS) to ensure that the study design was ethically sound before commencement. Throughout all phases of the study, the researcher adhered to the PSI (2010) code of ethics as an ethical framework. These included the core principles of respect for the participants' rights and dignity, competence and the limits of such, responsibility towards participants and the wider community, and integrity.

Specifically, acting in accordance with said principles meant ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of participants, including ensuring data could be attributed to any particular participant. Additionally, informed consent was sought from all participants, with the research aims being explained honestly and accurately in a straightforward and open manner.

A potential ethical dilemma that emerged during the research was that some participants were already known in a professional capacity to the researcher. As such, it was necessary to reiterate that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they, like all other participants, were free to withdraw from the study at any point without reason. As good ethical practice, the researcher had to consider their own positionality throughout the research to mitigate any potential conflict of interest.

5.2. Implications for Practice, Policy and Future Research

The current findings elucidate the perspectives of practitioner EPs in Ireland and how they perceive their role has changed to become more holistic, systemic, consultative, and collaborative. EPs have specialist knowledge of child development and school systems. In terms of variations of the role across services, the findings indicate that the role and title of the EP appear to be influenced by the type of service in which one is employed. EPs in school psychology settings readily identified as “educational psychologists”. EPs working in other settings (such as Disability Services) felt they were perceived and identified more as "psychologists" rather than specifically "educational psychologists". Further, EPs in this

setting felt they were perceived as ‘diagnosticians’. Some participants felt the "child" part of some doctoral training programs was paramount and should have more emphasis, for example “child and educational psychologist”.

The findings suggest that cognitive assessments, though still a key element of diagnostic assessment, are no longer the main form of assessment. This has been partially attributed to changes in legislation such as Department of Education Circulars, which stipulate that a formal diagnosis is no longer required to access special educational resources. This finding has important implications for the type of assessment work done by EPs, with several participants observing that casework pertains to assessing social and emotional difficulties.

Relatedly, many EPs are now incorporating more therapeutic interventions into their role. As such, an implication for training and CPD would be that EPs receive continued input in social-emotional well-being and child mental health to support development in this area to support clients and stakeholders. Atkinson and Keneally (2021) have put forward a framework for practice to support therapeutic work for EPs, particularly in school settings, which may support input and training in this area.

In relation to clients, the findings indicate some uncertainty as to who the client is from the EP’s perspective, with differences across services concerning this. Some participants viewed the client as the child or young person (CYP), others as the CYP and the family, and others as the CYP, the family, and the referring agent, for example the school. While all agreed that CYP was undoubtedly their primary client and their “raison d’etre”, there was a recurring view that EPs have ‘multiple clients’, and that who the client is can change daily and is dependent on each individual piece of casework. This should be clarified for practitioners by the service management in which they are employed, and any ethical responsibilities to any other stakeholders involved in a particular case to ensure efficient use

of time and resources. This finding may have important implications for the role of the EP in practice as it could impact where and to whom the work of the EP should be focused. It could also impact on models of supervision used by EPs as some, such as the Hawkins and Shohet Seven Eyed Supervision Model, attend to multiple perspectives in casework.

Participants cited the child, family, and school levels as the levels they most frequently worked at. EPs noted the value of inter-agency working but also noted barriers to this process. Participants valued working with local organisations, particularly if this was consistent with the family's goals of increasing community engagement for the CYP. Many EPs would like to engage further with other community-level supports. As such, an implication for practice to support this engagement could be to develop more local networks between psychology services and other community supports. This could first be piloted in one service and assessed for effectiveness before expanding to other areas, if appropriate.

The findings suggest that EPs value shorter, more consumer-friendly psychological reports. They also indicated the importance of treating report writing as an iterative process and the report itself as a live, working document, telling the client's story, and balancing the reporting of presenting concerns with strengths-based reporting. Participants cited time and wording of reports to meet diagnostic criteria as a barrier to this practice. This has implications for how report writing is taught in training programs and service guidelines that may require particular wording in a report to deem the client eligible for certain resources. It also leads to the question of: should EPs have more agency in the wording of the reports they write?

Participants noted the use of technology has increased, which can both enable and constrain practice. The use of technology, including video conferences and tele-assessment, facilitated remote practice during COVID-19 pandemic, but a reticence in using technology was cited by some. In the wake of EPs using less technology for assessment purposes as they

return to the workplace since the lifting of government restrictions, future research should explore how much technology use EPs would like to retain pertaining to assessment, if any. Perhaps there is scope to provide the option of video conferences for team meetings to maximise time efficiency for EPS who are regularly commuting due to school visits. The continued use of video consultation could also benefit families who have difficulties accessing the service of leaving their homes due to childcare responsibilities.

Some of the issues emerging from this study include the professional title of educational psychologists and if this reflects EPs' role within a particular service. As the regulating body for health and social care professionals in Ireland, CORU, prepares to regulate the psychology profession, it is recommended that the professional title should be considered in the context of the current study's findings, and whether this will take the form of "Educational Psychologist", "Educational and Child Psychologist", "Child and Educational Psychologist", or "Psychologist". A title that encompasses a wider perspective of the role and is more in line with where and how EPs work in order to enhance the public's and other professionals' understanding of the EP role, such as "Child and Adolescent Educational Psychologist", should be considered.

Ethical concerns were raised regarding current practices dictated by legislation, such as time obligations arising from the Assessment of Need requirements and Preliminary Team Assessments. Some participants questioned the ethics of these components of service delivery and whether they, due to their time-restricted nature, can allow a sufficient collection of information to determine whether or not the child meets the definition of having a disability as defined by the Disability Act (2005). It is recommended that these components of service delivery should be evaluated in the context of the current findings.

The current findings suggest that many participants would like to be more actively involved in conducting research. However, there were identified barriers to practitioner EPs

conducting and consuming research. The primary barrier cited was lack of time due to the size of caseloads and waitlists that take priority. A lack of confidence in conducting research, particularly in data analysis, was also a barrier. Participants noted that the consumption of research, such as reading the latest journal articles, was done in their own time due to a lack of time during their working day arising to caseload demands. Therefore, it is recommended that EPs across services be granted protected time to conduct and consume research to contribute to and be informed by the evidence base. The type of research supported within a particular service, conducive to practitioner work, could be case studies pertaining to clinical work. Relatedly, increased working alliances with researchers and educational psychology trainees from third-level institutions could support conducting of said research.

There were differences or contradictions in measuring outcomes across settings. The findings indicated that measuring outcomes can vary and includes qualitative and quantitative measures. It was noted by some participants that there is a lack of systematic evaluation of outcomes and that this is something that could be improved in terms of service delivery. Therefore, it is advised that services review how best to support the systematic evaluation of outcomes of EP work.

Participants cited the economic barrier to doctoral training as being unethical and inequitable. Currently, doctoral training in educational psychology in Ireland is unfunded, with students paying over 10,000 euros per year in fees. This contrasts with clinical psychology doctoral students who are paid a salary by the Health Service Executive and have 60% of their course fees funded. As such, it is recommended that the funding of doctoral training for educational psychology be reviewed to reduce the economic barrier to training and thereby increase diversity in the profession.

The current study explored the perspectives of EPs working in the Republic of Ireland in relation to their role. This topic was explored using in-depth semi-structured interviews.

While this methodology proved appropriate for the research questions, future research could consider using different data collection methods, such as focus groups, observations of EPs in practice, or a nationwide survey of EPs. If focus groups were considered for future research, it is recommended that an experienced third-party facilitator is used to run the groups to reduce bias or any conflict of interest. Future research should consider exploring the perspectives of EPs in private practice who were not included in the current study to determine if their views of the EP are comparable to the current findings. Future studies could also include the voices of other professionals who work closely with EPs and clients to ascertain their perceptions of the EP role. Related to the inclusion of clients, future studies should also explore with a larger sample whom EPs consider the client in each piece of casework.

Future research could also incorporate the perspectives of other related professionals such as teachers, occupational therapists, social workers, and speech and language therapists. It was beyond the current study's scope to explore these other professionals' perspectives. However, including these perspectives in future research could elucidate both similarities and differences between disciplines in relation to their respective roles. The use of a case study comparative analysis with third-generation activity theory could be used to support this analysis.

Related to the findings of the current research, future research could build on the current study by further exploring the uncertainty pertaining to whom the EP views as the client in the service in which they work and the impact this may have on casework and supervision for EPs. Future research could also explore and compare the measuring of outcomes across services quantitatively.

5.3. Impact Statement

The findings provide insights into the unique contribution of EPs and how the role of the EP has changed. EPs provide specialist knowledge of education and school systems. EPs adhere to evidence-based practice, work as scientist-practitioners, and take a systemic and holistic approach to casework. Relatedly, EPs have moved towards a consultative approach when engaging in assessment-related work. EPs in the school setting observe a shift in the use of cognitive assessment to access resources due to legislative changes and an increased focus on emotional and behavioural presentations. Further findings suggest that the role and title of educational psychologist is influenced by the type of service in which one is employed, which has significant implications for practice and where EPs choose to work.

EPs see a key part of their role as “taking people where they are at” and providing the “holding” role for families. EPs act as capacity builders (for schools and families) that support positive change and advocate for children and young people. EPs consider the voice of the child and young person and strive to be child-centred in their assessment approaches.

This research reveals the rules adhered to in practice by EPs, including the legislation, ethics, and philosophies that inform their role. The findings inform how EPs work at different levels within the community and the changes, barriers, and hopes for the future. This study also illuminates the various tools EPs use in practice, including for assessment and intervention, as well as the professional practice frameworks, and production and consumption of research as tools that support the EP role. The research highlights how and when EPs work as part of a team and the barriers and constraints to EP role.

The current study’s findings have important implications for the future measurement and evaluation of outcomes, and elucidate that some EPs feel there is a lack of systematic evaluation of the outcomes of their work. The findings also have implications for the changing nature of psychological report writing. This research highlights uncertainty from

EPs across settings as to who the client is. Some view the client as the child or young person (CYP), others as the CYP and the family, and others as the CYP, the family, and the referring agent, for example the school. Participants noted they would value more clarity in their roles as to who the client is. The research also highlights tensions or contradictions concerning the professional title of Educational Psychologists, with the preferred title appearing to be influenced by the type of service in which one is employed. These tensions have implications for policy and practice, and are potential avenues of inquiry for future research. This finding could benefit training programs in how they teach report writing and also benefit practitioner EPs when considering their own report writing style for CPD purposes.

This research builds on previous literature on the role of the EP and contributes novel findings about the role in an Irish context. This research elucidates the similarities between educational psychology and other related psychology disciplines, while also bringing further awareness to the distinctive contribution of educational psychology to education and healthcare systems. The current findings, when applied, could support the continuing development of educational psychology in Ireland for both trainee EPs and practitioners. The dissemination of this study's findings has already commenced, with a presentation delivered at the PSI annual conference in November 2021 and at professional placement service team meetings, with further plans for publication in relevant Educational Psychology journals such as *Educational Psychology in Practice*.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Pertinent Reports Guidelines and Legislation Impacting the EP Role Within the UK Context

- (1954) The Special Educational Treatment Regulations (Scotland)
- (1968) The Social Work (Scotland) Act
- (1969) The Education (Scotland) Act
- (1974) The Education Act
- (1980) The Education (Scotland) Act
- (1981) The Education (Scotland) Act
- (1981) The Education Act
- (1986) The Disabled Persons Act
- (1989) The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order
- (1989) The Children Act
- (1993) The Education Act
- (1996) The Education (Northern Ireland) Order
- (1998) The Education (Special Educational Needs Code of Practice – Northern Ireland)
Order
- (2000) The Standards in Scotland’s Schools Act
- (2000) The Education (National Priorities) (Scotland) Order
- (2001) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA)
- (2002) Review of Provision of Educational Psychology Services in Scotland
- (2004) The Children Act
- (2005) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (Northern Ireland)
- (2004) The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act

- (2011) The British Psychological Society’s Good Practice Guidelines on the use of psychological formulation
- (2014) Achieving Better Access to Mental Health Services by 2020
- (2014) The Children and Families Act
- (2014) The Education Act (Northern Ireland)
- (2014) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations
- (2015) Transforming Care for People with Learning Disabilities – Next Steps
- (2015) Future in mind: Promoting, protecting, and improving our children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing
- (2016) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (Northern Ireland)
- (2016) The British Psychological Society’s Autistic Spectrum Disorders: Guidance for Psychologists
- (2017) The British Psychological Society’s Practice Guidelines: Third edition
- (2018) The British Psychological Society’s Code of Ethics and Conduct
- (2019) The British Psychological Society’s Standards for the accreditation of doctoral programmes in educational psychology in Scotland
- (2021) The British Psychological Society’s Code of Human Research Ethics

Appendix B: Pertinent Reports, Guidelines and Legislation

in the Republic of Ireland Context

- (2011) The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) Code of Professional Ethics
- (2014) Circular 0030/2014. The Special Needs Assistant (SNA) scheme to support teachers in meeting the care needs of some children with special educational needs arising from a disability
- (2015) Children First Act
- (2016) Report of the Review Group Eligibility Criteria for Recruitment of Psychologists to the Health Service Executive
- (2016) National Policy on Access to Services for Children and Young People with Disability and Developmental Delay (2016)
- (2017) Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children
- (2017) Accreditation Criteria for Professional Doctoral Training In Educational Psychology in Ireland
- (2017) Psychologists Registration Board (Establishment Day) Order 2017
- (2017) HSE National Consent Policy 2017
- (2017) Circular 0013/2017 Special Education Teaching Allocation
- (2017) Slaintecare
- (2017) Joint Working Protocol Primary Care, Disability and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- (2018) Data Protection Act
- (2018) Health Service Executive (HSE) Autism Spectrum Disorder Diagnostic Protocol 2018
- (2019) Better Outcomes Brighter Futures

- (2019) Circular No 007/2019 Circular to the Management Authorities of all Mainstream Primary Schools Special Education Teaching Allocation
- (2019) Report on the New Standard Operating Procedure for Assessment of Need under the Disability Act 2005
- (2019) CAMHS Operational Guideline
- (2020) Circular 0030/2020. Special Needs Assistant Allocations for the 2020/21 School Year for Mainstream Classes in Primary and Post Primary Schools
- (2020) Remote Neuropsychological Assessment in the context of COVID-19 Pandemic
- (2020) The Relaunch: Back to School After COVID-19 Restrictions - Guidance from the Psychological Society of Ireland
- (2021) Report of the National Psychology Project Team: Establishment of a National Psychology Placement Office and Workforce Planning

Appendix C: Excluded Studies

Table A1

Excluded Studies

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| <p>Amod, Z., & Miller, J. (2019). Systemic Reflecting Team Training: Perceptions and Experiences of South African Educational Psychologists. <i>The American Journal of Family Therapy</i>, 47(2), 102-119.</p> <p>Available from: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2019-31400-001&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: Ineligible context</p> |
| <p>Barclay, G., & Kerr, C. (2006). Collaborative working across children's services: where are we now?. <i>Educational and Child Psychology</i>, 23(4), 35.</p> <p>). Available from: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2007-06073-004&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion:</p> <p>The focus of the study is not on Educational Psychologists</p> |

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| <p>Biddanda, H., Shriberg, D., Ruecker, D., Conway, D., & Montesinos, G. (2019). Navigating the waters of social justice: Strategies from veteran school psychologists. <i>Contemporary School Psychology, 23</i>(4), 379-387.</p> <p>Available from: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eue&AN=139722304&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: Ineligible context</p> |
| <p>Bisinoto, C., Marinho, C., & Almeida, L. (2014). Educational psychology in higher education: Current scene in Portugal. <i>Revista de Psicología (PUCP), 32</i>(1), 91-120.</p> <p>Available from: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2014-35742-004&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: Ineligible condition</p> |
| <p>Callicott, K., & Leadbetter, J. (2013). An investigation of factors involved when educational psychologists supervise other professionals. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice, 29</i>(4), 383-403.</p> <p>Available from: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2013-42377-005&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: Ineligible condition</p> |

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| <p>Wu, I., & Zhang, K. C. (2011). School psychology services in Hong Kong and implication for special education and professional development. <i>The Journal of International Association of Special Education</i>, 12(1), 64-68.</p> <p>Available from: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eue&AN=86730013&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: The focus of the study is not on Educational Psychologists/unable to identify the voice of the EP relative to other participants</p> |
| <p>Desforges, M., Mayet, V., & Vickers, M. (1995). Psychological assessment of bilingual pupils. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i>, 11(3), 27-35.</p> <p>Available from: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psych&AN=1996-21357-001&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: The focus of the study is not on Educational Psychologists</p> |

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| <p>Doggett, C., & Lewis, A. (2013). Using appreciative inquiry to facilitate organizational change and develop professional practice within an educational psychology service. <i>Educational and Child Psychology, 30</i>(4), 124-143.</p> <p>Available from: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=91661961&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: The focus of the study is not Educational Psychologists/unable to identify the voice of the EP relative to other participants, such as Trainee Educational Psychologists</p> |
| <p>Doveston, M., & Keenaghan, M. (2010). Teachers and educational psychologists working together: what can we learn?. <i>Support for Learning, 25</i>(3), 131-137.</p> <p>Available from: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psych&AN=2010-16373-005&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: The focus of the study is not on Educational Psychologists</p> |

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| <p>Dunsmuir, S., Lang, J., & Leadbetter, J. (2015). Current trends in educational psychology supervision in the UK. <i>Educational and child Psychology</i>, 32(3), 8-21.</p> <p>Available from: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=109323230&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: The focus of the study is not Educational Psychologists/unable to identify the voice of the EP relative to other participants, such as Trainee Educational Psychologists</p> |
| <p>Forlin, C. (2010). The role of the school psychologist in inclusive education for ensuring quality learning outcomes for all learners. <i>School Psychology International</i>, 31(6), 617-630.</p> <p>Available from: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psych&AN=2010-26350-005&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: Ineligible outcomes</p> |

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| <p>Frank Webb, A., & Michalopoulou, L. E. (2021). School psychologists as agents of change: Implementing MTSS in a rural school district. <i>Psychology in the Schools</i>, 58(8), 1642-1654.</p> <p>Available from:</p> <p>https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=151268051&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: The focus of the study is not Educational Psychologists/unable to identify the voice of the EP relative to other participants, such as Trainee Educational Psychologists</p> |
| <p>Friesem, Y. (2020). It's all about control: how giving kids control over access, content, and format of their media production advances social and emotional learning. <i>Media Practice and Education</i>, 21(4), 261-274.</p> <p>Available from:</p> <p>https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=147176902&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: The focus of the study is not on Educational Psychologists</p> |

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| <p>Giles, P., & Rowley, J. (2020). Educational psychologists' responses to a post-16 service user film on their practice: a participatory research project. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i>, 36(1), 78-92.</p> <p>Available from:</p> <p>https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=141935659&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: Ineligible outcomes</p> |
| <p>Hadjstylianos, E. (2014). Exploration of effective strategies for children with emotional disorders as identified by helping professionals in schools. <i>North American Journal of Psychology</i>, 16(1), p. 129-136.</p> <p>Available from: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2014-09153-012&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: Ineligible Outcomes</p> |
| <p>Hanchon, T. A., & Allen, R. A. (2013). Identifying students with emotional disturbance: school psychologists' practices and perceptions. <i>Psychology in the Schools</i>, 50(2), 193-208.</p> <p>Available from:</p> <p>https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=84696715&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: Ineligible study design</p> |

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| <p>Hayes, M., & Stringer, P. (2016). Introducing Farouk's process consultation group approach in Irish primary schools. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i>, 32(2), 145-162.</p> <p>Available from:</p> <p>https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=117840275&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: The focus of the study is not Educational Psychologists/unable to identify the voice of the EP relative to other participants</p> |
| <p>Hobbs C, Durkin R, Ellison G, Gilling J, Heckels T, Tighe S, Waites B, Watterson C. (2012) The professional practice of educational psychologists: Developing narrative approaches. <i>Educational and Child Psychology</i>. ;29(2):41.</p> <p>Available from:</p> <p>https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=76480132&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: Ineligible phenomena of interest</p> |
| <p>Hulusi, H., & Oland, L. (2010). Using narrative to make sense of transitions: supporting newly arrived children and young people. <i>Emotional and behavioural difficulties</i>, 15(4), 341-351.</p> <p>Available from:</p> <p>https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eue&AN=55474086&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: Ineligible study design</p> |

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| <p>Irwin, A. M., Oberhelman, N. A., & Davies, S. C. (2021). Study abroad and school psychologists' perceptions of intercultural competence. <i>Contemporary School Psychology, 25</i>(3), 367-376.</p> <p>Available from: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2020-86893-001&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: Ineligible phenomena of interest</p> |
| <p>Kvarme, L. G., Aabø, L. S., & Sæteren, B. (2013). "I feel I mean something to someone": solution-focused brief therapy support groups for bullied schoolchildren. <i>Educational psychology in practice, 29</i>(4), 416-431.</p> <p>Available from: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2013-42377-007&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: The focus of the study is not on Educational Psychologists</p> |
| <p>Markodimitraki, M., Ampartzaki, M., Kypriotaki, M., & Linardakis, M. (2017). Twin brothers with autism and their intra-pair interactions in a pre-school special education class. <i>Early Child Development and Care, 187</i>(12), 1938-1947.</p> <p>Available from: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2017-52366-010&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: The focus of the study is not on Educational Psychologists</p> |

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| <p>Mitchell S, Higgins A. Minority within a minority: Stakeholders' perceptions of deaf education in Wales. 2020;37(1). Available from: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2020-13688-002&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: The focus of the study is not on Educational Psychologists</p> |
| <p>Murray, S., & Leadbetter, J. (2018). Video Enhanced Reflective Practice (VERP): supporting the development of trainee educational psychologists' consultation and peer supervision skills. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i>, 34(4), 397-411. Available from: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2018-33841-001&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: Ineligible phenomena of interest</p> |
| <p>Nkoma, E., & Hay, J. (2018). Educational psychologists' support roles regarding the implementation of inclusive education in Zimbabwe. <i>Psychology in the Schools</i>, 55(7), 850-866. Available from: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2018-25622-001&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: Ineligible phenomena of interest</p> |

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| <p>O'Neill, R. E., Bundock, K., Kladis, K., & Hawken, L. S. (2015). Acceptability of functional behavioral assessment procedures to special educators and school psychologists. <i>Behavioral Disorders, 41</i>(1), 51-66.</p> <p>Available from:</p> <p>https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=114939027&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: Ineligible study design</p> |
| <p>Ruff, R. R. (2011). School Counselor and School Psychologist Perceptions of Accountability Policy: Lessons from Virginia. <i>Qualitative Report, 16</i>(5), 1270-1290.</p> <p>Available from:</p> <p>https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ941703&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: The focus of the study is not on Educational Psychologists</p> |

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|--|---|
| <p>Sewell, A., & Ducksbury, L. (2013). Exploring educational psychologist's perceptions of the use and implications of standardised cognitive assessment and IQ. <i>Educational and Child Psychology, 30</i>(3), 96-106.</p> <p>Available from:</p> <p>https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=94230304&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: The focus of the study is not Educational Psychologists/unable to identify the voice of the EP relative to other participants, such as Trainee Educational Psychologists</p> |
| <p>Swan, D. (2014). Educational psychology in Ireland and its Psychological Society of Ireland division—a history. <i>The Irish Journal of Psychology, 35</i>(1), 25-32.</p> <p>2014;35(1). Available from:</p> <p>https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2014-22713-004&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: Ineligible study design</p> |

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|---|--|
| <p>Thorpe, A. H., Willbourne, J. A., & Burdock, M. J. (2020). Thingymibob Group: Staff Experiences of Implementing a Play-Based Therapy Group in an Adolescent Secure Hospital. <i>Educational & Child Psychology</i>, 37(4), 25-36.</p> <p>Available from: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2020-89293-002&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: The focus of the study is not on Educational Psychologists</p> |
| <p>Vivash, J., Dockrell, J., & Lee, F. (2018). The re-alignment of educational psychologists in supporting primary schools to enhance provision for children with speech language and communication needs. <i>Educational and Child Psychology</i>, 43-59.</p> <p>Available from: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eue&AN=132453025&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: The focus of the study is not Educational Psychologists/unable to identify the voice of the EP relative to other participants</p> |

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|---|---|
| <p>Wade, C. (2016). Therapeutic practice within educational psychology: The discursive construction of therapeutic practice from the perspective of educational psychologists new to the profession. <i>Educational and Child Psychology</i>, 33(4), 8-27.</p> <p>Available from: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2017-05449-002&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: The focus of the study is not Educational Psychologists/unable to identify the voice of the EP relative to other participants (e.g. Trainee EPs)</p> |
| <p>Waite, V., & Woods, K. (1999). Educational psychologists' assessments of autism. <i>Educational Psychology in Practice</i>, 15(3), 167-173. Available from: https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=76480135&site=ehost-live</p> | <p>Reason for exclusion: The focus of the study is not Educational Psychologists/unable to identify the voice of the EP relative to other participants</p> |

Woodley-Hume, T. A., & Woods, K. (2019). Exploring the role of assistant educational psychologists within local authority educational psychology services in England. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 35(2), 197-215.

Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2018-62977-001&site=ehost-live>

Reason for exclusion: The focus of the study is not on Educational Psychologists

Appendix D: Included Studies

Table A2

Included Studies

Atkinson, C., Bond, C., & Goodhall, N. (2017). Children's access to their right to play: Findings from two exploratory studies. In *Educational & Child Psychology* (Vol. 34, Issue 3). Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2018-08632-002&site=ehost-live>

Atkinson, C., & Posada, S. (2019). Leadership supervision for managers of educational psychology services. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 35(1), 34–49. Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2018-51267-001&site=ehost-live>

Brady, J., & Espinosa, W. R. (2017). Problem-Solving Practices and Complexity in School Psychology. *Contemporary School Psychology*, 21(1), 38–48. . Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eue&AN=121469362&site=ehost-live>

Burnham, S. (2013). Realists or pragmatists? “Reliable evidence” and the role of the educational psychologist. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 29(1), 19–35. Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=85723015&site=ehost-live>

Canto, A. I., Chesire, D. J., Buckley, V. A., Andrews, T. W., & Roehrig, A. D. (2014). Barriers to meeting the needs of students with traumatic brain injury. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 30(1), 88–103. . Available from:

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=94419946&site=ehost-live>

Castillo, J. M., Wolgemuth, J. R., Barclay, C., Mattison, A., Tan, S. Y., Sabnis, S., Brundage, A., & Marshall, L. (2016). A qualitative study of facilitators and barriers related to comprehensive and integrated school psychological services. *Psychology in the Schools*, 53(6), 641–658.

Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=115996324&site=ehost-live>

Da Silva, J., & Fritz, E. (2012). The experiences of educational psychologists who utilise ego-state therapy to address dissociation in adolescents. Psychological Society of South Africa. All Rights Reserved. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 42(2), 169–181. Available from:

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=76974504&site=ehost-live>

Davey, N., & Egan, M. (2021). Sustained CPD as an effective approach in the delivery of the incredible years teacher classroom management programme. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 37(2), 169–186 Available from:

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=150040143&site=ehost-live>

Ducharme, D., Roach, A. T., & Wellons, Q. D. (2020). The role of school psychologists in employment-focused transition services. *Journal of Applied School Psychology, 36*(4), 376-400. Available from:

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=146196181&site=ehost-live>

Eddleston, A., & Atkinson, C. (2018). Using professional practice frameworks to evaluate consultation. *Educational Psychology in Practice, 34*(4), 430–449. Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2018-44763-001&site=ehost-live>

Fanshawe, S. (2021) Exploring educational psychologists' views and experiences of coaching: A mixed methods study. *International Coaching Psychology Review, 16* (1) Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=149489564&site=ehost-live>

Flanigan, A. E., Kiewra, K. A., & Luo, L. (2018). Conversations with Four Highly Productive German Educational Psychologists: Frank Fischer, Hans Gruber, Heinz Mandl, and Alexander Renkl. *Educational Psychology Review, 30*(1), 303–330. Available from:

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2016-56989-001&site=ehost-live>

Goforth, A. N., Yosai, E. R., Brown, J. A., & Shindorf, Z. R. (2017). A multi-method inquiry of the practice and context of rural school psychology. *Contemporary school psychology, 21*(1), 58-70. Available from:

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eue&AN=121469360&site=ehost-live>

Greenspan, S. B., Whitcomb, S., Gordon, K. L., Hayden, L., Lauterbach, A., Fefer, S., & Griffith, C. (2021). Incorporating physical activity in mental health intervention service delivery: School psychologists' perspectives. *International Journal of School & Educational Psychology*, 1-18. Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2021-26459-001&site=ehost-live>

Griffin, C. (2018). A day in the life of an Educational Psychologist (*Assessment & Development Matters*, Issue. 10 (1) Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=127532870&site=ehost-live>

Hamre, B., Hedegaard-Sørensen, L., & Langager, S. (2018). Between psychopathology and inclusion: the challenging collaboration between educational psychologists and child psychiatrists. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 22(6), 655-670. Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=129491684&site=ehost-live>

Hoyne, N., & Cunningham, Y. (2019). Enablers and barriers to Educational Psychologists' use of therapeutic interventions in an Irish context. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 35(1), 1-16. Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=134609676&site=ehost-live>

Lowther, C. (2013). Rocket science: an exploration of what information is of meaning to educational psychologists when evaluating their work.

Educational Psychology in Practice, 29(3), 243-257. Available from:

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=91735243&site=ehost-live>

Maki, E. D., Victoria, S. A., Jesseca, J., Marlana, M., Broadhead, S., Brodsky, L., Couse, A., & Melissa, P. (2019, May). School Psychologists'

Perceptions of Systems Change: A Case Study. *School Psychology Forum, Research in Practice (Vol. 13, No. 1)* (pp. 41-52). National

Association of School Psychologists. Available from:

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eue&AN=136695869&site=ehost-live>

Marks, C. (2012). Educational psychologists' constructions of sexuality and the implications for practice. *Educational Psychology in Practice*,

28(1), 71-90. Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psych&AN=2012-05948-005&site=ehost-live>

Marrs, H., & Little, S. (2014). Perceptions of School Psychologists Regarding Barriers to Response to Intervention (RTI) Implementation.

Contemporary School Psychology, 18(1), 24-34. Available from:

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eue&AN=94397232&site=ehost-live>

McGuiggan, C. (2021). Stepping over the boundary: an exploration of educational psychologists' work with families. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 37(1), 1–18. Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=148804885&site=ehost-live>

Moolla, N., & Lazarus, S. (2014). School psychologists' views on challenges in facilitating school development through intersectoral collaboration. *South African Journal of Education (Vol. 34, Issue 4)*. Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eue&AN=99851067&site=ehost-live>

Nugent, M., Jones, V., McElroy, D., Peelo, M., Thornton, T., & Tierney, T. (2014). Consulting with groups of teachers. Evaluation of a pilot project in Ireland. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 30(3), 255–271. Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=97508464&site=ehost-live>

O'Farrell, P., & Kinsella, W. (2018). Research exploring parents', teachers', and educational psychologists' perceptions of consultation in a changing Irish context. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 34(3), 315–328. Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psych&AN=2018-19757-001&site=ehost-live>

Parker, J. S., & Hanson, P. (2021). School stakeholders do not “just leave their religious beliefs at home”: An exploratory study of school psychologists’ professional experiences. *International Journal of School and Educational Psychology*, 9(1), 88–100. Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eue&AN=149173092&site=ehost-live>

Pillay, J. (2014). The role of educational psychologists in promoting ethical research conducted with children: an exploratory study. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 24(6), 520–525. Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=101078350&site=ehost-live>

Prinz, A., Zeeb, H., Flanigan, A. E., Renkl, A., & Kiewra, K. A. (2021). Conversations with Five Highly Successful Female Educational Psychologists: Patricia Alexander, Carol Dweck, Jacquelynne Eccles, Mareike Kunter, and Tamara van Gog. In *Educational Psychology Review* (Vol. 33, Issue 2, pp. 763–795). Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=150234711&site=ehost-live>

Rawlings, E., & Cowell, N. (2015). Educational psychologists' experience of taking part in group supervision: A phenomenological study. *Educational and Child Psychology*, 32(3), 51–64. Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2015-45662-006&site=ehost-live>

Robinson, L., Bond, C., & Oldfield, J. (2018). A UK and Ireland survey of educational psychologists' intervention practices for students with autism spectrum disorder. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 34(1), 58–72. Available from:

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=127116238&site=ehost-live>

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Sedgwick, A., & Stothard, J. (2019). An exploration of educational psychologists' perceptions, knowledge and practices regarding speech, language and communication needs. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 35(3), 307–325. Available from:

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=137679744&site=ehost-live>

Smillie, I., & Newton, M. (2020). Educational psychologists' practice: obtaining and representing young people's views. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 328–344. Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=145497362&site=ehost-live>

Sowden, B., Fleming, J., Savage, T. A., & Woitaszewski, S. A. (2016). Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender-Identified School Psychologists: A Qualitative Study of Their Professional Experiences. *Contemporary School Psychology*, 20(1), 1–9. Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eue&AN=112756691&site=ehost-live>

Thomas, G., Atkinson, C., & Allen, C. (2019). The motivational interviewing practice of UK Educational Psychologists. *Educational and Child Psychology*, 36(3), 61-72.

Winter, S., & Bunn, H. (2019). Work to be done? A survey of educational psychologists' contribution to special schools for profound and multiple learning difficulties. *British Journal of Special Education*, 46(1), 53–75. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8578.12252>.

Wu, I., & Zhang, K. C. (2011). School psychology services in Hong Kong and implication for special education and professional development. *The Journal of International Association of Special Education*, 12(1), 64-68. Available from: <http://www.iase.org/?journal,7>

Yates, M. L., & Hulusi, H. M. (2018). Missed Opportunities: What can be learnt from EPs' experiences at SEN tribunals? *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 34(3), 300–314. Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2018-21672-001&site=ehost-live>

Zafeiriou, M. E., & Gulliford, A. (2020). A grounded theory of educational psychologists' mental health casework in schools: connection, direction, and reconstruction through consultation. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 36(4), 422–442. Available from: <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=147383518&site=ehost-live>

Appendix E: Screenshot of Sequential Data Synthesis Process and Sample Categories to organise data

The screenshot displays the JBI SUMARI web application interface. At the top left is the JBI SUMARI logo. A navigation bar contains tabs for Overview, Protocol, Studies, Appraisal, Extraction, Synthesis (with a dropdown arrow), and Review. Below this, a sub-navigation bar includes buttons for Studies (highlighted), Categories, Synthesized Findings, and Meta-Aggregative Flowchart. The main heading is 'Studies', with '+ Create Study' and 'Export DOCX' buttons to its right. A search bar labeled 'Filter studies...' is positioned below the heading. A list of studies is shown, each with a name and two action buttons: 'Open' (with a dropdown arrow) and 'Delete' (in a red box).

| Study Name | Open | Delete |
|---------------|------|--------|
| Atkinson 2017 | Open | Delete |
| Atkinson 2019 | Open | Delete |
| Brady 2017 | Open | Delete |
| Burnham 2013 | Open | Delete |
| Canto 2014 | Open | Delete |

Findings

Assign Selection...

Filter findings...

Unassigned

barriers and challenges in implement RTI - Staff resistance: sub themes included lack of understanding of RTI and confusion about the roles and responsibilities of stakeholder in RTI

barriers and challenges in implement RTI - Staff resistance: sub themes included lack of understanding of RTI and confusion about the roles and responsibilities of stakeholder in RTI

Credible

barriers and challenges in implement RTI - Leadership: core ideas

barriers and challenges in implement RTI -Leadership: core ideas within this theme included need for leadership and need for top down approach

Credible

Categories

Create Category

Filter categories...

Barriers in the promoting development and education

Delete

Policy/ priority issues. sub themes include: District policies and procedures ;School policies and procedures; and State policies and procedures.

In relation School Psychologists experiences related to school to employment transition processes, a category identified was ecological systems: this included barriers to participation for SPs; knowledge of county and state transition systems; and steps for improving transition services and increasing participation of SPs.

In relation to School Psychologists collaborating with

Studies

Categories

Synthesized Findings

Meta-Aggregative Flowchart

Categories

Assign Selection...

Filter categories...

Unassigned

Community

Rules and Beliefs

Training and Development

Transferable skills

Outcomes

Synthesized Findings

+ Create

Filter synthesized findings...

There are enablers to research and enquiry such as time management strategies, access to funding and technology, and administrative supports. There are ethical underpinnings, such as informed consent, transparency and confidentiality, permeating practice regardless of the differing modes of enquiry.

Delete

Perspectives on different methods of research and enquiry

X

Enablers of research and enquiry

X

Ethics in research and enquiry

X

The presenting concerns in consultation vary from learning difficulties, to social emotional and behavioural difficulties, as

Delete



Ambivalence about science: though acknowledging the benefits of their practice being grounded in models of scientific inquiry such as hypothesis testing and interactions between cause and effect, participants rejected the notion that the scientific perspective offered a more accurate useful or reliable view of human cognition and behaviour. participants mentioned how scientific enquiry is as susceptible to manipulation and misinterpretation as other forms of enquiry.
(C)

The over-riding importance of 'making a difference'. participants saw their primary role as "mediators of useful outcomes, making a difference to peoples lives" rather than developers of knowledge that is generalisable.

Training and Development

✕ Delete

Training and professional development. Sub themes include :Graduate training received;School psychologist learning community ;Self-study; and District provided professional development ✕

Lack of time/ heavy caseload. Sub themes include: ✕
Lack of time in school psychologist's schedule Heavy caseload of SPED evaluations; Lack of time in teacher and student schedules; High ratio and high number of schools; and SPED administrative duties and timeline. •policy/priority/ role issues. sub themes include: District policies, procedures, and initiatives not aligned; Others' defining school psychologists' role narrowly; and Role assigned to other personnel. •Lack of stakeholder involvement. sub themes include: Staff knowledge, skills, beliefs, and attitudes not aligned Lack of teacher buy-in and support; Lack of administrator buy-in and support; and Lack of inclusion in decision-making. •Obstacles to problem

Role of the EP in promoting diversity and cultural advocacy

✕ Delete

potential role of EP; in advising at the systemic level, advising on play for children with SEN ✕

there are multiple roles of the school Psychologist in this process. roles identified included mediator, parent advocate, facilitator, expert, team leader, team member, legal authority, student advocate and administrator. ✕

Findings show multiple examples of how competencies were indicated in the participants' detailing of their interactions with spiritual/ religious students. Most of the examples included competencies within the Attitudes and Beliefs domain; however, some examples represented competencies within the Knowledge and Skills domains of Vieten et al. (2016) competency framework. . Some of the participants experiences (e.g., consulting with religious teachers) were less connected to the established competencies and more connected to Ingraham's Multi Cultural School Consultation (MSC) framework ✕

Role in promoting development and education

✕ Delete

potential role of EP; in advising at the systemic level, advising on play for children with SEN ✕

In relation to EPs' practice in gathering and representing children and young people's (CYP's) views a theme identified was that gaining CYP's views empowers them: this includes the sub-themes of the EP as an advocate; getting the voice of the CYP is helpful for the CYP; and improved outcomes for the CYP ✕

exploring EPs' intervention practices in relation to pupils with Autism other frequently mentioned evidence-based interventions (EBIs) by participants were Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support (SCERTS; Prizant, Wetherby, Rubin, Laurent, & Rydell, 2005), Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication related handicapped Children (TEACCH; Mesibov, Shea, & Schopler, 2005), the National Autistic Society's EarlyBird and EarlyBird Plus (Shields, 2001), and Attention Autism (Davies, 2013). ✕

exploring EPs' intervention practices in relation to pupils with Autism the individual needs of the child and the school context were cited most frequently as the factors that influenced their decisions about which intervention to implement • exploring EPs' intervention practices in relation to pupils with Autism the most important factors to participants' approach to intervention planning were collaboration; personalisation; developing school capacity, and assessment informed intervention ✕

In answer to the specific research question: What processes do EPs employ to support SLCN? the following theme was identified - •Interventions: this included interventions that could be done at home by the parents, and school-based interventions In answer to the specific research question: How do EPs work jointly with other professionals, in particular SaLTs, in the area of SLCN? the following themes were identified ✕

Purpose and types of intervention work

✕ Delete

The over-riding importance of 'making a difference'. participants saw their primary role as "mediators of useful outcomes, making a difference to peoples lives" rather than developers of knowledge that is generalisable. ✕

services related to testing were most common. services provided by most participants included direct assessment and intervention; student focused consultation, facilitating multi tiered system of supports and problem solving. some participants also mentioned professional development and supervision, and family and community engagement activities as part of the services they provide. ✕

Results suggest that when school and district leaders prioritise using physical activity to promote mental health, this can then foster the development of certain factors. these include (a) components or structures to foster such initiatives, which consists of the sub themes systemic and concrete factors. (b) data collection and data-based decision-making efforts which includes the sub themes of progress monitoring, measuring outcomes and fidelity, and, in turn (c) effective and targeted interventions, which includes the sub themes of treatment targets, bi directional student - teacher benefits, and alternatives. ✕

Processes in promoting development and education

✕ Delete

In relation to exploring how successful female educational psychologists conduct their work - Influencing people and places: these included mentors and colleagues; role models; students; early influences and work environments. ✕

In relation to exploring how successful female educational psychologists conduct their work - Time management strategies: these included hard work; maximising research time, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance ✕

In relation to EPs' practice in gathering and representing children and young people's (CYP's) views a theme identified was that gaining CYP's views empowers them: this includes the sub-themes of the EP as an advocate; getting the voice of the CYP is helpful for the CYP; and improved outcomes for the CYP ✕

In relation to experiences of EPs in Hong Kong, a theme identified was that Service Models guide Educational Psychologists' roles ✕

Legislative work within professional values and skills

✕ Delete

The overarching theme identified was that there was a degree of dissonance in relation to participants' perceptions of their professional role as co-constructors of solutions in tribunal or SENDIST hearings ✕

In relation to EPs experiences at witnesses at SENDIST hearings, a theme identified was Tribunal processes: which included Solicitor involvement; instructional clarity, mediation, sharing of information and decision making ✕

In relation to EPs experiences at witnesses at SENDIST hearings, a theme identified was the role of the EP in tribunal or SENDIST hearings: This included role conflict and this type of work being perceived as distinct from their core roles; Lack of mediator role from advisory services; the importance of Supervision and support; and loss of locus of control in relation to tribunal cases. ✕

Facilitators to intervention

✕ Delete

access to resources: this included the sub themes of Professional association materials and resources; District and community personnel supports; Sufficient campus infrastructure (e.g. program availability); Access to technology (e.g., computers, software); Access to other resources (e.g., textbooks, readings); Availability of assessment and intervention materials; Access to research; and Funding ✕

Facilitators perceived by participants as impacting on Therapeutic practice included: • service support (supervision, peer support, CPD, Flexibility of EP role, Material resources ,NEPs strategy and MGYM support) • intervention outcomes •media interest •school factors (school support and awareness, teacher involvement, large schools, EP integration into school) ✕

exploring EPs' intervention practices in relation to pupils with Autism resource factors that impact intervention planning included financial resources, time allocation limitations;access to trained practitioners and staff perceptions of interventions ✕

Experiences of therapies and therapeutic perspectives used by EPs

✕ Delete

Therapeutic approaches most commonly used by participants were Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT). ✕

In relation to exploring the experiences of EPs use of ego-state therapy, the use of other therapies was used to augment ego-state therapy ✕

In relation to exploring the experiences of EPs use of ego-state therapy, the "yin and yang" of ego-states was considered important, that is, all participants concurred that this therapy is beneficial to adolescents with dissociation through the use of dialoguing and providing voice, thus promoting intergration. ✕

Experiences of different assessment methods

✕ Delete

services related to testing were most common. ✕
services provided by most participants included direct assessment and intervention; student focused consultation, facilitating multi tiered system of supports and problem solving. some participants also mentioned professional development and supervision, and family and community engagement activities as part of the services they provide.

Results suggest that when school and district leaders ✕
prioritise using physical activity to promote mental health, this can then foster the development of certain factors. these include (a) components or structures to foster such initiatives, which consists of the sub themes systemic and concrete factors. (b) data collection and data-based decision-making efforts which includes the sub themes of progress monitoring, measuring outcomes and fidelity, and, in turn (c) effective and targeted interventions, which includes the sub themes of treatment targets, bi directional student - teacher benefits, and alternatives.

Experience of presenting concerns in consultation

✕ Delete

. Eighty per cent of consultations were about individual pupils, while 20% were about groups of children or general queries. The mean age of children who were discussed was 8.3 years, with 82% of cases being boys and only 18% being girls.

✕

most of the cases brought to group consultation were complex, with referrals to pertaining emotional and behavioural difficulties, learning, home life and social skills

✕

Over 74% of cases related to behavioural and emotional difficulties.

✕

services related to testing were most common. services provided by most participants included direct assessment and intervention; student focused consultation, facilitating multi tiered system of supports and problem solving. some participants also mentioned professional development and supervision, and family and community engagement activities as part of the services they provide.

✕

Experience of presenting concerns in assessment

✕ Delete

Over 74% of cases related to behavioural and emotional difficulties.

✕

EPs spend about 25% of their caseload time on students with autism, either through assessment, intervention or both

✕

In relation to exploring experiences of how School Psychologists meet the needs of students with a traumatic brain injury, a barrier identified was lack of perceived importance (e.g. not a recognised area of need, lack of school/teacher “buy-in”)

✕

In relation to EPs work with families and how they see their role at the family system level, a theme identified was Preschool family work: the work of the EP at the preschool level was mainly assessment based, to identify SEND provision. intervention work with pre school families was not seen as part of their role.

✕

Experience of barriers and limitations to consultation

✕ Delete

a way participants measured consultation effectiveness included using factors such as student change, teacher acceptance, parent opinions, and successful conflict management. these factors were not always assessed formally. some barriers to effective consultation included legal issues, parent demands, concerns of the teacher and systemic constraints. ✕

Main findings are that there is an interest in coaching amongst the participant EPs. However there is a lack of understanding as to what exactly it constitutes. Coaching and consultation are view as being quite similar and related in many respects and can be used in conjunction with each other. EPs's level of professional confidence in engaging in its use could be affect if and how they use coaching. participants felt there is a place for coaching in ED psych but that it would involve overcoming several barriers such as client dependence ,time constraints, and school willingness ✕

Organisational challenges: can be an impediment to collaboration, both at the micro and macro levels. these challenges include poor structures and procedures and management as well as lack of resources. ✕

Ethics in research and enquiry

✕ Delete

In relation to exploring the role that practising Educational Psychologists in African are perceived to have in the promotion of ethical research with children -Harms. subthemes include: imposing of educational psychologists own values on participants; the objectivity of the educational psychologist; the psychologist being perceived as a healer, mismatch of western and African traditions and cultures; ineffective sustainability of support interventions; more harm to vulnerable children. ✕

In relation to exploring the role that practising Educational Psychologists in African are perceived to have in the promotion of ethical research with children -Benefits. subthemes include knowledge management; improvement of the lives of children; empowerment and capacity building of children, families and communities; increased access to community services for children, and challenge myths in African communities. ✕

EP role in consultation

✕ Delete

potential role of EP; in advising at the systemic level, advising on play for children with SEN ✕

there are multiple roles of the school Psychologist in this process. roles identified included mediator, parent advocate, facilitator, expert, team leader, team member, legal authority, student advocate and administrator. ✕

services related to testing were most common. services provided by most participants included direct assessment and intervention; student focused consultation, facilitating multi tiered system of supports and problem solving. some participants also mentioned professional development and supervision, and family and community engagement activities as part of the services they provide. ✕

Involvement with Key stakeholders. Sub themes include: Administrative buy-in and support; Availability of and collaboration with support staff ;Relationship building and networking; Teacher buy-in and support; District staff buy-in and support; Parent buy-in and support; Building educators' capacity to implement practices; and Positive climate among stakeholders. ✕

Enablers to effective service delivery and organisational change

✕ Delete

access to resources: this included the sub themes of Professional association materials and resources; District and community personnel supports; Sufficient campus infrastructure (e.g. program availability); Access to technology (e.g., computers, software); Access to other resources (e.g., textbooks, readings); Availability of assessment and intervention materials; Access to research; and Funding ✕

Training and development : training in intersectoral collaboration and school development was highlighted, as was professional training to support the shift to more systemic and consultative methods. ✕

In relation to experiences of EPs in Hong Kong, a theme identified was the encouragement of a systemic mindset and realistic goals: this includes School Psychologists adopting a preventative mindset and a flexible attitude in relation to the selection of service options ✕

Enablers of research and enquiry

✕ Delete

access to resources: this included the sub themes of Professional association materials and resources; District and community personnel supports; Sufficient campus infrastructure (e.g. program availability); Access to technology (e.g., computers, software); Access to other resources (e.g., textbooks, readings); Availability of assessment and intervention materials; Access to research; and Funding ✕

interviews with each scholar revealed several related factors (i.e., long and focused research career, trademark characteristic, scholarly influencers, effective time- management practices, and research-management strategies) between this group of productive German scholars and their productive American counterparts ✕

the study also indicated several differences (e.g., educational training, funding opportunities, sabbaticals, administrative responsibilities, and research traditions) between the American and German research environments that can impact on productivity. ✕

In relation to exploring how successful female educational psychologists conduct their work - Research management strategies: these included being work task-oriented; collaboration; and applying writing strategies. ✕

In relation to exploring how EPs in the UK and Ireland assess children and young people with Autism, the mode of assessment participants were 'most unfamiliar' with were standardised developmental inventories(47%); adaptive behaviour scales (28%); executive functioning assessment (25%); behavioural checklists/scales (24%) and emotional regulation scales (22%). The modes of assessment used the most included consultation with parents and teachers; observations at school, gaining the child's view, and review of records ✕

In relation to exploring how EPs in the UK and Ireland assess children and young people with Autism, the factors that most influenced assessment choices were the individual child's needs; the evidence base for the tool; school factors; and the child and parent views. ✕

In relation to exploring how EPs in the UK and Ireland assess children and young people with Autism, the factors that influenced decision making on the choice of assessment the most for participants were: individualised assessment (and matching to the needs of the child; the purpose or referral questions/concern; and contextual factors ✕

In answer to the specific research question: What processes do EPs employ to support SLCN? the following theme was identified - •Assessment: this included observations, screening and checklists, and specific tests e.g. cognitive assessment ✕

Decision making processes, tools and frameworks for assessment

✕ Delete

access to resources: this included the sub themes of Professional association materials and resources; District and community personnel supports; Sufficient campus infrastructure (e.g. program availability); Access to technology (e.g., computers, software); Access to other resources (e.g., textbooks, readings); Availability of assessment and intervention materials; Access to research; and Funding ✕

Appreciative Inquiry and COMOIRA were both the most familiar and the most preferred frameworks to participants of the 5 discussed for in terms of evaluating consultation. although COMOIRA generally received higher ratings than AI, it was notable that EPs appeared to view it as more problematic in terms of restricting working practices and being too simplistic to capture the complexity of problems presented in practice. it was however praised for its positive psychology and solution focused elements. COMOIRA was viewed as helpful in facilitating the change process, reframing perspectives, a useful for reflective practice, and helped to ensure accountability in terms of demonstrating changes brought about by the EP's involvement. Participants also likes COMOIRAS transparency and clear link to psychological principles. ✕

Community

✕ Delete

access to resources: this included the sub themes of Professional association materials and resources; District and community personnel supports; Sufficient campus infrastructure (e.g. program availability); Access to technology (e.g., computers, software); Access to other resources (e.g., textbooks, readings); Availability of assessment and intervention materials; Access to research; and Funding ✕

the effectiveness of sustained support. EPS suggested establishing a community of practice to further facilitate the support offered to teachers, that was both formal and informal. ✕

In relation to exploring the role that practising Educational Psychologists in African are perceived to have in the promotion of ethical research with children -Benefits. subthemes include knowledge management; improvement of the lives of children; empowerment and capacity building of children, families and communities; increased access to community services for children, and challenge myths in African communities. ✕

Collaborative working with other professionals and barriers in the division of labour

✕ Delete

team based decision making permeated all elements of the participants work in problem solving. this involved working with other professional such as teachers, principals etc. ✕

Involvement with Key stakeholders. Sub themes include: Administrative buy-in and support; Availability of and collaboration with support staff ;Relationship building and networking; Teacher buy-in and support; District staff buy-in and support; Parent buy-in and support; Building educators' capacity to implement practices; and Positive climate among stakeholders. ✕

three main themes were identified from the data •A troubleshooting culture and a psychiatric dominance in the collaboration •Psychologists as mediators of diagnostic knowledge in educational contexts •The stigmatising and prescriptive functions of diagnosis ✕

In relation to exploring how EPs in the UK and Ireland assess children and young people with Autism, participants noted working with teachers and SENCOs the most out of any other professionals ✕

Collaboration in service delivery and organisational change

✕ Delete

Involvement with Key stakeholders. Sub themes include: Administrative buy-in and support; Availability of and collaboration with support staff ;Relationship building and networking; Teacher buy-in and support; District staff buy-in and support; Parent buy-in and support; Building educators' capacity to implement practices; and Positive climate among stakeholders. ✕

Data analysis indicated that the German scholars' shared experiences during the early stages of their careers influenced their career paths and productivity. ✕

three main themes were identified from the data •A troubleshooting culture and a psychiatric dominance in the collaboration •Psychologists as mediators of diagnostic knowledge in educational contexts •The stigmatising and prescriptive functions of diagnosis ✕

School Psychologists Offered Recommendations to Implement Behavioral Systems Change. sub themes include planned and realistic systems, and collaboration and communication through all levels of the school being crucial to systems success. ✕

C

Challenges and barriers to intervention

✕ Delete

School Psychologists' Expressed Professional Needs to Implement Behavioral Health Systems Change. sub-themes included School psychologists feeling they required more time and/or a reduced caseload to make CBHM systems change happen, and requiring more training to support tiered intervention" ✕

In relation to exploring the role that practising Educational Psychologists in African are perceived to have in the promotion of ethical research with children -Harms. subthemes include: imposing of educational psychologists own values on participants; the objectivity of the educational psychologist; the psychologist being perceived as a healer, mismatch of western and African traditions and cultures; ineffective sustainability of support interventions; more harm to vulnerable children. ✕

exploring EPs' intervention practices in relation to pupils with Autism resource factors that impact intervention planning included financial resources, time allocation limitations;access to trained practitioners and staff perceptions of interventions ✕

Challenges and barriers to assessment

✕ Delete

barriers and challenges in implement RTI -School Psychologist resistance: sub themes include tradition and RTI being a 'fad', fear of change, viewing the psychologist as a tester/assessor, and loss of status ✕

diverse discourse and worldviews: the challenge of these, and why it is important to to clarify terminology and concepts when collaborating with others. people have different views and assumption and this impacts on school development ✕

In relation to exploring EPs perception in relation to the impact of ethnic minority cultural factors (EMCF) on autistic spectrum condition (ASC) assessment - relationship between the Educational psychologist and the school: the school can both facilitate and constrain the assessment. ✕

Barriers to promoting diversity and cultural advocacy

✕ Delete

Personal and interpersonal dynamics: feeling marginalised and power differences/lack of power were two sub themes that emerged from this for participants. ✕

. Some of the participants experiences (e.g., consulting with religious teachers) were less connected to the established competencies and more connected to Ingraham's Multi Cultural School Consultation (MSC) framework Additionally, culturally insensitive school-based practices indicated that school psychologists may encounter unique issues as school-based consultants that warrant special consideration. ✕

In relation to exploring EPs perception in relation to the impact of ethnic minority cultural factors (EMCF) on autistic spectrum condition (ASC) assessment - relationship between the Educational psychologist and the school: the school can both facilitate and constrain the assessment. ✕

Barriers to effective service delivery and organisational change

✕ Delete

restricted and reduced role of EP; due to policy and governmental factors ✕

Organisational challenges: can be an impediment to collaboration, both at the micro and macro levels. these challenges include poor structures and procedures and management as well as lack of resources. ✕

In relation to exploring EPs perceptions, knowledge and work practises in relation to speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN) - influential factors: this included resources such as lack of time and funding; models of practice; and professional identity In answer to the specific research question: What processes do EPs employ to support SLCN? the following themes were identified ✕

Barriers in the promoting development and education

✕ Delete

Policy/ priority issues. sub themes include: District policies and procedures ;School policies and procedures; and State policies and procedures. ✕

In relation School Psychologists experiences related to school to employment transition processes, a category identified was ecological systems: this included barriers to participation for SPs; knowledge of county and state transition systems; and steps for improving transition services and increasing participation of SPs. ✕

In relation to School Psychologists collaborating with other sectors towards school development, a challenge identified was diverse discourses and differing worldviews: this included language and jargon used varying between sectors ✕

Appendix F: Characteristics of Included International Studies (Not Including Studies Based in Ireland)

Table A3

Characteristics of Included Studies - Interpretive and Critical Research Form

| Study | Methods for data collection and analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
|--|---|----------------|--|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Atkinson C, Bond C, Goodhall N, Woods F. 2017. | An exploratory qualitative survey using a focus group. Data were analysed using Braun and Clarkes 'step approach to thematic analysis. | England | Examining the role EPS can play in facilitating play | EPs from one local authority | Six qualified female EPs working within one local authority | Six main themes emerged: •recognition of the instrumental use of play; • valued for social, developmental, learning, and intrinsic purposes; • potential role of EP; in advising at the systemic level, advising on play for children with SEN • restricted and reduced role of EP; due to policy and governmental factors • barriers to typical play for children with SEND; • the wider environment. |

| Study | Methods for data collection and analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
|-----------------------------|---|---------|---|----------------------------|--|--|
| Atkinson C, Posada S. 2019. | A qualitative design using focus groups. Data were analysed using Braun and Clarkes ' step method of thematic analysis. | England | Understanding principal EP's experiences of supervision and what factors enable or inhibit leadership supervision | EPs from local authorities | Ten participants. The majority (seven) of participants were female, with nine of the group identifying as White British and one as White European. Five participants were pEPs; two were Acting pEPs, two Deputy/ Assistant PEPs and one Senior EP. Eight of the ten had been in their current post for one to five years, with the other two participants in post for less than a year and five to 10 years, respectively. Regarding the services represented, six were rural, three mixed and one urban, with two traded, seven partially traded and one non-traded. | The analysis yielded six themes: •access and entitlement: e.g., to supervision •affective factors: e.g., openness and honesty, meeting supervisory needs, and personal support. •leadership approach to supervision with the service context: adhering to professional standards, the context of leadership role, modelling good practice •political context for supervision: e.g., qualifications, socio legislative factors, service development •the purpose and focus of leadership supervision. e.g., Having a psychological focus, problem-solving, providing a reflective space, and support for HR issues • whom supervision is received from: e.g., buying in supervision, informal supervision |

| Study | Methods for data collection and analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
|----------------------------|---|----------------|---|---|---|--|
| Brady J, Espinosa W. 2017. | Three individual interviews with each participant using a phenomenological interview process as proposed by Seidman (2013). Data were analysed for themes using the Code to Theory Model (Saldana, 2009). | The U.S.A. | Examined the process used by School Psychologists to solve problems in their practice within schools. | School psychology setting in the U.S.A. | Five psychologists. Three psychologists worked in elementary schools, one at a secondary continuation high school and the fifth at a comprehensive high school. The school district was in the southwest USA in a predominantly middle-class community. | Five themes emerged. •the context of problem-solving is complex and includes factors such as parental requests, teacher influences, the school and district culture, team members' skills and students' needs. These factors interact with each other in a nonlinear way. •the problem-solving process was described in terms of the decision made, contextual factors, barriers, and facilitators. Though not explicitly mentioned, the linear, sequential problem-solving process of Bergan and Kratochwill (1990) was inferred to influence the process. •there are multiple roles of the school Psychologist in this process. Roles identified included mediator, parent advocate, facilitator, expert, team leader, team member, legal authority, student advocate and administrator. •team-based decision-making permeated all elements of the participants' work in problem-solving. This involved working with other professionals such as teachers, principals etc. •a way participants measured consultation effectiveness included using factors such as student change, teacher acceptance, parent opinions, and successful conflict management. These factors were not always assessed formally. Some barriers to effective consultation included legal issues, parent demands, teacher concerns, and systemic constraints. |

| Study | Methods for data collection and analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
|------------------|---|----------------|---|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Burnham S. 2013. | Individual interviews using a biographical research paradigm. Thematic analysis using Braun and Clarke's six-phase model was used to analyse the data through an inductive process. | England | Examine the evidence bases that underpin the work of the EP and the link between their views about evidence and their view about the role of the EP | EPs working in local authorities | 7 EPs. One male and six females are from three different local authorities in England. | Three themes were formulated based on the data, which include: •"The blurred boundary between the personal and the professional", i.e. That being a psychologist is an expression of personal attributes •"ambivalence about science": though acknowledging the benefits of their practice being grounded in models of scientific inquiry such as hypothesis testing and interactions between cause and effect, participants rejected the notion that the scientific perspective offered a more accurate useful or reliable view of human cognition and behaviour. Participants mentioned that scientific enquiry is susceptible to manipulation and misinterpretation as other forms of enquiry. •"the overriding importance of 'making a difference'". Participants saw their primary role as "mediators of useful outcomes, making a difference to people's lives" rather than developers of knowledge that is generalisable. |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|------------|---|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Castillo JM, Wolgemuth JR, Barclay C, Mattison A, Tan SY, Sabnis S, et al. 2016. | Individual, semi-structured interviews were conducted. Thematic analysis using a deductive approach based on a-priori coding was employed to analyse the data. Member checking was also conducted to enhance the rigour and credibility of the findings. | The U.S.A. | The facilitators and barriers to comprehensive and integrated school psychological services using the National Association of School Psychologists Model for Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services as the guiding framework. | School-based practitioners. | Thirteen qualified practitioner School Psychologists from across the U.S.A. | Services related to testing were most common. Services provided by most participants included direct assessment and intervention, student-focused consultation, and facilitating a multi-tiered system of support and problem-solving. Some participants also mentioned professional development, supervision and family and community engagement activities as part of their services. Six themes were formulated from the data that described facilitators to school psychological services: •access to resources: this included the sub-themes of Professional association materials and resources; District and community personnel supports; Sufficient campus infrastructure (e.g. Program availability); Access to technology (e.g., computers, software); Access to other resources (e.g., textbooks, readings); Availability of assessment and intervention materials; Access to research; and Funding •Training and professional development. Sub-themes include: Graduate training received; School psychologist learning community; Self-study; and District provided professional development •Involvement with Key stakeholders. Sub-themes include administrative buy-in and support; availability and collaboration with support staff; Relationship building and networking; Teacher buy-in and support; District staff buy-in and support; Parent buy-in and support; Building educators' capacity to implement practices; and Positive climate among stakeholders. •Personal variables. Sub-themes include: Possess the knowledge and skills necessary; Personal preference for engaging in the practices; Positive attitudes and beliefs about the practices; Level of experience in school psychology and related fields; Personal use of problem-solving to reduce barriers; and Personal |
|--|--|------------|---|-----------------------------|---|---|

| Study | Methods for data collection and analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
|-------|--|---------|-----------------------|---------------------------|---|---|
| | | | | | | <p>work habits (i.e., adaptability, record keeping). •Policy/ priority issues. Sub-themes include District policies and procedures, School policies and procedures, and State policies and procedures. •Sufficient time/small caseload. Sub-themes include Sufficient time to deliver services. The barriers to comprehensive School psychological services as perceived by school psychologists included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Lack of time/ heavy caseload. Sub-themes include Lack of time in the school psychologist’s schedule, Heavy caseload of SPED evaluations, Lack of time in teacher and student schedules, High ratio and a high number of schools, and SPED administrative duties and timeline. •policy/priority/ role issues. Sub-themes include District policies, procedures, and initiatives not aligned; Others narrowly defining school psychologists’ role and role assigned to other personnel. •Lack of stakeholder involvement. Sub-themes include Staff knowledge, skills, beliefs, and attitudes not aligned, Lack of teacher buy-in and support; Lack of administrator buy-in and support; and Lack of inclusion in decision-making. •Obstacles to problem-solving implementation. Sub-themes include a Lack of problem-solving components being implemented and Limited student and family access. •Lack of access to resources. Sub-themes include Lack of funding and human resources and Lack of access to assessment and intervention materials. •insufficient training and professional development. Sub-themes include Lack of knowledge and skills and Lack of engagement in professional development. |

| Study | Methods for data collection and analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
|--------------------------------|--|----------------|--|--|---|--|
| Eddleston A, Atkinson C. 2018. | Action research using the and Development in Organisations (RADIO) model (Timmins et al., 2013) was conducted. The focus was used to select the frameworks used. Participants then evaluated the effectiveness of the chosen framework using two focus groups. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics for the questionnaires, and Thematic Analysis using Braun and Clarkes 6 phase guide was used to analyse data from focus groups. | England/ Wales | Evaluating consultation via practice frameworks. | Educational Psychological Services (EPs) | 12 Educational Psychologists working in two separate Educational Psychology services. | Appreciative Inquiry and COMOIRA were the most familiar and preferred frameworks to participants of the five discussed in evaluating consultation. Although COMOIRA generally received higher ratings than AI, it was notable that EPs viewed it as more restricting working practices and too simplistic to capture the complexity of problems presented in practice. It was, however, praised for its positive psychology and solution-focused elements. COMOIRA was viewed as helpful in facilitating the change process, reframing perspectives, a useful reflective practice, and ensuring accountability in demonstrating change about by the EP's involvement. Participants also liked COMOIRA's transparency and clear link to psychological principles. |

| Study | Methods for data collection and analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
|-------------------|--|----------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Fanshawe S. 2021. | Mixed methods using online questionnaires and semi-structured individual interviews. Data from questionnaires were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Data from interviews were analysed using content and Thematic analysis using Clarkes 6 stage process. | England | Exploring the experiences of EPs who use coaching in practice. | Educational Psychologists in England | 10 EPs were randomly selected from the 24 who expressed interest in participating. All EPS were members of the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP). | The main findings are that there is an interest in coaching amongst EPs. However, there is a lack of understanding of what it constitutes. They are viewed as being quite similar and related in many respects and can be used in conjunction with each other. EPs' level of professional confidence in engaging in its use could affect if and how they use coaching. Participants felt there is a place for coaching in ED psych, but it would involve overcoming several barriers such as client dependence, time constraints, and school willingness. Key themes identified include the use of coaching: Which can be done differently and used as part of a wider toolkit. Reminded participants of consultation. Professional Autonomy: Coaching can be an optional approach to practice. IGROW model of coaching is transferable to consultation. Outcomes of coaching: Enables change and can be facilitative and positive. The coaching relationship: a central factor for good facilitation of coaching. A holistic and Future-focused approach: |

| Study | Methods for data collection and analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------|--|--|--|---|
| Flanigan AE, Kiewra KA, Luo L. 2018. | Case study method using individual semi-structured interviews via Skype. Data analysis included a blend of Creswell's (2013) approach to analysis and Yin's (2012) cross-case approach to case study research. | Germany | Investigating how four German Educational Psychologists became productive scholars or researchers. | Educational Psychologists in German University settings. | 4 Educational Psychologists in research posts. | Data analysis indicated that the German scholars' shared experiences during the early stages of their careers influenced their career paths and productivity. Additionally, interviews with each scholar revealed several related factors (i.e., long and focused research career, trademark characteristics, scholarly influencers, effective time-management practices, and research-management strategies) between this group of productive German scholars and their productive American counterparts. Finally, the study also indicated several differences (e.g., educational training, funding opportunities, sabbaticals, administrative responsibilities, and research traditions) between the American and German research environments that can impact productivity. |

| Study | Methods for data collection and analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
|--------------------|---|----------------|--|--|---|---|
| Gallagher C. 2014. | Individual semi-structured interviews. Data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's s 6 phases of thematic analysis. | England | Exploring how Educational Psychologists conceptualise domestic violence and the impact it may have in working with schools, children, and families about this. | Educational Psychologists in local authority settings. | Five psychologists from two urban local authorities (three female and two male) | Researchers concluded that EPs encounter challenges when working with domestic violence, including professional sensitivity, invisibility and secrecy of domestic violence, and lack of clarity about their role in this area. Facilitators and barriers to practice concerning the phenomenon include: •institutional factors •professional factors •personal factors •societal and cultural factors |

| Study | Methods for data collection and analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
|--|---|----------------|---|---|---|--|
| Goforth A, Yosai E, Brown J, Shindorf Z. 2017. | An online survey was conducted and analysed using descriptive statistics. Two focus groups were held with a smaller contingent of randomly selected participants. Data from these were analysed using a selective coding process. | The U.S.A. | To ascertain rural school psychologists' specific contexts, characteristics, roles, and responsibilities. | School Psychologists working in rural settings in the Pacific Northwest and Rocky Mountain regions. | 10 School psychologists for phase 2 were two focus groups of five participants. Participants in the two focus groups included nine females and one male school psychologist. 221 School Psychologists took part in the online survey. | Overall, there was a great deal of diversity within and across rural communities; They served more schools, on average, compared to urban or suburban school psychologists, although there were no differences in the numbers of students served in those schools; the results of this study showed that rural school psychologists had less experience than urban school psychologists. Rural school psychologists had similar access to evidence-based academic, behaviour, mental health, and developmental disabilities interventions. Four primary themes emerged from the analysis of the focus groups related to the advantages and disadvantages of working in rural schools and communities, which included <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Working in Rural Schools Has Both Advantages and Disadvantages •Cultural Challenges and Disparities •Professional Issues in Rural Schools •Ethical Issues in Rural Schools |

| Study | Methods for data collection and analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
|--|---|----------------|---|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Greenspan SB, Whitcomb S, Gordon KL, Hayden L, Lauterbach A, Fefer S, et al. 2021. | Data collection comprised a personal and school demographics questionnaire and focus groups via Zoom. Questionnaire data were analysed via descriptive statistics. Focus group data were analysed using Open, axial, and selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) using a Grounded Theory approach | The U.S.A. | Exploring the perspectives of school psychologists' use of physical activity as a mechanism to support students' mental health. | Practising school psychologists | Twenty practising school psychologists (90% female). This was a purposeful sample | Results suggest that when school and district leaders prioritise using physical activity to promote mental health, this can then foster the development of certain factors. These include (a) components or structures to foster such initiatives, which consist of the sub-themes systemic and concrete factors. (b) data collection and data-based decision-making efforts which includes the sub-themes of progress monitoring, measuring outcomes and fidelity, and, in turn (c) effective and targeted interventions, which include the sub-themes of treatment targets, bidirectional student-teacher benefits, and alternatives. |

| Study | Methods for data collection and analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
|--|---|----------------|--|--|--|---|
| Hamre B, Hedegaard-Sørensen L, Langager S. 2018. | Individual semi-structured interviews were analysed using a Foucauldian constructivist phenomenological approach. | Denmark | The inter-professional collaboration between psychologists and psychiatrists when at-risk children were referred to professionals for examination and testing. | Educational Psychologists and their work in collaborating with psychiatrists in the children's psychiatric wards | Eight municipal Educational Psychologists working within mainstream and special school settings. | Three main themes were identified from the data •A troubleshooting culture and a psychiatric dominance in the collaboration •Psychologists as mediators of diagnostic knowledge in educational contexts •The stigmatising and prescriptive functions of diagnosis |

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| Maki ED, Sheppard AV, James J, Mueller M, Broadhead S, Brodsky L, et al. 2019. | Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted, and data were analysed using a 5-stage methodology from Grounded Theory | The U.S.A. | The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the perceptions of school psychologists in the initial stages of expanding their roles to enact a comprehensive behavioural health service within the context of a large, urban district where their previous roles had previously been limited to crisis support and eligibility for special education. | School psychologists working within the first cohort of schools to implement the Comprehensive Behavioural Health Model (CBHM). | 10 School psychologists (8 females, two males) | Four main 'spheres' were identified: •School Psychologists' Expressed Professional Needs to Implement Behavioural Health Systems Change. Sub-themes included School psychologists feeling they required more time and/or a reduced caseload to make CBHM systems change happen and requiring more training to support tiered intervention" •School Psychologists Offered Recommendations to Implement Behavioural Systems Change. Sub-themes include planned and realistic systems, and collaboration and communication through all levels of the school are crucial to systems success. •School Psychologists Identified the Critical Supports and Resources Necessary for Implementing Behavioural Health Systems. Sub-themes included school psychologists finding colleague support helpful in developing system change, as well as structured and guiding resources (e.g., training and materials). •the Professional and Personal Growth Throughout the Process of engaging in Behavioural Health Systems Change |
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| Study | Methods for data collection and analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
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| Marks C. 2012. | Underpinned by a social constructionist epistemology, individual semi-structured interviews using Potter and Wetherell's (1987) 10-stage Discourse Analysis | England | Exploring EPs constructions of sexuality and the implications for practice. | EPs from a psychological service | 7 Educational Psychologists | Findings indicate that participant EPs engage in a variety of constructions of sexuality for different purposes. The participants in this study highlighted two primary concerns: the need to maintain a non-prejudiced position and a need to manage accountability tensions. In negotiating tensions related to elements of their role in sexuality diversity, accountability was asserted. Although this 'threatened' an egalitarian position. Nine key themes were identified: •Greater acceptance •Invisibility of sexuality in schools and society •normalising sexual diversity •sexuality diversity is part of the umbrella of equality •protection of children •awareness of heterosexism •inclusive versus non-inclusive school cultures •systemic versus individual work •accountability in sexuality diversity |

| Study | Methods for data collection and analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
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| Marrs H, Little S. 2014. | Individual phone interviews were conducted, and data were analysed through a constructionist or positivist lens using methods from Consensual Qualitative Research (Hill, Thompson & Williams, 1997) | The U.S.A. | Understanding the experiences of school psychologists in relation to the transition to Response to Intervention (RTI) practice | School psychologists working primarily in elementary schools. | Seven female School Psychologists working in rural, suburban, and urban settings in Washington Star | Data from participants identified four major themes in relation to barriers and challenges in implementing RTI • barriers and challenges in implementing RTI - Leadership: core ideas within this theme included the need for leadership and the need for a top-down approach • barriers and challenges in implementing RTI - Structural Barriers: sub-themes included time, training, implementation, and need for team building • barriers and challenges in implement RTI - Staff resistance: sub-themes included lack of understanding of RTI and confusion about the roles and responsibilities of stakeholder in RTI • barriers and challenges in implement RTI -School Psychologist resistance: sub-themes include tradition and RTI being a 'fad', fear of change, viewing the psychologist as a tester/assessor, and loss of status |

| Study | Methods for data collection and analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
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| Moolla N, Lazarus S. 2014. | Eight focus groups were conducted, and data were analysed with a constructivist interpretivist paradigm using thematic analysis. | South Africa | Perceptions of the challenges that emerge when working with other sectors to support school development | School psychologists working with public schools in the Western Cape | 47 School Psychologists | Five main themes were identified. • diverse discourse and worldviews: the challenge of these and why it is important to clarify terminology and concepts when collaborating with others. People have different views and assumptions, which impacts school development •Role and boundaries: effective collaboration can happen when each sector contributes their own area of expertise, which can be contrary to how some S psychologists work on multi-disciplinary teams. Role definition can support this, and the role of the participants in this study is poorly defined. Role activities include Consultation with educators, Consultation with principals, Training and group interventions with teachers Development and support of the Institution Level Support Team (ILST) Special programmes and projects Monitoring and evaluation of schools Supporting teaching, learning and management •Personal and interpersonal dynamics: feeling marginalised and power differences/lack of power were two sub-themes that emerged from this for participants. •Training and development: training in intersectoral collaboration and school development was highlighted, as was professional training to support the shift to more systemic and consultative methods. Organisational challenges: can be an impediment to collaboration, both at the micro and macro levels. These challenges include poor structures and procedures and management as well as a lack of resources. |

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| Parker JS, Hanson P. 2021. | Individual structured interviews were conducted as part of a larger study, not for review. Secondary data analysis using constant comparative analysis techniques was used to analyse the interview data. Data was coded both inductive and deductively. | The U.S.A. | Explore how a group of school psychologists' professional experiences aligned with spiritual and religious practice competencies developed for psychologists (Vieten et al., 2016). | School Psychologists | Ten female school psychologists are employed in the Southeast region of the United States. | Findings show multiple examples of how competencies were indicated in the participants' detailing of their interactions with spiritual/ religious students. Most of the examples included competencies within the Attitudes and Beliefs domain; however, some examples represented competencies within the Knowledge and Skills domains of Vieten et al. (2016) competency framework. Some of the participants' experiences (e.g., consulting with religious teachers) were less connected to the established competencies and more connected to Ingraham's Multi-Cultural School Consultation (MSC) framework. Additionally, culturally insensitive school-based practices indicated that school psychologists might encounter unique issues as school-based consultants that warrant special consideration. |

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| Pillay J. 2014. | Individual interviews and a brief questionnaire were used to gather data. Thematic analysis, as posited by Merriam (1998), was used to analyse the data. | South African | Exploring the role that practising Educational Psychologists in Africa are perceived to have in the promotion of ethical research with children. | Educational Psychologists from public services in South Africa | 10 Educational Psychologists (60% female, 40% male) | Five main themes were identified from the data. • In relation to exploring the role that practising Educational Psychologists in Africa are perceived to have in the promotion of ethical research with children -Harms. Subthemes include the imposing of Educational Psychologists' own values on participants; the objectivity of the Educational Psychologist; the psychologist being perceived as a healer; mismatch of western and African traditions and cultures; ineffective sustainability of support interventions; more harm to vulnerable children. • In relation to exploring the role that practising Educational Psychologists in Africa are perceived to have in the promotion of ethical research with children - Benefits. Subthemes include knowledge management; improvement of the lives of children; empowerment and capacity building of children, families, and communities; increased access to community services for children, and challenge of myths in African communities. • In relation to exploring the role practising Educational Psychologists in Africa are perceived to have in the promotion of ethical research with children -Informed consent: subthemes include participants being given clear and transparent information pertaining to the research from the beginning; consent and permission from relevant stakeholders; complete documents safeguarding children's rights in the research process; using participants language; and being mindful of power imbalances. • In relation to exploring the role that practising Educational Psychologists in Africa are perceived to have in the promotion of ethical research with children - Privacy and confidentiality. Subthemes include information being stored safely and securely, participants being permitted to see the results of the research and |
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| Study | Methods for data collection and analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
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| | | | | | | <p>extra care for OVC. • In relation to exploring the role that practising Educational Psychologists in Africa are perceived to have in the promotion of ethical research with children -Payment and compensation. Subthemes include: no bribes being permitted; support for the compensation of the participants in the research; awareness that payment and compensation can be viewed as an act of goodwill in African culture</p> |

| Study | Methods for data collection and analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
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| Prinz A, Zeeb H, Flanigan AE, Renkl A, Kiewra KA. 2021. | Case analysis using individual semi-structured interviews. Interview data were analysed using a cross-case approach (Yin, 2014) | The U.S.A. (2 participants are from German and the Netherlands. | Exploring how successful female Educational Psychologists conduct their work and maintain productivity. | German, U.S.A and the Netherlands | Five female Educational Psychologists working in academia/ research | Main themes were identified from the data • In relation to exploring how successful female Educational Psychologists conduct their work - Influencing people and places: these included mentors and colleagues; role models; students; early influences, and work environments. • In relation to exploring how successful female Educational Psychologists conduct their work - Time management strategies included hard work, maximising research time, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. • In relation to exploring how successful female Educational Psychologists conduct their work - Research management strategies: included being work task-oriented; collaboration; and applying writing strategies. • In relation to exploring how successful female Educational Psychologists conduct their work - Gender in the field: advantages of being female in academia as noted by the participants included freedom in developing a scholarly identity and preferential hiring. Disadvantages that were noted included expectations in relation to gender roles and gender-based discrimination. All participants noted the efforts they have made to promote women in academia through gender equality engagement. •Advice offered by the participants for aspiring scholars included: choosing a personally interesting research area; exploring good research questions; striving for quality and not just quantity; collaborating; being persistent and finding a personal rhythm. |

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| Rawlings E, Cowell N. 2015. | Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted. Data was analysed using Smith, Flowers, and Larkin's (2009) stepped approach to Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) | England | Exploring the experience of Educational Psychologists in relation to engaging in group supervision | Educational Psychologists in Local Authority settings in shire counties | Eight practising Educational Psychologists (six females and two males) | In relation to exploring how EPs engaged in group supervision -the purpose, process and personal needs of group supervision interacted together. Three superordinate themes were identified in relation to the experience of EPs partaking in group supervision. • In relation to exploring how EPs engaged in group supervision -Purpose of group supervision: which included the themes of group supervision being seen as productive; restorative; and helped participants in reaffirming themselves as psychologists. • In relation to exploring how EPs engaged in group supervision -Process of group supervision: which included the themes of it being an active process of "getting in the zone" and the group "being a separate entity but working as one". • In relation to exploring how EPs engaged in group supervision -Personal needs being met by the group supervision process: which included the themes of belonging and not belonging within the group. |

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| Rupasinha J. 2015. | An embedded case study approach informed by a social constructivist orientation. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted as well as document analysis of local demographic data and LA protocols for assessment. A cross-case synthesis with pattern matching (Yin, 2009) was used to analyse the data, as well as Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) for interview data and content analysis (Mayring, 2004) for documentation. | England | Exploring EPs perception in relation to the impact of ethnic minority cultural factors (EMCF) on autistic spectrum condition (ASC) assessment and any distinct factors related to ASC when engaging in working with families from ethnic minorities, and the EPs personal experiences of assessment of children from an EMC. | Local Authority, social enterprise, and private practice Educational Psychologists | 3 Educational Psychologists, each from a Local Authority, social enterprise, and private practice | Nine global themes were identified. •In relation to exploring EPs perception in relation to the impact of ethnic minority cultural factors (EMCF) on autistic spectrum condition (ASC) assessment - Shared understanding: the importance of shared understanding with all stakeholders they had contact with. • In relation to exploring EPs perception in relation to the impact of ethnic minority cultural factors (EMCF) on autistic spectrum condition (ASC) assessment - the relationship between the Educational Psychologist and the school: the school can both facilitate and constrain the assessment. • In relation to exploring EPs perception in relation to the impact of ethnic minority cultural factors (EMCF) on autistic spectrum condition (ASC) assessment - the distinctiveness of ASC: some participants approached ASC assessments differently and sometimes with a more within-child focus • In relation to exploring EPs perception in relation to the impact of ethnic minority cultural factors (EMCF) on autistic spectrum condition (ASC) assessment - Language: the impact of EMC having English as an additional language affected the assessment process differently for certain participants. • In relation to exploring EPs perception in relation to the impact of ethnic minority cultural factors (EMCF) on autistic spectrum condition (ASC) assessment - Culturally specific factors: certain trends were noted within each particular ethnic group they worked with, such as gender attitudes and support seeking in relation to disability. • In relation to exploring EPs perception in relation to the impact of ethnic minority cultural factors (EMCF) on autistic spectrum condition (ASC) assessment - Work context: management of services in which participants worked impacted the decision making they |
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| | | | | | | <p>were permitted to make. • In relation to exploring EPs perception in relation to the impact of ethnic minority cultural factors (EMCF) on autistic spectrum condition (ASC) assessment - EPs individuality: all participants noted a part of themselves that impacted how they engaged in the assessment, such as gender, accent, and personal preferences in relation to assessment methods. • In relation to exploring EPs perception in relation to the impact of ethnic minority cultural factors (EMCF) on autistic spectrum condition (ASC) assessment - consultation with parents: and the adjustments that were made to facilitate parents. • In relation to exploring EPs perception in relation to the impact of ethnic minority cultural factors (EMCF) on autistic spectrum condition (ASC) assessment - direct work with the child: all participants note that EMCF did not significantly affect the presentation of a child with autism. However, they did mention ways in which they changed their direct work with a client in response to EMCF</p> |

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| Sedgwick A, Stothard J. 2019. | Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted, and data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six stages of Thematic Analysis. | The U.K. | Exploring EPs' perceptions, knowledge, and work practises in relation to speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN) | Fully or partially traded Local Authorities | 8 EPs | In answer to the specific research question: How do EPs perceive their role regarding working with SLCN, and what informs their practice? The following themes were identified: •In relation to exploring EPs' perceptions, knowledge and work practice in relation to speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN) - role: this included personal perspectives on their role and shared views • In relation to exploring EPs' perceptions, knowledge and work practises in relation to speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN) - knowledge: this included EPs' understanding of SLCN; and the variable way that EPs learn about SLCN. • In relation to exploring EPs' perceptions, knowledge, and work practises in relation to speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN) - influential factors: this included resources such as lack of time and funding; models of practice; and professional identity in answer to the specific research question: What processes do EPs employ to support SLCN? The following theme was identified - •Consultation: this included being language-specific, particularly in terms of gathering early development history; and gathering information on any co-morbidity. In answer to the specific research question: What processes do EPs employ to support SLCN? The following theme was identified - •Assessment: this included observations, screening and checklists, and specific tests, e.g., cognitive assessment. In answer to the specific research question: What processes do EPs employ to support SLCN? The following theme was identified - •Interventions: this included interventions that could be done at home by the parent and school-based interventions. In answer to the specific research question: How do EPs work jointly with other professionals, in |
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| | | | | | | particular Speech and Language Therapists, in the area of SLCN? The following themes were identified. In answer to the specific research question: What processes do EPs employ to support SLCN? The following theme was identified - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Current work practices: this included casework and statutory work, and systemic work. •Ideal working practices: this included co-construction of casework, positive relationships, and organisation-level changes that support joint working. In answer to the specific research question: What processes do EPs employ to support SLCN? The following theme was identified - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Influencing factors: these included resources such as lack of funding and time, models of service, logistics, and professional attitudes. |
| Silva J da, Fritz E. 2012. | A phenomenological approach using incomplete sentences, semi-structured interviews, and symbolic artefacts as methods of data collection. Data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) method of Thematic Analysis. | South Africa | Exploring the experiences of EPs in relation to the use of ego-state therapy and its appropriateness | 4 EPs working in Gauteng, South Africa, working in academia and/or private practice | 4 EPS, three female and one male with an age range of 35-55 | Four main themes were identified in the data. •In relation to exploring the experiences of EPs' use of ego-state therapy, ego-state therapy was primarily used with clients in the adolescent developmental stage • In relation to exploring the experiences of EPs' use of ego-state therapy, inner strength as co-therapist was a key factor: this can potentially provide the strength to facilitate change. • In relation to exploring the experiences of EPs' use of ego-state therapy, the use of other therapies was used to augment ego-state therapy • In relation to exploring the experiences of EPs' use of ego-state therapy, the "yin and yang" of ego -states were considered important, that is, all participants concurred that this therapy is beneficial to adolescents with dissociation through the use of dialoguing and providing voice, thus promoting integration. |

| Study | Methods for data collection and analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
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| Smillie I, Newton M. 2020. | A questionnaire was used to collect data, as well as semi-structured individual interviews. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, and interview data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) method of Thematic Analysis. | Wales | Gather information in relation to EPs' practice in gathering and representing children and young people's (CYP's) views | EPs in local authorities | 8 EPs completed individual interviews of the 73 EPs who completed the questionnaire. | The most common techniques used to elicit children and young people's (CYP) views were discussion methods, asking parents/guardians, solution-focused methods, self-report scales and therapeutic approaches. Participants used a combination of verbatim quotes and paraphrases to capture the voice of the CYP. From the interviews, three main themes were identified. • In relation to EPs' practice in gathering and representing children and young people's (CYP's) views, a theme identified was accessing a true representation of CYP's views: this includes the sub-themes of communicating CYP's views with sensitivity and accuracy; gaining an honest account of CYP's views; limited communication as limiting the views expressed by the CYP; and using a range of strategies to help to support the CYP in giving their views. • In relation to EPs' practice in gathering and representing children and young people's (CYP's) views, a theme identified was that gaining CYP's views empowers them: this includes the sub-themes of the EP as an advocate; getting the voice of the CYP is helpful for the CYP; and improved outcomes for the CYP • In relation to EPs' practice in gathering and representing children and young people's (CYP's) views a theme identified was Child-centred practice (CCP): this includes the sub-themes of CCP being a matter of respect and adhering to ethical principles; CCP being supported by proformas and policies; needing CYP's views to engage in the casework, and psychology supporting a child-centred approach. |

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| Sowden B, Fleming J, Savage T, Woitaszewski S. 2016. | Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted, and data were analysed using the consensual qualitative research (CQR) methods as developed by Hill et al. (1997) | The U.S.A. | Exploring the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of LGBT-identified school psychologists. | School psychologists who were members of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) | 8 LGBT identified school psychologists, three lesbian women, four gay men, and one transgender female who were all Caucasian with an age range of 26-57 years. | Five main themes were identified • In relation to exploring the thoughts, feelings and experiences of LGBT-identified school psychologists, a theme identified was the impact on the professional role: this included both concerns that the participants' sexual orientation would become a label but also positive experiences and increased professional opportunities in relation to the LGBT aspect of their identity. • In relation to exploring the thoughts, feelings and experiences of LGBT-identified school psychologists, a theme identified was Heterosexism in schools: participants identified both covert and overt heterosexism that affected both school staff, and pupils • In relation to exploring the thoughts, feelings and experiences of LGBT identified school psychologists a theme identified was Relationships: both professional and personal relationships were identified as being stronger and more positive when the school psychologist was 'out'. • In relation to exploring the thoughts, feelings and experiences of LGBT-identified school psychologists, a theme identified was Resiliency: all participants showed resiliency and helped in supporting and fostering resiliency in pupils. • In relation to exploring the thoughts, feelings and experiences of LGBT-identified school psychologists, a theme identified was Advocacy: participants identified ways they had advocated for students or had a positive effect on pupils as LGBT-identified school psychologists. • In relation to exploring the thoughts, feelings and experiences of LGBT-identified school psychologists, a theme identified was Transgender 'outness': there were distinct differences between the experience of the transgender school psychologist in the |
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| Study | Methods for data collection and analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
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| | | | | | | study and the other participants. Their 'outness' was considered different from the lesbian, gay or bisexual person as sexual orientation can be 'hidden'. |
| Thomas G, Atkinson, C Allen, C | Online survey | UK | EPs practice in relation to Motivational Interviewing, a therapeutic modality | EPs in the UK | 119 Practitioner EPS | MI was used with various client groups in a variety of EP functions. In general, the EPs with the most experience were more confident in their understanding of MI, had more training, and used it more in actual practice. The key components of modern MI theory—the spirit, skills, and processes—were familiar to EPs. Practice focused primarily on active listening. The narrowing of service delivery through trading and statutory demands were obstacles to using MI. |
| Wu IH, Zhang KC. 2012. | In this case study design, data were collected through individual interviews, reviews of work materials, school-based observations and recording of field notes. No information as to how the data was analysed is presented. | Hong Kong, China | Describing the professional development experiences of a School (Educational) Psychologist based in Hong Kong | Educational Psychologists working in primary and secondary schools | One female EP-One, or Senior Educational Psychologist. | The main themes identified include: • In relation to experiences of EPs in Hong Kong, a theme identified was that Service Models guide Educational Psychologists' roles •• In relation to experiences of EPs in Hong Kong, a theme identified was that attitude change leads to systems change: this is facilitated by indirect consultation with parents and school staff •• In relation to experiences of EPs in Hong Kong, a theme identified was the encouragement of a systemic mindset and realistic goals: this includes School Psychologists adopting a preventative mindset and a flexible attitude in relation to the selection of service options •• In relation to experiences of EPs in Hong Kong, a theme identified was becoming prepared for the job role and competency expansion. |

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| Yates M-L, Hulusi HM. 2018. | Using a critical realist ontology and qualitative epistemology, data were collected using individual semi-structured interviews. Data were analysed using an inductive approach to Thematic Analysis as developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) | The U.K. | Exploring the experiences of Educational Psychologists who, on behalf of their Local Authority, were expert witnesses at Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunals (SENDIST) hearings. | Educational Psychologists working in Local Authorities | 8 Educational Psychologists, seven females and one male. | The overarching theme identified was that there was a degree of dissonance in relation to participants' perceptions of their professional role as co-constructors of solutions in tribunal or SENDIST hearings. Two main or super themes were further identified • In relation to EPs' experiences as witnesses at SENDIST hearings, a theme identified was Tribunal processes: which included Solicitor involvement, instructional clarity, mediation, sharing of information and decision making. • In relation to EPs' experiences as witnesses at SENDIST hearings, a theme identified was the role of the EP in tribunal or SENDIST hearings: This included role conflict and this type of work being perceived as distinct from their core roles; Lack of mediator role from advisory services; the importance of Supervision and support; and loss of locus of control in relation to tribunal cases. |

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| Zafeiriou ME, Gulliford A. 2020. | Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted for data collection and immersive analysis using a constructivist Grounded Theory approach was used to analyse the data. | England | Exploring EPs mental health casework in schools | EPs in large semi-rural Local Authority service | 5 Educational Psychologists with experience ranging from 5-25 years. | Four main categories were identified that relate to both the problem-solving processes of the EP and the 'soft' aspects of involvement that helps to meet the emotional needs of stake stakeholders. • In relation to exploring EPs' mental health casework in schools, a theme identified was Responding to Adults' difficult emotions: this included schools and parents contacting the EP when feeling 'stuck'; having difficult conversations; working with difficult emotions; listening and reflecting; being present; empathising and tuning in, and using invitational language • In relation to exploring EPs mental health casework in schools, a theme identified was joining theory with evidence: this included looking for evidence; being analytical; applying psychological knowledge and formulating hypotheses. • In relation to exploring EPs mental health casework in schools, a theme identified was Sharing hypotheses and challenging perceptions: this included identifying discrepancies in views; standing up for one's views; ensuring the child is the focus; sharing psychological knowledge; increasing empathy; being directive; reframing; upskilling the adults and facilitating a therapeutic relationship between the adult and child. • In relation to exploring EPs mental health casework in schools, a theme identified was Planning: this included a focus on planning and planning timeframes. Results further suggested that EPS use two interacting methods in casework involving mental health, which include: facilitating a secure base by offering emotional containment for adults such as parents and staff and engaging adults in problem-solving activities such as challenging perceptions in order to support changes in thoughts and behaviours |
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| Ducharme D, Roach AT, Wellons QD. 2020. | A survey and individual semi-structured using a structural interpretivist framework were conducted. Both inductive and deductive analysis was used to identify codes from the data. Survey data were analysed using descriptive statistics. | The U.S.A. | Exploring practising school psychologists' experiences, attitudes, and training related to the school-to-employment transition process. | School psychologists based in a large school district in Georgia, the United States. | 38 SPs (35 female, three male) completed the survey, and 7 SPs completed individual interviews | Results indicated that participants perceived themselves to possess the skill to support transition processes from school to employment for students; however, they encounter barriers in the form of resource allocation, lack of training and lack of knowledge of the support for transition services. They did, however, acknowledge that they did have other skills to support the transition process. Four main categories were identified • In relation to School Psychologists' experiences related to school to employment transition processes, a category identified was personal experiences: which include personal experiences of the SP and parents' knowledge of transition services • In relation to School Psychologists' experiences related to school to employment transition processes, a category identified was training: this included graduate and professional training in relation to transition services • In relation School Psychologists' experiences related to school to employment transition processes, a category identified was the role of SP in transition services: this included best practices; evaluation; and IEP transition goals. • In relation to School Psychologists' experiences related to school to employment transition processes, a category identified was ecological systems: this included barriers to participation for SPs; knowledge of county and state transition systems; and steps for improving transition services and increasing participation of SPs. |

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| Canto AI, Chesire DJ, Buckley VA, Andrews TW, Roehrig AD. 2014. | An online survey which included demographic questions, Likert questions and open-ended questions was administered, and data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Thematic Analysis as advocated by Braun and Clarke (2006) | The U.S.A. | Exploring experiences in supporting students after brain injury and exploring barriers to service delivery in the schools. | Practising school psychologists in Florida | 73 participants completed the survey | 6 main barriers were identified in meeting the needs of students with traumatic brain injury (TBI) • In relation to exploring experiences of how School Psychologists meet the needs of students with a traumatic brain injury, a barrier identified was lack of communication (by parents, rehabilitation/medical personnel, or within the school regarding injury or assessment); • In relation to exploring experiences of how School Psychologists meet the needs of students with a traumatic brain injury, a barrier identified was lack of training/knowledge (by school personnel, school psychologists, or other appropriate designees); • In relation to exploring experiences of how School Psychologists meet the needs of students with a traumatic brain injury, a barrier identified was lack of perceived importance (e.g. Not a recognised area of need, lack of school/teacher “buy-in”); • In relation to exploring experiences of how School Psychologists meet the needs of students with a traumatic brain injury, a barrier identified was lack of resources (e.g. Interventions, services); • In relation to exploring experiences of how School Psychologists meet the needs of students with a traumatic brain injury, a barrier identified was procedural impediments (for example, lack of formal transition procedure, limited/no advocacy); • In relation to exploring experiences of how School Psychologists meet the needs of students with a traumatic brain injury, a barrier identified was problematic placement options (e.g. Having to place students in Emotional and Behavioural Disorder (EBD) classrooms]. |

| Study | Methods for data collection and analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
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| Lowther C. 2013. | Taking a Social Constructionist approach, participants engaged in individual semi-structured interviews and data was analysed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as informed by Smith et al.'s (2009) guidelines. | England | Exploring what information Educational Psychologists consider meaningful when evaluating their work. | Educational Psychologists working in a Local Authority | Six female staff grade psychologists working in a Local Authority. | Overall, a variety of sources of information were meaningful to the participating EPs in relation to evaluating their work outcomes. Both "internal" and "external" tools were used by participants to measure the success of their work or involvement. External tools included things like qualitative and quantitative questionnaires; internal tools included things like verbal feedback and how the participants thought, felt, and knew about their work. |

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| Moolla N, Lazarus S. 2014. | Using a constructivist interpretivist paradigm, eight focus groups with 6-8 participants per group were conducted. Data was analysed using Thematic Analysis. | South Africa | Exploring the perceptions of school psychologists in relation to the challenges that can occur when collaborating with other sectors in facilitating school development in a process that the authors term "intersectoral collaboration." | School Psychologists employed in the Western Cape Department of Education South Africa | 45 School Psychologists | In the facilitation of school development , participants detailed 5 areas of challenge when collaborating with different sectors which were: • In relation to School Psychologists collaborating with other sectors towards school development, a challenge identified was diverse discourses and differing worldviews: this included language and jargon used varying between sectors • In relation to School Psychologists collaborating with other sectors towards school development, a challenge identified was roles and boundaries which included lack of understanding of the role of the EP role from schools and detailing of their roles in terms of development which included activities at the level of the individual such as Consultation with educators and Consultation with principals; and at the level of the organisation which included: Training and group interventions with teachers; Development and support of the Institution Level Support Team (ILST); Special programmes and projects; Monitoring and evaluation of schools; Supporting teaching, learning and management. • In relation to School Psychologists collaborating with other sectors towards school development, a challenge identified was Personal and Interpersonal Dynamics, which included Power and marginalisation as two sub-themes within the category of personal and interpersonal factors that impact intersectoral collaboration. • In relation to School Psychologists collaborating with other sectors towards school development, a challenge identified was Organisational Challenges: challenges were identified at the micro and macro levels of the education system and included inadequate structures and procedures, poor management and coordination, and a dearth of resources. |
|----------------------------------|---|--------------|---|--|-------------------------|---|

| Study | Methods for data collection and analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
|-------|--|---------|-----------------------|---------------------------|---|--|
| | | | | | | <p>Participants indicated that structures and procedures within the WCED are not always clear. • In relation to School Psychologists collaborating with other sectors towards school development, a challenge identified was Training and Development: participants suggested that all pertinent sectors require training in intersectoral collaboration and school development. Professional training and development of school psychologists were seen as key to supporting and facilitating a process whereby systemic, consultative methods can be employed by school psychologists.</p> |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|---------|--|---|--|---|
| Mcguiggan C. 2021. | Individual semi-structured interviews and data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's 'phase model of inductive Thematic Analysis | England | Examining how EPS work with families and how they view their role within the context of the family system. | Educational Psychologists working in Local Authorities | 9 Educational Psychologists who had been qualified EPs for between seven and 33 years. | Four main themes were identified from the data • In relation to EPs' work with families and how they see their role at the family system level, a theme identified was Preschool family work: the work of the EP at the preschool level was mainly assessment based, to identify SEND provision. Intervention work with pre-school families was not seen as part of their role. • In relation to EPs' work with families and how they see their role at the family system level, a theme identified was School-based family work: schools manage referrals to EPS of children and families. As schools make the referrals, they are viewed both by themselves and the EP as being the client who 'holds' the problem. Participants usually involved families in the assessment but not always. In assessment, EPS have pivoted away from a rigid and decontextualised mode of assessment toward one that is more ecological such as Woolfson's integrated framework (2008). Opportunities for intervention work are limited. • In relation to EPs' work with families and how they see their role at the family system level, a theme identified was the barriers to the EP role: barriers to participants' roles included a traded model of service delivery that creates a consumer/provider relationship between the EP and the school. Participants felt schools had "ownership" of EP time as a result. Facilitators included the EP having a child and family-centred orientation to practice, rather than just school centred. • In relation to EPs' work with families and how they see their role at the family system level, a theme identified was the context of their role and what they feel should happen: some participants took a 'pragmatic acceptance' |
|-----------------------|--|---------|--|---|--|---|

| Study | Methods for data collection and analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
|-------|--|---------|-----------------------|---------------------------|---|---|
| | | | | | | position, while others took a mode 'idealistic resistance' position whereby they sought ways their role could be expanded across a Child's family system. |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|---------|---|--|-------------------------------|--|
| Winter S, Bunn H. 2019. | An online survey was used to collect data, and this data was analysed qualitatively using content analysis and quantitatively using descriptive statistics and content analysis. | England | Exploring the perspectives of Educational Psychologists in relation to their role and contributions to special schools for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) | Educational Psychologists working primarily in Local Authorities | 207 Educational Psychologists | Three main themes were identified • Practicalities of EPs' contact with special schools for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties PMLD: one-third of the EPs who completed the survey indicated that they were a main point of contact for a special school catering for PMLD and the majority of the respondents (60.4%) stated that they were not. Visits to these schools were based on a needs-led or case-led basis. Statutory work was cited most regularly as the main reason for visits, including transfer reviews, annual reviews, and statutory assessments. •EPs' current work in special schools catering for profound and multiple learning difficulties PMLD: the most common area of work identified by 80% of participants was statutory-led work and individual casework. Consultation and attendance at multi-agency meetings were also preferred methods of working, identified by over half of respondents. Potential barriers to working within PMLD settings included lack of a shared understanding of roles, time restrictions, statutory work, austerity cuts and the 'culture' of special schools that cater for PMLD. • The preferred future – the EPs' perspective EPs were asked what their ideal contribution at a special school which caters for profound and multiple learning difficulties PMLD would look like. Responses that were most frequently cited included forms of non-direct pupil work, including systemic work, individual work, interventions, staff training, and work with parents. Consultation was suggested frequently by EPs as a method by which to provide support and guidance in addition to problem-solving. |
|-------------------------------|--|---------|---|--|-------------------------------|--|

Appendix G: Characteristics of Included Studies Featuring EPs based in Ireland

Table A4

Characteristics of Included Studies Featuring EPs Based in Ireland

| Study | Methods for data collection analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
|------------------------|---|----------------|---|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Davey N, Egan M. 2021. | Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants. Data were analysed thematically using the six-phase Braun and Clarke method of thematic analysis. Member checking was also conducted to support the accuracy of the analysis. | Ireland | The study sought to explore the experiences of the continuing professional development offered to teachers by NEPs psychologists during an Incredible Years teacher classroom management programme. | School setting (NEPs) | The study includes 12 primary school teachers and 2 NEPs psychologists, one male and one female, ranging in age from 44-51. | Three overarching themes emerged from data analysis from the perspective of both the EPs and teachers. First is the importance of customising programme delivery. This includes the sub-themes of tailoring of strategies and tailoring of programme content. Using role plays and presenting vignettes were considered a challenge. Knowledge of the school context supported the EP's ability to work with teachers and deliver the programme successfully at a whole school level, which is the preferred level at which to deliver the program for the EPs. Second is the efficacy of co-construction of individual behaviour plans. Sub-themes include working in partnership and sharing expertise. Third is the effectiveness of sustained support. EPs suggested establishing a community of practice to further facilitate the support offered to teachers, which was both formal and informal. |

| Study | Methods for data collection analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
|------------------|---|----------------|---|---|--|---|
| Griffin c. 2018. | Personal narrative | Ireland | Explores the author's experience in a day in Mary Immaculate College (part of the University of Limerick) as an Educational Psychologist and lecturer, which started with a lecture to trainee teachers, a tutorial with psychology students, and office work | Educational Psychologist working in a university research/teaching role | One female Educational Psychologist working in a university research/teaching role | The role and remit as discussed by this particular Educational Psychologist include lecturing a diverse range of trainee teachers and psychology students, travelling to provide supervision to trainee teachers and Educational Psychologists, office-based work including module design, supervision of research and other administrative duties, and the authors own research which involved the completion of a peer-reviewed article for submission. |

| Study | Methods for data collection analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
|------------------------------|--|----------------|---|--|--|--|
| Hoyne n, Cunningham y. 2019. | Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted, and data from these were analysed using Braun and Clarke's 5 step method of thematic analysis. | Ireland | Exploring the different therapeutic approaches employed by EPs in an Irish school psychology context and the factors EPs seen as barriers and facilitators to this provision. | Educational Psychologists working within a school setting (NEPs) | Twelve education psychologists (91.6% female, 8.4% male) within one region on NEPs (one regional director, two senior psychologists and nine main grade psychologists.). | Therapeutic approaches most used by participants were cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT). Facilitators perceived by participants as impacting therapeutic practice included: service support (supervision, peer support, c, flexibility of ep role, material resources, and MGMT support); intervention outcomes; media interest; and school factors (school support and awareness, teacher involvement, large schools, ep integration into school) Barriers related to: time (time available for delivery, energy, caseload, the limited number of NEPs EPs); government policy (resource-driven system, education budget reductions); school factors (school attitude, competing demands, lack of awareness, small rural schools); EP role (not clear in relation to service policy what the role of the ep is in therapeutic practice); and training (inadequate initial training, lack of availability of suitable CPD) |

| Study | Methods for data collection analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
|--------------------------------|---|---------|--|--|--|---|
| O'Farrell p, Kinsella w. 2018. | Case studies were conducted, and experiences and perspectives were gathered using individual semi-structured interviews. Interview data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's six stages of thematic analysis. | Ireland | Exploring the perceived efficacy of consultation as a model of service delivery for Educational Psychologists. | Irish primary and post-primary schools | Three case study groups with 3 participants each. One Educational Psychologist per group totalling 3 Educational Psychologists in the study. | Three main themes were identified from participant data. (All findings mentioned are attributable to the views of the psychologists in the study). First, in relation to exploring the perceived efficacy of consultation as a model of service delivery for Educational Psychologists - support: participant psychologists note how consultation is a more effective use of time and resources, though it has not necessarily reduced their workload. Second, in relation to exploring the perceived efficacy of consultation as a model of service delivery for Educational Psychologists - understanding: managing other stakeholders' expectations and assumptions about consultation. Participant EPs noted they are 'not the experts' in the process. Rather, they are there to build capacity. They can be directive and give advice, but they view the teacher as having ownership in relation to formulation of strategies. Third, in relation to exploring the perceived efficacy of consultation as a model of service delivery for Educational Psychologists - valuing consultation: participant Educational Psychologists noted the request for more systemic consultation from schools and how it was seen as valuable, though there can also be resistance from some schools. |

| Study | Methods for data collection analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
|---------------------------------------|--|----------------|---|---|--|---|
| Robinson I, Bond C, Oldfield j. 2018. | An online questionnaire was administered, and data were analysed using descriptive statistics and conventional content analysis based on the guidelines provided by Hsieh and Shannon (2005) | UK and Ireland | Exploring EPs' intervention practices in relation to pupils with autism | Local authority services and partially traded services. | 146 participants (127 females and 19 males), of which 104 were either Educational Psychologists, senior or principal psychologists. 13 of the 146 participant EPs were based in the NEPS in Ireland. | In the UK and Ireland, participant EPs reported that 30% of their caseload included implementing interventions for students with autism. When exploring EPs' intervention practices in relation to pupils with autism, the most used interventions by participants were visual support, social stories, reinforcement, antecedent-based training, prompting, modelling and social skills training. Other frequently mentioned evidence-based interventions (EBIS) by participants were social communication, emotional regulation and transactional support (Scerts; Prizant, Wetherby, Rubin, Laurent, & Rydell, 2005), treatment and education of autistic and communication-related handicapped children (Teacch; Mesibov, Shea, & Schopler, 2005), the national autistic society's Earlybird and Earlybird plus (shields, 2001), and attention autism (Davies, 2013). The individual needs of the child and the school context were cited most frequently as the factors that influenced their decisions about which intervention to implement. The most important factors in participants' approach to intervention planning were collaboration, personalisation, developing school capacity, and assessment-informed intervention. Factors that impact intervention planning include financial resources, time allocation limitations; access to trained practitioners and staff perceptions of interventions |

| Study | Methods for data collection analysis | Country | Phenomena of interest | Setting/ context/ culture | Participant characteristics and sample size | Description of main results |
|---|--|----------------|---|---|--|---|
| Sadreddini S, Bond C, Oldfield j. 2019. | An online survey was administered, and data were analysed using descriptive statistics and content analysis. | UK and Ireland | Exploring how EPs in the UK and Ireland assess children and young people with autism. | EPs in the UK and Ireland working in local authority services (or the NEPS if in Ireland), partially or fully traded services, or the national health service in Ireland. | 161 participants, of which 142 were EPs, senior EPs, principal EPs, or associate EPs. 19 of the participant EPs were based in Ireland. | Results indicate the following. EPs spend about 25% of their caseload time on students with autism, either through assessment, intervention, or both. In relation to exploring how EPs in the UK and Ireland assess children and young people with autism, the mode of assessment participants was 'most unfamiliar' with were standardised developmental inventories (47%); adaptive behaviour scales (28%); executive functioning assessment (25%); behavioural checklists/scales (24%) and emotional regulation scales (22%). The modes of assessment used the most included consultation with parents and teachers, observations at school, gaining the child's view, and review of records. The factors that most influenced assessment choices were the individual child's needs; the tool's evidence base, school factors; and the child and parent views. The factors that influenced decision-making on the choice of assessment the most for participants were individualised assessment (and matching to the needs of the child; the purpose or referral questions/concern; and contextual factors. • In relation to exploring how EPs in the UK and Ireland assess children and young people with autism, participants noted working with teachers and SENCOs the most out of any other professionals |

Appendix H: Characteristics of Included Studies Featuring EPs Based in Ireland - Quasi-Experimental Study Form

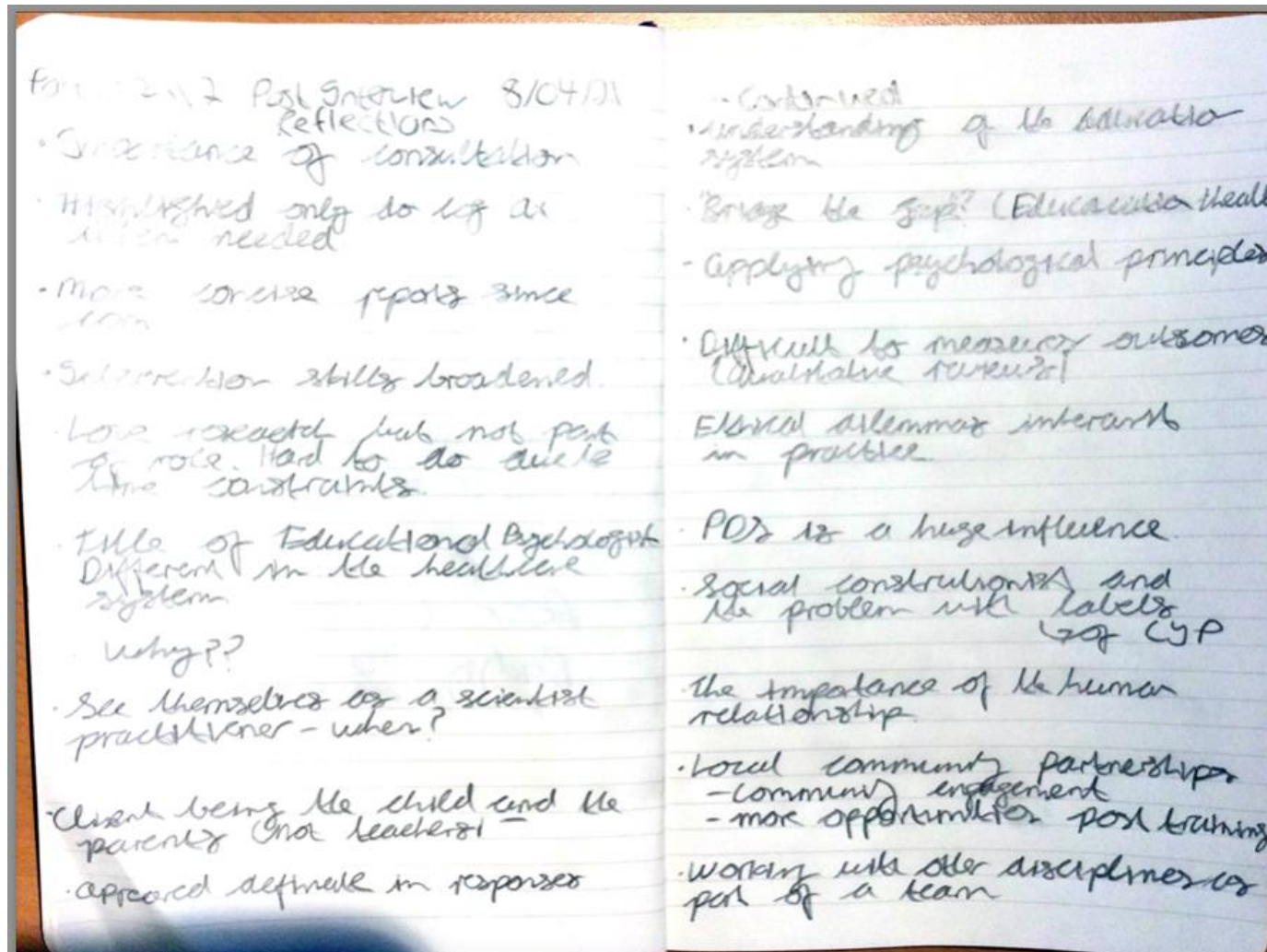
Table A5

Characteristics of Included Studies Featuring EPs Based in Ireland - Quasi-Experimental Study Form

| Study | Country | Setting/context | Participant characteristics | Groups | Outcomes measured | Main description of results |
|---|---------|---|--|--|---|---|
| Nugent M, Jones V, McElroy D, Peelo M, Thornton T, Tierney T. 2014. | Ireland | A pilot project to evaluate and explore group consultation in Irish Schools | 205 teachers in different schools and 34 Educational Psychologists working with NEPS | 10 - 12 cluster groups of teachers, with each group being facilitated by two psychologists | Outcomes measured related to the Educational Psychologists included: •the experience of the process •content analysis of the group consultation records | The following results are related to the data collected from the Educational Psychologist participants. Eighty per cent of consultations were about individual pupils, while 20% were about groups of children or general queries. The mean age of children who were discussed was 8.3 years, with 82% of cases being boys and only 18% being girls. Over 74% of cases related to behavioural and emotional difficulties. Most of the cases brought to group consultation were complex, with referrals pertaining to emotional and behavioural difficulties, learning, home life and social skills. Several cases discussed in mainstream schools related to Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or suspected ASD. There was consensus amongst EPS that the pilot project was working well and that teachers valued the format and process. Other comments highlighted that the focus on behavioural challenges as being viewed as positive (N = 2), that teachers valued the access to advice, information, and strategies (N = 5) and that it was a valuable use of psychologists' time (N = 3). Over the two years, four psychologists mentioned the importance of having acceptable numbers in the groups and enough "cases" |

to keep the group active. Schools valued the training sessions, according to the participant psychologists.

Appendix I: Sample of Reflective Journal



Appendix J: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

Interview Questions

Hello, thank you very much for agreeing to take part in this interview. This research aims to explore Educational Psychologists' (E.P.s') experiences and perceptions of their changing role as Educational Psychologists working in the Republic of Ireland in terms of their core functions of consultation, assessment, intervention, training and research. So, if you're ready, let's begin.

Section 1 – Subject – Who

- How would you describe your role as an Educational Psychologist?

Prompts –

- Consultation involves the facilitation of collaborative problem-solving at the individual, group, systems levels. How would you describe consultation as part of your role?
- Has this changed? If so, how?
- Assessment involves selecting from a range of methods to explore the presenting concerns of the client in an ethical manner. How would you describe assessment as part of your role? What part does assessment play in your current role as an Educational Psychologist?
- Has this changed? If so, how?
- As psychologists, we integrate assessment information from a range of sources into a concise formulation that informs any future actions and or/interventions. We then

communicate this information to a range of audiences in a clear and concise manner. How would you describe formulation and report writing as part of your role?

- Has this changed? If so, how?
- As psychologists, we identify, plan and sometimes deliver evidence-informed interventions, drawing on psychological literature, assessment data, and agreed goals. How is intervention work incorporated into your current role as an Educational Psychologist?
- Has this changed? If so, how?
- Training and development can involve the design, delivery and evaluation of training that is evidence-informed and attuned to the participants' needs. It can also involve the delivery of manualised programs. How would you describe training and development as part of your role?
- Has this changed? If so, how?
- As Psychologists, we critically evaluate research in our field and report synthesised findings to inform practice and policy. We apply research skills in practice. We can also plan and conduct research and disseminate the findings to a range of audiences. How would you describe research as part of your role?

2. Object – What?

- Who is the client in the organisation you work in?
- Have your work practices with clients/service users changed?
- How has your role as an Educational Psychologist within your work organisation shaped how you work with clients/service users?
- The unique contribution of the EP role?

3. Outcomes

- How do you measure/evaluate outcomes in your organisation?
- How has your work as an Educational Psychologist impacted the outcomes for clients/ service users? How do you know?
- Has the focus of your work with service users/clients changed over time? If so, how?

4. Rules

1. How do legislation/guidelines shape how you do your work as an Educational

Psychologist? . e.g. (prompt with) *NICE Guidelines*

- PSI/BPS guidelines
- Slaintecare (2017)
- Children's First
- Better Outcomes Better Future Report
- HSE Autism Spectrum Disorder Diagnostic Protocol 2018
- Best Practice Guidelines for the Assessment and Diagnosis of ASD for Children and Adolescents (PSI, 2010)
- Joint Working Protocol Primary Care, Disability and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (2017a)
- Assessment of Need SOP (2020) Primary Care Strategy 2001 •Primary Care Brief
- CAMHS SOP
 - Mental Health Commission documents
 - A Vision for Change 2006
 - Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People (2010)

- National Policy on Access to Services for Children and Young People with Disability and Developmental Delay (2016)

National Consent Policy 2017

- HSE Change Management Resources
 - Dignity at Work
 - The role of psychologists and COVID guidelines
-
- (Ask which one depending on which is familiar to each participant's setting)
 - How does the P.S.I. Code of Ethics shape how you work as an Educational Psychologist?
 - Are there any other pieces of legislation or policies, or Acts that shape your role as an Educational Psychologist?
 - Are there any philosophical or epistemological orientations that shape your work as an Educational Psychologist?
 - Ask about "soft" rules such as belief, therapeutic perspectives....
 - E.g., Are there any underlying beliefs that you have that inform your work as an Educational Psychologist?

5. Community

- In your role as an E.P., how do you work with/ engage with the community? What systems?
- Has your role working at the community level changed? If so, how?

6. Division of Labour

- What is the structure of the organisations within which you work as an EP?
- Do you work as part of a team? If so, how is your role as an Educational Psychologist shaped by working as a member of a team?
- Has your role within a team changed? If so, how?
- How do you think your role as an Educational Psychologist is perceived by other members of the team?
- Has your role changed?

7. Tools or Artefacts

- What tools do you use in your role as an Educational Psychologist? In terms of:
- Therapies?/therapeutic perspectives (e.g., CBT or Solution Focused)
- Resources
- Instruments (for assessment and intervention)
- Frameworks for practice/problem-solving frameworks
- Technology
- Have any of these changed?
- How do these tools facilitate your role as an Educational Psychologist?

Closing: Ok (Name), that is all of my questions. Thank you very much again for your time. Is there anything you would like to ask me or anything further you would like to say at all about the role of the EP or anything that you think is important that I have neglected to ask?

Appendix K: Participant Information Letter



Educational Psychologists' experiences of their work in education and healthcare settings:

The role of the Educational Psychologist in the Republic of Ireland

Participant Information Letter

What is the project about?

Educational psychologists in all settings, including Disability and School settings, have seen their roles both change and expand in different ways. Additionally, Educational Psychologists who qualified before the transition to doctoral level are now eligible to work in the HSE Child Psychology settings (Primary Care and CAMHS), provided they complete a 60-day placement in said setting. The proposed research aims to explore Educational Psychologists' (EPs') experiences and perceptions of their changing role across a range of services in the Republic of Ireland.

Who is undertaking it?

My name is Eoin Hassett, and I am a Postgraduate student attending Mary Immaculate College. I am presently completing a Professional Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology in the Department of Education, Inclusive & Special Education, under the supervision of Dr Maeve Dooley and Dr Therese Brophy. The current study will form part of my doctoral thesis.

Why is it being undertaken?

The objective of the study is to explore Educational Psychologists' experiences of working as an educational psychologist within the functions of consultation, assessment, intervention, training and research and the changing role of the Educational Psychologist in Ireland.

What are the benefits of this research?

The potential benefits of this research include that it: (a) could yield rich, informative data that would support the continuing development of Educational Psychology in Ireland, both in training and in practice, (b) be applied to the further enrichment of training programs in educational psychology and developing knowledge of the discipline of educational psychology for both trainees and qualified practitioners, adding a practical and applied value to this study, and (c) bring further awareness to the distinctive contribution of educational psychology to education and healthcare systems.

Exactly what is involved for the participant (time, location, etc.)

The study will consist of a short questionnaire followed by an individual interview with the Principal Investigator, which will take 60-90 minutes. The questionnaire and interview may be completed at a location that is convenient for each participant.

Right to withdraw

Your anonymity is assured, and you are free to withdraw from the experiment at any time without giving a reason and without consequence.

How will the information be used/disseminated?

The data from this study will be combined with that of the other participants in this study and used to form the results section of my thesis. Summary data will appear in the thesis, and individual participant data will not be identifiable and will be completely anonymised.

How will confidentiality be kept?

All information gathered will remain confidential and will not be released to any third party. A random ID number will be generated for each participant, and it is this number rather than the participant's name, which will be held with their data to maintain their anonymity.

What will happen to the data after research has been completed?

In accordance with the MIC Record Retention Schedule, all research data will be stored for the duration of the project plus three years. *(This is the minimum retention period for research records set out in the MIC Record Retention Schedule)*

Contact details:

If at any time you have any queries/issues with regard to this study, my contact details are as follows:

Principal Investigators Name: Eoin Hassett

Principal Investigators 10110437@micstudent.mic.ul.ie

Principal Investigators Contact Number: 083-1585967

If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent, you may contact:

MIREC Administrator, Research and Graduate School, Mary Immaculate College, South
Circular Road, Limerick. Telephone: 061-204980 / E-mail: mirec@mic.ul.ie

Appendix L: Initial Coding Template and Final Coding Template

Table A6

Initial Coding Template and Final Coding Template

| Main Theme (based on Activity Theory) | Subject | Object | Outcomes | Rules | Community | Division of Labour | Tools |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| Sub-themes (Based on inductive coding of the data and deductive coding of the data from a priori themes based on activity Theory and BPS Competencies) | Perceptions of role Contribution of role Types of service delivery | Who is the client? How role is shaped by clients | Types of outcomes How they are measured | Legislation or guidelines that shape the role Philosophical orientations Soft rules Underlying beliefs | Types of Engagement Levels of engagement | Job Title Team working Organisational Structure Challenges Enablers | Types of assessment Assessment tools Types of intervention Intervention tools Types of research Research tools Technology |

Appendix M: Final Coding Template and Inductive Coding Process Example

Table A7

Final Coding Template

| Main Theme (based on Activity Theory) | Subject | Object | Outcomes | Rules | Community | Division of Labour | Tools |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| Sub-themes (Based on inductive coding of the data and deductive coding of the data from a priori themes based on activity Theory and BPS Competencies) | Specialist knowledge of education and school systems Specialist knowledge of child development EPs as scientist practitioners A systemic and holistic approach to casework Move to more of a consultative approach when engaging with stakeholders | Whom EPs consider the client(s): changes and views A degree of uncertainty | Measuring Outcomes The importance of and changing nature of reports | The importance of ethical practice amongst EPs Legislation Philosophies Guiding Practice | Barriers and hopes for the future for community engagement for EPs EPs working at different levels of the community and changes to community engagement. | Job Title The importance of role definition and boundaries about the role Other professionals' perceptions of the EP role (according to EPs Working as a team Role challenges | Assessment methods and changes for EPs Intervention methods, barriers, and changes Professional practice frameworks Technology as a tool that supports and enables the role of the EP though has limitations Research and enquiry |

Advocates for the child and family and provide a key role in emotional support















EPs as decision makers or diagnosticians

Therapeutic orientations

Table A8

Sample Inductive Coding Process for Subject Node Theme for EPs in Healthcare Settings

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| Inductive Codes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist knowledge, • Educational knowledge, • Knowledge of school systems, • Experience working with children, • Knowledge of policy e.g., Circulars --knowledge of NEPS structure and way of working, educational needs, knowledge of, and experience in working | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of child development • Unique role • Knowledge of developmental difficulties, delays and disabilities • All placements in training are predominantly children's services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referring to evidence base • Information gathering and hypothesis testing • Importance of rationale • Applying theoretical models and frameworks • Critical thinking • Contributing psychological | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative problem solving • Consultation work • Engaging through consultation • Not having an 'expert' approach • Changing attributions of stakeholders • Changing the dialogue and narrative about a child | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including view of the child or young person • Being an advocate for those with a disability or minority groups • Challenging attributions other professionals when needed • Helping families to understand and accept a difficulty • Empowering parents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision maker • Certain elements of gatekeeper role remain • Managing clinical risk • Primary assessor • The profession that makes the diagnosis |
|-----------------|--|---|--|--|---|---|

| | | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| | with conditions that effect learning, | • Course material focused on children | knowledge to government to inform policy | | • Emotional Support Piece | • Providing the 'holding' piece for families and 'meeting them where there at | |
| | • How presenting problems impact on schooling, | | | | | | |
| | • Understanding and appreciating role of the school | | | | | | |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sub Themes | Specialist knowledge of lucation and school systems. | Specialist knowledge of child development | EPs as scientist practitioners | Move to more of a consultative approach when engaging with stakeholders | Advocates for the child and family and provide a key role in emotional support | EPs as decision makers or diagnosticians, | |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Theme | EPs provide several contributions in their role | | | | | | |

Appendix N: Annotated Sections of a Transcript (DPsy4)

Table A9

Annotated Sections of a Transcript (DPsy4)

| Data | Initial Codes |
|--|---|
| <p>Interviewer (I): Do you see any unique contribution as an educational psychologist?</p> | |
| <p>Participant (P): As a psychologist who has specific training in educational psychology, yeah, I definitely think there's huge value in the fact that every placement has been child based. And then if you were working in a service which is for children...then all of your experience has been with children, and that is hugely valuable, and all your course material has been geared and centred around children ... and I suppose, you know all your experience, and everything you look at is from that perspective. And I suppose that is unique to us</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Specific training in Educational Psychology</i> • <i>All placements in training are child based</i> • <i>Course material centred on children</i> |
| <p>Interviewer (I): How has your role as an Educational Psychologist within your work organisation shaped how you work with clients/service users? If that makes sense.</p> | |
| <p>Participant (P): OK, I suppose you know in terms of the role of the psychologist, that is mostly at that start of that journey. When a family comes into the service, it's kind of two main roles that you kind of have as the psychologist, and that's the, that you are The primary assessor most times. But also that emotional support piece. So, your role is around not just assessing the holistic development of the child and looking at all the different elements, but it's also, I suppose, supporting the family and kind of, holding that, you know, holding parents at a time when they are very emotional and raw, and I suppose managing you know, managing that and supporting that. And I suppose you know the psychologist..They're the ones that</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Primary Assessor</i> • <i>Emotional support role</i> • <i>Assessing holistic development of the child</i> • <i>Supporting families</i> • <i>Holding</i> • <i>Managing clinical risk</i> • <i>Meeting the parents the most</i> • <i>Being involved in all elements of the assessment</i> |

Data**Initial Codes**

manage that clinical risk as well, so you know, that's kind of a big a big part of it. So I suppose when I'm interacting with parents I suppose... Although I'm seen as the primary assessor, oftentimes I actually meet the parents the most during the assessment journey. Because I'm seeing I'm doing so many, like let's say for an ASD assessment the SLT might come to the ADOS, but I will be at all elements of that assessment. you know, I'll be at all appointments, so parents would build quite a good relationship.

(I) What I'm hearing is the unique contribution of the EP in your service and you kind of said its as primary assessor and then the kind of the emotional, support, piece and then you mentioned Risk management ...

(P): Yeah, managing the kind of clinical risk. I suppose that would be a big piece as well. Yeah, that would be the unique contribution I suppose we are the diagnosticians. you know we are the ones who are going to make that diagnosis. And we're also you know, and I suppose we're also well placed to support parents emotionally, but also that management of clinical risk of, let's say child protection. You know, children being on the wait list for a long period of time, you know, children engaging in particularly challenging behaviors. I suppose that would come back to the psychologist, a lot of the time on the team. And that ability to manage that risk and do those risk assessments would be kind of a role of the psychologist as well, which would be unique to the psychologist on the multidisciplinary team in comparison to other team members

- *Managing Clinical Risk*
- *Unique contribution*
- *Diagnosticians*
- *Supporting Parents Emotionally*
- *Supporting challenging behaviours*
- *Risk assessments*

(I)OK, and I just want to ask you a few questions on outcomes. Uhm, I mean by I suppose. First question, how

- *IFSP as measure*
 - *Progressing Disabilities*
-

| Data | Initial Codes |
|---|---|
| <p>do you measure or evaluate outcomes in your in your organization? In your service,</p> <p>(P): So we use the IFSP because of Progressing Disabilities so they are our measures of outcomes. They're going to be used as our stats going forward for the HSE, so there how we're measuring outcomes. They're part of our MIS, our online system. And we put them up and we have to say how they have gone even on the system. And so I suppose we take three priorities from the parents. And then we take goals that are in line with those priorities and we goal set around what the parents can do and how the team can support the parents with the strategy suggested during that meeting. And I suppose then it's time bound that you say six months, 12 months or whatever that there would be a review IFSP and you come back with that document and you see what has changed ,where they are at now. And I suppose every meeting you record the baseline of what the child is currently doing. The goal of what you want the child to achieve. The actions and strategies the parent is going to do. And then lastly how the team is going to support the parents in implementing those actions and strategies. And then, as I say, you have a review date in mind and you know you discuss that with parents and then you come back together and that's how you measure I suppose the outcomes and what must be going on. And I suppose you know prior to that it would have been more response to intervention. You know like and I suppose, still within psychology If it's not an IFSP. If it's actually a piece of intervention work, I would be more, I suppose looking at meeting parents, you know....consultation. Defining the problem if you like or whatever, and then setting clear goals and giving a plan and then having set a review date you know with parents about: "OK, we're going to review this.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>MIS online system</i> • <i>Priorities and goals</i> • <i>Time bound</i> • <i>Review of IFSP</i> • <i>Baseline Measures</i> • <i>Response to intervention</i> • <i>Through Consultation for intervention work</i> • <i>Defining the problem and setting goals</i> • <i>Review date</i> • <i>Deciding if desired outcomes have been reached</i> |

Data**Initial Codes**

We're going to come back together" And that's I suppose, how I've measured in terms of behaviour outcomes. That's how I would be measuring them on an individual basis with parents that I did a bit of behaviour intervention work with. It would be giving them a review date and looking at whether, the desired outcomes that we had agreed upon had been reached, and if they hadn't, how we can change the intervention plan to meet those targets, or if they have, do we need to add a new goal.

Appendix O: Informed Consent Form



Research Study on Educational Psychologists

Informed Consent Form

- I have read and understood the Participant Information Letter
- I understand what the project is about
- I know that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the project at any stage without giving any reason and without consequence.
- I consent to this interview being recorded
- I am aware that my results will be kept confidential.
- I have read this form completely; I am 18 years of age or older and am happy to take part in the study on Educational Psychologists.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Appendix P: Subject Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Healthcare Settings

Table A10

Subject Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Healthcare Settings

| EPs working in healthcare settings | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|--|--|--|---|
| Subject Node Theme | EPs provide several contributions in their role | | | | | | |
| Sub-themes | Specialist knowledge of education and school systems. | Specialist knowledge of child development | EPs as scientist practitioners | A systemic and holistic approach to casework | Move to more of a consultative approach when engaging with stakeholders | Advocates for the child and family and provide a key role in emotional support | EPs as decision makers or diagnosticians, |
| Supporting Quotations | “As a psychologist who has specific training in educational psychology, yeah, I definitely think there's huge value in the fact that every placement has been child based. And then if you were working in a service | “We bring a unique role in terms of our understanding of, like I mentioned before, child development and knowledge of kind of | “Ultimately, I consider myself a scientist practitioner.... having your evidence base and having a rationale | “We maybe don't accept things at just at face value, and I think that sort of critical thinking, information gathering and standing back. I think in trying to see the big | “I think the unique role of an EP is things like school systems and even consultation as well. I think that's something that a huge emphasis | “But also, that emotional support piece. So, your role is around not just assessing the holistic development of the child and looking at | “There is a sort of a certain... we hold a certain resource, or there's a sort of a gatekeeper role still remains. And I know schools are moving away |

EPs working in healthcare settings

| Subject Node Theme | EPs provide several contributions in their role | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| Sub-themes | Specialist knowledge of education and school systems. | Specialist knowledge of child development | EPs as scientist practitioners | A systemic and holistic approach to casework | Move to more of a consultative approach when engaging with stakeholders | Advocates for the child and family and provide a key role in emotional support | EPs as decision makers or diagnosticians, |
| which is for children...then all of your experience has been with children, and that is hugely valuable, and all your course material has been geared and centred around children ... and I suppose, you know all your experience, and everything you look at is from that perspective. And I suppose that is unique to us” (DPsy4) | developmental disabilities or developmental difficulties” (DPsy16) | for it” (clinical decisions) (DPsy2) | picture so that we sometimes are the one who says, “is it appropriate to work on this goal right now? Is this right for this family? Is there too much going on?” (DPsy1) | is placed on in our training and in our profession.” (DPsy16) “I suppose it’s a very important part (consultation). It’s it’s the backbone of what we do” (DPsy12) | all the different elements, but it’s also, I suppose, supporting the family and kind of, holding that, you know, holding parents at a time when they are very emotional and raw, and I suppose managing you know, managing that and | from it, but it’s a tricky one to navigate.” (DPsy1) “I suppose you know the psychologist ... They’re the ones that manage that clinical risk as well, so you know, that’s kind of a big a big part of it.” (DPsy4) “Although I’m seen as the primary assessor, oftentimes I actually meet | |

EPs working in healthcare settings

Subject Node Theme

EPs provide several contributions in their role

| Sub-themes | Specialist knowledge of education and school systems. | Specialist knowledge of child development | EPs as scientist practitioners | A systemic and holistic approach to casework | Move to more of a consultative approach when engaging with stakeholders | Advocates for the child and family and provide a key role in emotional support | EPs as decision makers or diagnosticians, |
|-------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
|-------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|

supporting that.” (DPsy4) the parents the most during the assessment journey.

“I would see my role, Because I’m seeing I’m again, is to promote doing so many, like let’s say the rights of the for an ASD assessment the person with a SLT might come to the disability. To try and ADOS, but I will be at all gently open people’s elements of that minds as well. You assessment.” (DPsy4)

know, if you go into a “Yeah, that would be the school and you’re unique contribution. I meeting with a suppose we are the

EPs working in healthcare settings

Subject Node Theme

EPs provide several contributions in their role

| Sub-themes | Specialist knowledge of education and school systems. | Specialist knowledge of child development | EPs as scientist practitioners | A systemic and holistic approach to casework | Move to more of a consultative approach when engaging with stakeholders | Advocates for the child and family and provide a key role in emotional support | EPs as decision makers or diagnosticians, |
|------------|---|---|--------------------------------|--|---|--|---|
|------------|---|---|--------------------------------|--|---|--|---|

resource teacher who diagnosticians. you know
 has a very narrow we are the ones who are
 mindset of what the going to make that
 child should be doing diagnosis" (DPsy4)
 and how they should
 be behaving. My role
 is to help. Open that
 mind a little bit more
 so that the person's
 rights are
 respected..... It's not
 just bringing in my

EPs working in healthcare settings

| Subject Node Theme | EPs provide several contributions in their role | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|---------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| Sub-themes | Specialist knowledge of education and school systems. | Specialist knowledge of child development | EPs as scientist practitioners | A systemic and holistic approach to casework | Move to more of a consultative approach when engaging with stakeholders | Advocates for the child and family and provide a key role in emotional support | EPs as decision makers or diagnosticians, |
| | | | | | | own beliefs, personal beliefs, it's to help advocate and then ultimately benefit the wider community and the next child that comes in with a disability.” (DPsy12) | |
| Sample codes | -Knowledge of the school system | -Knowledge of developmental | -Referring to the evidence base | -All-encompassing view, not looking at just one area of development | -Collaborative problem solving | -Including the view of the child or young person | -Decision maker -Certain elements of the gatekeeper role remain |

EPs working in healthcare settings

| Subject Node Theme | EPs provide several contributions in their role | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| Sub-themes | Specialist knowledge of education and school systems. | Specialist knowledge of child development | EPs as scientist practitioners | A systemic and holistic approach to casework | Move to more of a consultative approach when engaging with stakeholders | Advocates for the child and family and provide a key role in emotional support | EPs as decision makers or diagnosticians, |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Understanding and appreciating the role of the school -Knowledge of and experience in working with conditions that affect learning -How presenting problems impact schooling -Practical and workable recommendations for schools educational needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> difficulties, delays, and disabilities -All placements in training are predominantly children’s services -Being practical about needs and goals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Information gathering and hypothesis testing -Importance of rationale -Applying theoretical models and frameworks -Critical thinking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Consultation supports this -Biopsychosocial model -Family systems approach -Awareness of family, school, and community systems - ‘Drilling down’ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not having an ‘expert’ approach Changing attributions of stakeholders -Changing the dialogue and narrative about a child | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Being an advocate for those with a disability or minority groups -Challenging attributions of other professionals when needed -helping families to understand and accept a difficulty | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Managing clinical risk -Primary assessor -The profession that makes the diagnosis | |

EPs working in healthcare settings

Subject Node Theme

EPs provide several contributions in their role

| Sub-themes | Specialist knowledge of education and school systems. | Specialist knowledge of child development | EPs as scientist practitioners | A systemic and holistic approach to casework | Move to more of a consultative approach when engaging with stakeholders | Advocates for the child and family and provide a key role in emotional support | EPs as decision makers or diagnosticians, |
|-------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
|-------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|

-Knowledge of policy, e.g., circulars --Knowledge of NEPS structure and way of working
bridge the gap between health and education

-Contributing psychological knowledge to the government to inform policy

-Seeing the bigger picture and tying everything together
-Challenging the conventional view of being predominantly cognitive assessment focused

-Empowering parents
-Providing the 'holding' piece for families and 'meeting them where they are at.'

Appendix Q: Subject Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Education Settings

Table A11

Subject Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Education Settings

| EPs working in education settings | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|--|
| Subject Node | EPs provide several contributions in their role | | | | | |
| Theme | | | | | | |
| Sub-themes | Specialist knowledge of education and school systems. | Specialist knowledge of child development | EPs as scientist practitioners | A systemic and holistic approach to casework | Move to more of a consultative approach when engaging with stakeholders | Advocates for the child and family and provide a key role in providing emotional support |
| Supporting Quotations | “I also then have the school system side of things where I’ll know exactly what’s going on” (SPsy5) | “I suppose with (our) training (in) child development and all of that would be quite key.” (SPsy13) | “That’s what educational psychology does. It brings a psychology, you know? It brings it from the lives of the children into the school and, and it makes it understandable for school staff so that | “You know, I think we, we have become a lot more involved at a systemic level from the department, particularly in the development of well-being policy, and you know, for schools | “That was the level of consultation that happened at that time (in the 2000s). Over the years, that has evolved as resource provision has been removed from psychologists in terms of gatekeepers and now...I would do more consultation meetings, more problem-solving meetings - collaborative problem-solving | I probably am more comfortable with conflict and situations where everybody maybe just isn't getting along that well. Because a lot of our job Eoin, you're going in maybe where the relationship is maybe a little bit intractable, and there’s tension there. So, a big part of our role is to |

EPs working in education settings

Subject Node **EPs provide several contributions in their role**

Theme

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Sub-themes | Specialist knowledge of education and school systems. | Specialist knowledge of child development | EPs as scientist practitioners | A systemic and holistic approach to casework | Move to more of a consultative approach when engaging with stakeholders | Advocates for the child and family and provide a key role in providing emotional support |
|-------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>school staff are themselves able to modify the way they interact and perceive how they work with these kids, and I think that's the value of educational psychology," (SPsy19)</p> | <p>across the country." (SPsy8)</p> <p>"So yeah, I firmly believe in that the ecological system around them is actually what we need to work with at least as much as the child, if not more." (SPsy18)</p> | <p>meetings, then I would do assessments. Even though I still do assessments" (SPsy17)</p> <p>"So, for me, like consultation, the important part of it is ...It's sort of the equal standing of everybody in it. What I mean by consultation is everybody is involved from the get-go. There are no side meetings with parents. There's no side meetings with teachers. I meet everybody together all the time." (SPsy8)</p> | <p>try...I think you're doing a fair bit of mediation to try and repair, and by the end of that meeting where they were both having the argument, they were both speaking to each other." (SPsy8)</p> <p>"I very much take people where they're at. And when they come and when I visit a school, and I meet parents or teachers, it's very much taking their truth and moving with that. And being quite open to their issues or concerns as they develop and</p> |
|---|---|--|--|

EPs working in education settings

Subject Node **EPs provide several contributions in their role**

Theme

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Sub-themes | Specialist knowledge of education and school systems. | Specialist knowledge of child development | EPs as scientist practitioners | A systemic and holistic approach to casework | Move to more of a consultative approach when engaging with stakeholders | Advocates for the child and family and provide a key role in providing emotional support |
|-------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>“So, the biopsychosocial would be the most one that I would fall into” (SPsy17)</p> <p>“I would very much take a biopsychosocial model. (SPsy13)</p> <p>“But I think it's that I see the bigger system. I think that I, I'm not</p> | <p>“So, the biopsychosocial would be the most one that I would fall into” (SPsy17)</p> <p>“So, we agreed that my role was working with the parents and the school to repair that relationship and work together. That was my role.” (SPsy7)</p> <p>“I just don't want to be seen as an expert. Now that's not because I'm not confident, and it's not because I don't feel I'm not good or anything.... I just don't want to be viewed as the expert. I want to be viewed as a facilitator... Yes, I have some other skills and training that maybe the people around the table don't have, but the mom or</p> | <p>how I can help change that or reframe the problems to make them easier or better for them and the child or young people” (SPsy18)</p> |
|--|--|--|

EPs working in education settings

Subject Node **EPs provide several contributions in their role**

Theme

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Sub-themes | Specialist knowledge of education and school systems. | Specialist knowledge of child development | EPs as scientist practitioners | A systemic and holistic approach to casework | Move to more of a consultative approach when engaging with stakeholders | Advocates for the child and family and provide a key role in providing emotional support |
|-------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|

focusing on one child and one family, and I think that that's part of the value that we have that we see the bigger system.” (SPsy18)

the dad or the guardian and the teacher all have. (SPsy3)

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| Sample codes | -Supported by placements in education settings | -Advocate for the child and young person -Bringing a realism | -EPs adhere to evidence-based practice -Consuming and conducting research | Bronfenbrenner -Not taking a within-child view | Collaborative problem solving -Not having an 'expert' approach Changing attributions of stakeholders | -Foster relationships -Home school liaison -Mediating tensions -Objective third party |
|---------------------|--|---|--|---|--|--|

EPs working in education settings

Subject Node **EPs provide several contributions in their role**

Theme

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Sub-themes | Specialist knowledge of education and school systems. | Specialist knowledge of child development | EPs as scientist practitioners | A systemic and holistic approach to casework | Move to more of a consultative approach when engaging with stakeholders | Advocates for the child and family and provide a key role in providing emotional support |
|-------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|

-Unique understanding

-Knowledge of school system and school policies

-Applying psychology vs teaching

Biopsychosocial approach

-Making sense of 'messy' situations

-Changing the dialogue and narrative about a child

Appendix R: Subject Node Contradictions

Table A12

Subject Node Contradictions

| Type of contradiction | Contradictions | Direct Quotation |
|--|---|--|
| Primary contradictions within the Subject Nodes but between both Activity Systems | Diagnosticians of neurodevelopmental and mental health disorders in healthcare settings, particularly Disability and CAMHs, whereas less emphasis on diagnosis and more needs led in education settings | <p>“We are the diagnosticians. you know we are the ones who are going to make that diagnosis” (DPsy4)</p> <p>“You could put five or six diagnoses on some children. They're not very helpful. I think there's a lifelong implication. And really, it's about how best to meet the young persons or a family or school is about meeting someone, how best to meet the needs because I think sometimes some stuff can be very quickly pathologised” (SPsy13)</p> |
| Primary contradictions Within the Subject Nodes for Psychologists Working in Healthcare Settings Activity System | Change in engaging in diagnostic practice versus engaging in formal diagnosis | <p>“Historically, (we) would have provided a diagnostic assessment, and so the changes there are there with the Preliminary Team Assessment, that it would now be a screening assessment and we would identify the child's needs as opposed to giving any formal diagnosis” (DPsy1)</p> <p>“We still need the assessment for the diagnostic piece” (DPsy12)</p> <p>“Diagnosing kind of mental health difficulties” (CPsy20)</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Primary contradictions Within the Subject | EPs identify as scientist-practitioners but difficult | "But like ultimately I consider myself a scientist practitioner" (DPsy2) |
| Nodes for Psychologists Working in Healthcare Settings Activity System | to consume or conduct research due to certain barriers | "So formal research, it's not part of my role, and I wish it was, but that would be probably my favourite part of the job, I mean. I love research. But it's just not possible like our wait lists are just years, years-long" (DPsy2) |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Primary contradictions Within the Subject | EPs identify as scientist-practitioners but find it | "At the end of the day, we are scientist-practitioners" (SPsy17). |
| Nodes for Psychologists working in Education Settings Activity System | difficult to consume or conduct research outside of Working Groups | "Because time to read and time to Brief yourself with the new research is just not really built into. You know the time when you have to do casework, we do. I suppose what we do in NEPS is we have working groups for different things." (SPsy19) |

Appendix S: Rules Node Theme

Table A13

Rules Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Healthcare Settings

EPs working in healthcare settings

Rules Node Theme Perspectives of rules that support or constrain the EP role

| Sub-themes | The importance of ethical practice amongst EPs | Legislation | Philosophies guiding practice |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|
| Supporting Quotations | <p>“But it's important to note as well that at times the guidelines, what's laid out in the guidelines, can be, it can contradict with legislation and governmental guidelines. So, it can pose a range of ethical dilemmas for professionals in terms of, particularly, I suppose, in relation to conducting PTA's because, as we know, the PSI, you know, has issued several statements around whether its best practice. So, it is very much that we are informed though by the principles of, the core principles of the PSI guidelines. So, in terms of working within our limits of competency is really important” (DPsy9)</p> | <p>“So, it is a very much family-centred practice kind of model that we're working off at the moment within the service. And that comes from the Progressing Disabilities ethos” (DPsy4)</p> | <p>“I'd be a social constructivist. Just some ideas ...I think very much. So actually, looking at the impact of the environment and how that shapes our thinking and how we kind of understand the world around it, around us, is all socially constructed, and I think that goes back to the labelling as well... I suppose why do we need labels, and we need labels to meet the political agendas of health and education essentially” (DPsy2)</p> <p>“I, I really like the idea of values as you know, a goal has a finish line. Whereas a value is like saying north when do you</p> |

EPs working in healthcare settings

Rules Node Theme Perspectives of rules that support or constrain the EP role

| Sub-themes | The importance of ethical practice amongst EPs | Legislation | Philosophies guiding practice |
|------------|--|-------------|---|
| | <p>“Our ethical guidelines are really important, and as an educational psychologist, constantly referring back to those and questioning, just because the organization tells me to do this, is this in line with my own professional standards? Is this psychologically sound? Can I stand over this as a professional, and sometimes, I suppose “you find that though its being asked by the organisation, I think I, initially naively, I would have thought “, Well, of course, that will be OK”.</p> <p>And actually, it's not, and there's been occasions where I really had to stand up and say hold on a second. I'm not sure that this is right or that we should be doing this, or that this is best practice. And I think that's something that from my training in psychology and as an educational psychologist, you are trained to be critical to, to work ethically” (DPsy1)</p> | | <p>get north? You never you never get north, but you're going north” (DPsy16)</p> |
| | <p>“That lack of diversity has a lot to do with the economic barrier of doing training? Ya, I think it's all to do with that to</p> | | |

EPs working in healthcare settings

Rules Node Theme Perspectives of rules that support or constrain the EP role

| Sub-themes | The importance of ethical practice amongst EPs | Legislation | Philosophies guiding practice |
|--------------|--|--|--|
| | <p>be honest about it. I think like, and that's limiting. I suppose diversity. Yeah, it's kind of is. That's limiting diversity to perhaps like socio-economic background, but I do think it limits it. I think the majority of Education Psychologists are white and middle class. And it's just not good for the profession. It's not good for clients, and it would be great if there was more diversity, but there's not." (DPsy1)</p> | | |
| Sample codes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Importance of ethical guidelines - How guidelines can contradict legislation - Ethical dilemmas - The economic barrier of training to become an Educational Psychologist | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PSI professional guidelines - AON (informs service delivery) - Children's First (importance of being a mandated person) - The change to Progressing Disabilities. informs service delivery (Strengths, limitations, hopes for future) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equality and inclusion - Advocating for children and families - Being reflective, non-judgmental, and open - Trauma-informed - Not trying to 'fix' or 'label' the child - Viewing behaviour as communicating a need |

EPs working in healthcare settings

Rules Node Theme Perspectives of rules that support or constrain the EP role

Sub-themes

The importance of ethical practice amongst EPs

Legislation

Philosophies guiding practice

- Following SOPs

- working collaboratively and eclectically with families
using a strengths-based approach

Appendix T: Rules Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Education Settings

Table A14

Rules Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Education Settings

EPs working in education settings

Rules Node Theme Perspectives of rules that support or constrain the EP role

| Sub-themes | The importance of ethical practice amongst EPs | Legislation | Philosophies guiding practice |
|-----------------------|---|--|--|
| Supporting Quotations | <p>“I feel that they (Codes of Ethics), ...they are a very helpful security like they're a framework that's really important.... it's so important I think for new psychologists it actually should, it should be seen as a guide rail and handrail that keeps you safe, keeps your clients safe.” (SPsy18)</p> | <p>“Look, yeah, you have the Better Outcomes. Brighter Future, Vision for Change. They're all meaningless, do you know what I mean? All these great pieces of text. And then they're not being implemented. Epsom Act, there's no legal requirement for any of that.” (SPsy5)</p> <p>“I think the special education teacher Circular of 2017. The move away from the general allocation model is impacting positively on my work because what that means is I don't need to assess a child to see if they have a disability for resource hours. Yeah, that's a positive policy document, I think. Now there is</p> | <p>“I think it's very important for everyone to figure their own out for themselves. I think every EP should be clear on what their philosophies are and obviously be open for it to be evolving...So I think it's an under-asked question, and it is really important.” (Psy18)</p> |

EPs working in education settings

Rules Node Theme Perspectives of rules that support or constrain the EP role

| Sub-themes | The importance of ethical practice amongst EPs | Legislation | Philosophies guiding practice |
|--------------|--|---|--|
| | | <p>still problems with it. About how resource is allocated based on certain criteria, but it's a step in the move in the direction” (SPsy5)</p> <p>“And I think it's (legislation) supporting people to, to understand their own roles and responsibilities as well... (SPsy7)</p> | |
| Sample codes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acting ethically as integral to everyday practice - Internalising ethics - Importance of PSI code of ethics - Tension between legislation and guidelines (e.g., PSI) - Unethical and outdated legislation (PTAs, Assistive Technology) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constraints of being a civil servant due to parts of the legislation associated with it - How they support work (changes to circulars mean more diverse casework, --Helps people understand their roles and provide a framework and guidance) - Embedded in work practice (such as GDPR and Child Protection) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An under-asked question and the importance of being clear on what your philosophies are - Being flexible and creative - Systems level thinking (not situating difficulties solely within the child) - Viewing presenting concerns as challenges rather than ‘deficits.’ |

EPs working in education settings

Rules Node Theme Perspectives of rules that support or constrain the EP role

| Sub-themes | The importance of ethical practice amongst EPs | Legislation | Philosophies guiding practice |
|-------------------|---|---|--|
| | | - Lack of meaningful implementation of some legislation (Better outcomes, brighter futures, Epson Act, Vision for change) | - Equality and inclusion (the importance of the child's voice; social justice) - Non-judgmental and not making assumptions - Professionalism - Social constructivism (challenging conventional narratives) - Trauma-informed |

Appendix U: Rules Node Contradictions

Table A15

Rules Node Contradictions

| Type of contradiction | Contradictions | Direct Quotation |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Rules Node</p> <p>Psychologists in Healthcare Settings versus Education settings</p> | <p>PDS versus Department of Education Circulars as key documents/legislative pieces that shape practice</p> | <p>“I think PDS is probably the one that impacts on my work the most” (DPsy2)</p> <p>“The circulars rule all. The circular, the Irish exemption circular massive one. The assistive technology circular, massive one. The other ones you mentioned are all More services specific like progressing disabilities... it doesn't necessarily impact my work.” (SPsy19)</p> |
| <p>Rules Node</p> <p>Primary Contradiction Within the Rules Nodes for Psychologists Working in Healthcare Settings Activity System</p> | <p>The contradiction between ethical practice versus guidelines</p> | <p>But it's important to note as well that at times the guidelines, what's laid out in the guidelines, can be, UM, it can contradict with, you know, legislation and governmental guidelines as well so it can pose a range of ethical dilemmas for professionals in terms of, particularly, I suppose in relation to conducting PTA's because as we know, the PSI, you know, has issued several statements around, you know whether, that that isn't best practice, so it is very much that we are informed, though by the principles of, the core principles of the PSI guidelines. So, in terms of working within our limits of competency is really important. (DPsy9)</p> |

| Type of contradiction | Contradictions | Direct Quotation |
|--|--|--|
| Rules Node | The tension between departmental policy and professional psychological opinion | “Sometimes there's a tension between (being) an officer of the department of education. The Department wants you to implement departmental policy. But equally, you're a psychologist, and you're there to give your psychological professional opinion” (SPsy8) |
| Primary Contradiction Within the Rules Nodes for Psychologists Working in Education Settings Activity System | | |

Appendix V: Community Node

Table A16

Community Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Healthcare Settings

EPs working in healthcare settings

| Community Node Theme | Community levels, barriers and changes that EPs perceive influence their role | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Sub-themes | Barriers and hopes for the future for community engagement for EPs. | EPs working at different levels of the community and changes to community engagement. |
| Supporting Quotations | “Community comes to us (the service)” (DPpsy15) | “...In terms of the frameworks, you know that inform PDS and the models that they are very much looking at supporting the young person to participate within their community.” (DPsy9) |
| Sample codes | Guarded service Takes time to build relationships Would like to be involved more within the community Would like more links with schools | Working predominantly at the family level, and to some degree, the school, consistent with PDS Signposting parents to other community support Linking more with other services, both local and national post training The PDS model supports family engagement with the community through IFSPs |

Appendix W: Community Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Education Settings

Table A17

Community Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Education Settings

EPs working in education settings

Community Node Theme Community levels, barriers and changes that EPs perceive influence their role

| Sub-themes | Barriers and hopes for the future for community engagement for EPs. | EPs work at different levels of the community and changes to community engagement. |
|-------------------|--|---|
|-------------------|--|---|

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Supporting Quotations | “More interagency collaboration” – SPsy17 | “I see my role as with the school community and with the local health community”. (SPsy7) “Local know what local needs” (SPsy8). |
|-----------------------|---|---|

| | | |
|--------------|--|--|
| Sample codes | Phone clinic or drop-in service similar to primary care More interagency collaboration (e.g., Delivering programs with HSE psychologists) | Predominantly school level (siloed) Contacting professionals from other services Meitheal meetings Liaising with local support services (Tusla, youth service, Jigsaw) The importance of localised rather than just centralised supports. “Local know what local needs.” |
|--------------|--|--|

Working at a practical level rather than influencing policy

Keeping up to date with changes in the HSE

Appendix X: Community Node Contradictions

Table A18

Community Node Contradictions

| Type of contradiction | Contradictions | Direct Quotation |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Community Node</p> <p>Primary contradictions within the Community Node but between both Activity Systems for Psychologists in Healthcare Settings versus Education settings</p> | <p>EPs working predominantly at the family level in healthcare settings versus mainly at the school level in education settings</p> | <p>“A lot of the time, you would just maybe check in with school as well just to see that everything was going OK. You know, but my role is definitely less within the community than it is with the family (DPsy4)</p> <p>“So, I suppose there is linking in with those services (voluntary organisations in the community) as well ... but like the school, probably schools less so” (CPsy14)</p> <p>“I see my role as like with school community” (SPsy7)</p> |
| <p>Community Node</p> <p>Primary contradictions within the Community Node for Psychologists Working in Healthcare Settings Activity System</p> | <p>EPs want to engage more with the community versus the time it takes to build relationships and partnerships in the community</p> | <p>In terms of the frameworks, you know that inform PDS and the models that they are very much looking at supporting the young person to participate within their community...Developing links with the likes of SENOS and other professionals working with schools within the community as well. And you know, building on those relationships. But again, it does take time to develop those relationships, and you know that that sometimes as well can be challenging. As I said, due to the transient, either our transient involvement with the families themselves or the transient, you know, movement around between different services as well (DPsy9)</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Community Node | EPs want to engage and collaborate with other | I always try to kind of get to know somebody in each of the different services, so at least if there's |
| Primary contradictions Within the | services even though this can be difficult | something crop up, you can ring them that person. They would ring me, maybe for. Bit of advice |
| Community Node for Psychologists | | on different things. (SPsy8) |
| Working in Education Settings Activity | | It's harder to really get immersed yourself in communities ...Unless you're doing this in your own |
| System | | time or that it's been negotiated with your schools (SPsy5) |

Appendix Y: Tools Node

Table A19

Tools Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Healthcare Settings

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| Setting | EPs working in healthcare settings | | | | | |
| Tools Node | Tools of assessment, intervention and research EPs perceive as influencing their role. | | | | | |
| Theme | | | | | | |
| Sub-themes | Assessment methods and changes for EPs | Intervention methods, barriers, and changes | Professional practice frameworks | Technology as a tool that supports and enables the role of the EP though has limitations. | Research and enquiry | Therapeutic orientations |
| Supporting Quotations | “Consultation is used probably the most to gather the information that maybe before assessments might have done, you know. So, I think | “Sometimes we get less time to deliver it (intervention)...again, it's back to the caseload and | “There are reflective practice tools that are really, really important as well. So, | “I think it's, it's a positive in the sense it's more accessible to families, so the | “Yeah, so like formal research, it's not part of my role, and I wish it was, but that would be probably My favourite part of | “I would not be so rigid in what I'm using... You know, you might have one idea of |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| Setting | EPs working in healthcare settings | | | | | |
| Tools Node | Tools of assessment, intervention and research EPs perceive as influencing their role. | | | | | |
| Theme | | | | | | |
| Sub-themes | Assessment methods and changes for EPs | Intervention methods, barriers, and changes | Professional practice frameworks | Technology as a tool that supports and enables the role of the EP though has limitations. | Research and enquiry | Therapeutic orientations |
| | there's definitely a move away from that big formal kind of multipart assessments if they're not needed. I suppose one because you probably just don't have the time, and there's probably too much to do, but as well, you probably are making a judgment on what kind of information you need, and really like doing a full assessment, does | the demand on the assessment, and the wait lists that sometimes the intervention takes the back seat. And it's harder to coordinate it. You have to put a lot more effort into preparing for it. So basically, the way it's changed, I suppose, is that | I suppose like even the Gibbs model would be one that sticks out. We would have done like peer supervision using that model" (CPsy14) | technology has allowed things to be maybe a little bit more efficient and more accessible." | the job, I mean. I love research. But it's just not possible like our wait lists" (DPsy2) "That's something that my training would definitely have instilled in me to be quite a critical consumer of research where the information is coming from and even in terms of giving information to parents that | what it's going to come in the door, but when they come in the door, you might totally change your mind and go down a different avenue" (DPsy12) |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|--|--|---------------------------------|
| Setting | EPs working in healthcare settings | | | | | |
| Tools Node | Tools of assessment, intervention and research EPs perceive as influencing their role. | | | | | |
| Theme | | | | | | |
| Sub-themes | Assessment methods and changes for EPs | Intervention methods, barriers, and changes | Professional practice frameworks | Technology as a tool that supports and enables the role of the EP though has limitations. | Research and enquiry | Therapeutic orientations |
| | that get you what you're looking for? (DPsy6) | it's, it's harder to find the time to really get it done.” (DPsy12) | | | encouraging them to think about: Well, I got this from this source.” (DPsy1) | |
| | “Within the PDS model as well, so it is most definitely. I suppose what we can see is that there won't be as much emphasis on carrying out, I suppose, cognitive assessments necessarily. That we may not, that may not be necessary. It may only | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|---|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Setting | EPs working in healthcare settings | | | | | |
| Tools Node | Tools of assessment, intervention and research EPs perceive as influencing their role. | | | | | |
| Theme | | | | | | |
| Sub-themes | Assessment methods and changes for EPs | Intervention methods, barriers, and changes | Professional practice frameworks | Technology as a tool that supports and enables the role of the EP though has limitations. | Research and enquiry | Therapeutic orientations |
| | <p>be for children who require special school placements” (DPsy9)</p> <p>“I didn't do any kind of assessment because it didn't meet a referral query or if it wasn't part of my clinical formulation or there was no need to do it ...So I will need to do cognitive assessments, but I'll only</p> | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|--|---|--|--|--|
| Setting | EPs working in healthcare settings | | | | | |
| Tools Node | Tools of assessment, intervention and research EPs perceive as influencing their role. | | | | | |
| Theme | | | | | | |
| Sub-themes | Assessment methods and changes for EPs | Intervention methods, barriers, and changes | Professional practice frameworks | Technology as a tool that supports and enables the role of the EP though has limitations. | Research and enquiry | Therapeutic orientations |
| | do it, I'll only do them if it's if there's an absolute need." DPsy2 | | | | | |
| Sample codes | - More of a consultative approach, particularly with IFSP, which is family lead - Forms of consultation | - Barriers (lack of funding, training, and time) - Changes (more intervention at the universal level, more intervention due to PDS, more group work, skills | - Types (IFF,5 P's, family systems) - How frameworks support assessment, formulation, and intervention | - Types - How it has changed since COVID - How technology enables role and | - Advantages of doctoral training to support R+E - The importance of research as part of being a scientist practitioner | - Types - Eclectic, open and adapted to the needs of the client - Evidence-based |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|--|---|---|---|
| Setting | EPs working in healthcare settings | | | | | |
| Tools Node | Tools of assessment, intervention and research EPs perceive as influencing their role. | | | | | |
| Theme | | | | | | |
| Sub-themes | Assessment methods and changes for EPs | Intervention methods, barriers, and changes | Professional practice frameworks | Technology as a tool that supports and enables the role of the EP though has limitations. | Research and enquiry | Therapeutic orientations |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment is less driven by resources and less use of cognitive assessments - more needs lead, - child-centred and holistic, with an emphasis on the biopsychosocial model - the importance of assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> have broadened, virtual delivery) 1 types (evidence-based yet bespoke to client needs, group-based, individual, parent-mediated, psychoeducation) - Importance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Often used intuitively rather than explicitly written out - the importance of reflective practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> supports service engagement - Limitations in the use of technology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Importance of evidence base (supported by desk-based research) and keeping up skills - Lack of conducting research - Barrier to consuming and conducting research (Time, not a priority, lack of confidence/competence) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengths-based and importance of the child or young persons' voice |

Appendix Z: Tools Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Education Settings

Table A20

Tools Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Education Settings

| Setting | EPs working in education settings | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| Tools Node | Tools of assessment, intervention and research EPs perceive as influencing their role. | | | | | |
| Theme | | | | | | |
| Sub-themes | Assessment methods and changes for EPs | Intervention methods, barriers, and changes | Professional practice frameworks | Technology as a tool that supports and enables the role of the EP though has limitations. | Research and enquiry. | Therapeutic orientations |
| Supporting Quotations | “Some schools have reduced the number of requests for assessment, ...for example, Irish exemptions RACE accommodations, reviews at the end of | “What we're doing is supporting the interventions through the school and through the parents” (SPsy10) | “I'll say it's eclectic, so the biopsychosocial would be the most one that I would fall into” (SPsy17) | “I don't believe they're useful for parent meetings...you're missing out on some of the nuances of that face-to-face engagement, and | I do think that one of the advantages of the doctorate-level training is...it's critical to be able to critically evaluate research because you can find articles and go, oh, that's really interesting. | “It's usually like a trans therapeutic model.” (SPsy5) “I suppose I bring elements of all of those, you know, the CBT and |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| Setting | EPs working in education settings | | | | | |
| Tools Node | Tools of assessment, intervention and research EPs perceive as influencing their role. | | | | | |
| Theme | | | | | | |
| Sub-themes | Assessment methods and changes for EPs | Intervention methods, barriers, and changes | Professional practice frameworks | Technology as a tool that supports and enables the role of the EP though has limitations. | Research and enquiry. | Therapeutic orientations |
| | primary school. All those things NEPS were required to do in the past, and now because of Department of Education policy, we don't have to do that" (SPsy3) | "And I suppose I think education psychology is far more about supporting the teachers that they have an ongoing relationship with, to have a relationship of trust with the child and support the child" (SPsy7) | "Yeah, problem analysis framework. That would be the overarching one that I did that I would use, and I definitely would think IFF, Bronfenbrenner, you know, looking at the different aspects" (SPsy8) | I prefer face-to-face engagement" (SPsy17). "People have been doing sort of Tele assessment. I'm not. I didn't engage in that, to be honest, didn't feel comfortable. Uhm, some people did." (SPsy5) | But the quality of the study might be very poor. (SPsy7) Listen, you'd love to read more, and you'd love to. Absolutely would love it, but it's just Time as you know yourself. But I suppose I do try to look at the research briefs. (SPsy13) "Doing research, not so good." (SPsy17) | solution-focused to my practice without like setting myself up as offering CBT Per se." (SPsy7) |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|--|--|---|---|
| Setting | EPs working in education settings | | | | | |
| Tools Node | Tools of assessment, intervention and research EPs perceive as influencing their role. | | | | | |
| Theme | | | | | | |
| Sub-themes | Assessment methods and changes for EPs | Intervention methods, barriers, and changes | Professional practice frameworks | Technology as a tool that supports and enables the role of the EP though has limitations. | Research and enquiry. | Therapeutic orientations |
| Sample codes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Challenging the perception that EPs are cognitive assessment focused (when in fact, used only when needed) - More social and emotional assessment - Importance of consultation: -More | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Types of intervention vary (therapeutic and psychoeducation, often linked to assessment evidence-based not doing it as much personally, but supporting teachers to deliver it and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Importance of frameworks - Adapting them and using them flexibly - Types | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can support and enable work - There are barriers to its use and some reticence, particularly for teleassessment - New Psymis system supporting the move to paperless working | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advantages of doctoral training to support R+E - Importance of evidence base (supported by desk-based research) and keeping up skills - Research conducted and disseminated by -Working groups and trainees is helpful - Barrier to consuming and conducting research (Time, not | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using them eclectically and not being bound to one type - Using elements of therapies rather than whole programs - Training supports the use of more therapies - Types used (CBT, Family systemic, person-centred, |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|--|--|---|
| Setting | EPs working in education settings | | | | | |
| Tools Node | Tools of assessment, intervention and research EPs perceive as influencing their role. | | | | | |
| Theme | | | | | | |
| Sub-themes | Assessment methods and changes for EPs | Intervention methods, barriers, and changes | Professional practice frameworks | Technology as a tool that supports and enables the role of the EP though has limitations. | Research and enquiry. | Therapeutic orientations |
| | consultation than traditional cognitive assessment. -Types, strengths, and challenges | providing additional support if interventions are not working | | | a priority, lack of confidence/competence) | psychodynamic, solution-focused, trauma-informed) |

Appendix AA: Tools Node Contradictions

Table A21

Tools Node Contradictions

| Type of contradiction | Contradictions | Direct Quotation |
|--|---|---|
| Tools Node Psychologists in Healthcare Settings versus Education settings Primary contradictions within the Tools Node but Between Both Activity Systems | Diagnostic Tools versus screeners for mental health and neurodevelopmental disorders | “You might be using a standardized assessment piece around suicidality” (CPsy20) “We do lots of emotional behavioural like Achenbachs. We do a lot of them, but again their screening tools, so they're not assessment tools.” (SPsy10) |
| Tools Node Psychologists in Healthcare Settings versus Education settings Primary contradictions within the Tools Node but Between Both Activity Systems | Frameworks used: NEPs problem-solving model versus 5ps | “Because we're doing a problem-solving kind of Framework... the NEPS Framework. I guess it has been my framework from day one really because of my training” (SPsy3) “We wouldn't really be looking at the problem-solving frameworks. Currently, I wouldn't really draw on them that much within my practice at the moment” (DPsy9) “So, the 5 Ps definitely, especially if it's a complex situation” (CPsy20) |

| Type of contradiction | Contradictions | Direct Quotation |
|--|---|---|
| Tools Node | More often directly delivering individual and | “I've been doing quite a lot of individual work” –(CPsy14) |
| Psychologists in Healthcare Settings versus Education settings | group therapeutic psychodynamic interventions in healthcare settings such as DBT and CBT, versus more teacher-parent-mediated | “It's going to be a block of six weeks (of intervention with the child or young person” (CPsy20) |
| Primary contradictions Within the Tools Node but Between Both Activity Systems | interventions in education settings | <p>“So, my role as an educational psychologist then is obviously changed. In terms of I'm less involved over time with the same student and less intensely involved and more kind of sparsely involved with a greater number of schools” (SPsy3)</p> <p>“In the main, our jobs are not to do interventions. As an EP, what we're doing is supporting the interventions through the school and through the parents, so we might recommend say, like a parenting course or behavioural outcomes within a parent” (SPSy10)</p> |

| Type of contradiction | Contradictions | Direct Quotation |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Tools Node</p> <p>Psychologists in Healthcare Settings versus education settings</p> <p>Primary contradictions Within the Tools Node but Between Both Activity Systems</p> | <p>Research opportunities, particularly conducting research, appear to be scarcer in healthcare versus education settings</p> | <p>“Unfortunately, research kind of takes a back seat because of time. In terms of actually carrying, it out... I know that in terms of consuming, you do. You know you would continue to kind of try and keep up with what is there. You would read the PSI articles, and you would engage with the, you know, the online trainings at the moment...so you would consume it. But I suppose in terms of actually being the researcher. It's not a role that I have had access to or could imagine having access to in the future.” (DPsy4)</p> <p>“I think that's a real strength of NEPS that there are the working groups that take responsibility for different areas of our practice and consume that research and try to disseminate that to us in a simplified way.” (SPsy11)</p> <p>“With a working group, you would be conducting research” (SPsy3)</p> |

| Type of contradiction | Contradictions | Direct Quotation |
|---|--|---|
| Tools Node Primary contradictions Within the Tools Node for Psychologists Working in Healthcare Settings Activity System | Enablers versus barriers in relation to using technology, particularly video conferencing platforms | <p data-bbox="1117 309 2002 555">“Like during lockdowns and working from homes like the video calling technology was probably the biggest one that I’ve used the most, you know. There, I suppose it was kind of very beneficial in terms of continuing services and accessing people and getting people to become involved. UM, that’s probably the most, the biggest one, you know. Uhm, I suppose stuff online (DPsy6)</p> <p data-bbox="1117 641 2002 833">“I think they (technology- video conferencing platforms) facilitate it. I think telehealth. I wouldn’t be already reliant on it 'cause I don't think you know; I think that human relationship can definitely get lost. But sometimes it's just really handy, and it makes things more accessible for the family.” (DPsy2)</p> <p data-bbox="1117 919 2002 1002">“But then you're missing out on the face-to-face value of interactions as well” (DPsy12, in relation to using video conferencing platforms)</p> |
| Tools Node Primary contradictions Within the Tools Node for Psychologists Working in Education Settings Activity System | Not doing as much direct intervention as those in healthcare settings versus wanting to do more direct intervention work | I really am sad to admit that I don't do an awful lot of intervention. I might identify and help plan interventions, but I really tend not to deliver much at all (SPsy3) |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Tools Node | Teacher or parent-mediated interventions versus a direct individual or group intervention | "I don't deliver as we don't deliver any interventions myself personally. The ones are the ones I'd recommend." (SPsy19) |
| Primary contradictions Within the Tools | | |
| Node for Psychologists Working in Education Settings Activity System | | <p>"Well, you know, I suppose in the main our jobs are not to do interventions. as an EP, what we're doing is supporting the interventions through the school and through the parents,' (SPsy10)</p> <p>"One of the things that we could do best, really, is support the important adults in the child's life to deliver that (Intervention)" (SPsy11)</p> <p>"So we're really kind of saying is look when we make these recommendations, these interventions have to be done by the school and by their parents. OK, and then what we would do then is we offer follow-up meetings." (SPsy10)</p> <p>"Sometimes then it might be about doing a couple of sessions with the (CYP). Maybe some CBT (SPsy8)</p> <p>"We see too many kids to actually be doing 1 to 1. now. I would also say that sometimes, and this is, it would be rare, we would take on individual cases..." (SPsy10)</p> <p>"So rather than seeing six or eight of them, I set up a group. And I did a 6-to-8-week intervention with them, and everybody got that CBT-based intervention. " (SPsy10)</p> |

| Type of contradiction | Contradictions | Direct Quotation |
|---|---|--|
| Tools Node | Eager to do therapeutic individual or group | “You know, we're training up teachers as well, getting them to do it, so it's great that we're |
| Primary contradictions Within_the Tools | intervention work versus not some wanting to do | training up everybody. All the teachers at this sort of whole class whole school approach. |
| Node for Psychologists Working in | therapeutic intervention work | But we also need to move up the NEPs continuum of support ourselves and start doing |
| Education Settings Activity System | | hands-on work as well.” (SPsy5) |
| | | “I suppose there's a lot of pressure for the individual intervention... And I suppose I think education psychology is far more about supporting the teachers that they have an ongoing relationship with, to have a relationship of trust with the child and support the child” (SPsy7) |
| | | “So I suppose I would have concerns about the notion of people swooping into schools and dealing with issues. That aren't, I suppose, not directly education-related, and I think there's a better place for that. So like I would have a worry about all of this counselling that goes out in schools.” (SPsy7) |

Appendix BB: Division of Labour Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Healthcare Settings

Table A22

Division of Labour Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Healthcare Settings

| Setting EPs working in healthcare settings | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Division of Labour The division of labour and EPs' perceptions of role demarcation and task allocation that influence the role | | | | | |
| Node Theme | | | | | |
| Sub-themes | Job Title | The importance of role definition and boundaries about the role | Other professionals' perceptions of the EP role (according to EPs | Working as a team | Role challenges |
| Supporting Quotations | <p>"I wonder about the title: Educational Psychologist. And wonder if it should be scrapped and just be called a Child Psychologist because I really don't think it (Educational Psychologist)</p> | <p>"I'd be very aware of my, the boundaries of my role as an EP and what I will and won't do and what I can and can't do" (DPsy16)</p> <p>"Oftentimes, the role of educational psychology can be</p> | <p>"I think t see the EP as the lead. ..Even though we're not, and we are, we're supposed to be an equal member of the team." (DPsy12)</p> | <p>"To work as part of a team and work as part of an interdisciplinary team and to, to come together to support a family. I, I think you learn an awful lot from that. It challenges</p> | <p>"Because as all services you know, we are very much working within limited resources, so I suppose that kind of dictates it more so than.. we would I suppose preferably like to offer more direct intervention</p> |

Setting **EPs working in healthcare settings**

Division of Labour **The division of labour and EPs' perceptions of role demarcation and task allocation that influence the role**

Node Theme

| Sub-themes | Job Title | The importance of role definition and boundaries about the role | Other professionals' perceptions of the EP role (according to EPs | Working as a team | Role challenges |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|--|
| | matches with my role. Maybe if you're working with NEPS. I think if you're CAMHS or primary care or disability services or you're a private psychologist, I think you're a child psychologist. I think if you're working with NEPS, then you're an educational psychologist or a school psychologist. So that's kind of the way I see it. Yeah. I know that's not for everyone, and | very broad and can sometimes be ambiguous. So, it's very important with others to clearly define our role, and you know, support their understanding by being very explicit around what our role entails." (DPsy9) "So, educating the public a lot, I think. In a gentle manner, not in a 'I'm the psychologist expert' manner" (DPsy12) | "I suppose you have to prove that you're not just the cognitive assessment person" (DPsy2) "Sometimes you know you're seen as the decision maker that you will stand over the decision. Your name goes first on the report." (DPsy1) | you to think outside of your own assumptions" (DPsy1) "I suppose it's changed a little bit because I suppose now like teams that probably were more multidisciplinary are becoming more interdisciplinary. You know, we all are trained in our own backgrounds and disciplines, but you kind of have to be au fait or a bit adept as well with what the other clinicians kind of cover and what they take the lead on, | to children and young people, but unfortunately, we do have lengthy wait lists" (DPsy9) "We are scientist-practitioners. We just don't get the time to be able to consult the literature." (DPsy16) "I really want to do Theraplay training, but the money 's just not there for it" (DPsy2) "At the moment, there's no scope for the discipline to |

Setting **EPs working in healthcare settings**

Division of Labour **The division of labour and EPs' perceptions of role demarcation and task allocation that influence the role**

Node Theme

| Sub-themes | Job Title | The importance of role definition and boundaries about the role | Other professionals' perceptions of the EP role (according to EPs | Working as a team | Role challenges |
|-------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| | that's not to put down the title of Education and Psychology. I'm really proud of that title as well. But it doesn't explain my role right now, it doesn't make sense and again. It's going back to labels about why we are sticking to certain labels that don't necessarily explain who you are, do you know?" (DPsy2) | "The most important thing is, is that the one thing I've kept through the whole, since training and now; I'll never use that kind of expert model. You know that: 'I'm the expert. I'm telling you what to do" (DPsy2) | | you know. I suppose being interdisciplinary; there is an expectation that you can kind of you have a fair idea of what the other disciplines do to an extent, you know, so I think that's probably something that has changed the most for me, you know, is kind of getting used to that kind of model in that way of working. Where you kind of complement each other." (Dpsy6) | advocate for itself or to advocate for what your clients need from a psychological point of view" (DPsy15) |

Setting **EPs working in healthcare settings**

Division of Labour **The division of labour and EPs' perceptions of role demarcation and task allocation that influence the role**

Node Theme

| Sub-themes | Job Title | The importance of role definition and boundaries about the role | Other professionals' perceptions of the EP role (according to EPs | Working as a team | Role challenges |
|-------------------|--|---|--|---|--|
| Sample codes | - Post is 'psychologist.' some see themselves as an 'educational psychologist' rather than 'psychologist' - Role dependent on the service you are in - Employed in the health sector rather than the education sector | - Importance of clarifying expectations regarding involvement - Knowing what you will and will not do, acting within limits of competence - Educational psychology is broad | - Perceptions of others don't always match up with EPs own perceptions Assessor (including cognitive assessment - Behavioural queries are for psychology - Diagnostician and decision maker - Gatekeeper - Problem solver | - Child disability network teams - Progressing disabilities model causing role to evolve - Complex structure can be a challenge and difficult to change - move from multidisciplinary to interdisciplinary - Working collaboratively within a team, drawing on each other's expertise | - Waitlists - Time - Funding - Lack of psychologists - Bureaucracy - Reactive ways of working - Hard to advocate for the EP role |

Setting **EPs working in healthcare settings**

Division of Labour **The division of labour and EPs' perceptions of role demarcation and task allocation that influence the role**

Node Theme

| Sub-themes | Job Title | The importance of role definition and boundaries about the role | Other professionals' perceptions of the EP role (according to EPs | Working as a team | Role challenges |
|-------------------|---|--|--|--------------------------|------------------------|
| | - The suggestion of the position being titled 'child psychologist.' | | - More pay, more responsibility | | |

Appendix CC: Division of Labour Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Education Settings

Table A23

Division of Labour Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Education Settings

| Setting | EPs working in education settings | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|---|--|---|
| Division of Labour Node Theme | The division of labour and EPs' perceptions of role demarcation and task allocation that influence the role | | | | |
| Sub-themes | Job Title | The importance of role definition and boundaries about the role | Other professionals' perceptions of the EP role (according to EPs | Working as a team | Role Challenges |
| Supporting Quotation | <p>“The identity piece like what we do is not just educational psychology, it’s the educational and child piece, is far more... it’s more in line with</p> | <p>“I just don't want to be seen as an expert. Now that's not because I'm not confident, and it's not because I don't feel I'm good or anything. I just don't want to be viewed as the expert.</p> | <p>“Yeah, and they know. And also, I think they understand how to get the best out of the service that we offer. So yeah, I think I would definitely think that understanding of what</p> | <p>“It would be much better with multidisciplinary, but our level is primary care. So, you can get this like kind of groupthink” (SPsy5)</p> | <p>“It would be much better with multidisciplinary, but our level is primary care. So, you can get this like is it called groupthink” (SPsy5)</p> <p>“I suppose... we are educational psychologists but civil servants. So that</p> |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|--|--|
| Setting | EPs working in education settings | | | | |
| Division of Labour Node Theme | The division of labour and EPs' perceptions of role demarcation and task allocation that influence the role | | | | |
| Sub-themes | Job Title | The importance of role definition and boundaries about the role | Other professionals' perceptions of the EP role (according to EPs | Working as a team | Role Challenges |
| | the work of what we do" (SPsy5) | I want to be viewed as a facilitator" (SPsy3) | we do... has definitely changed" (SPsy7) | | adds an impact on a lot of legislation pieces (SPsy17) |
| Sample codes | - Moving away from the "expert" role Identity issue - Recommending change in title to include "child" | - Clarifying expectations - Defining work to be done from the outset | - Varied - greater understanding from schools as to what EPs can offer - Subsidiary assessment tool. - Hidden' from other services | - Degree of autonomy - Centralised access to resources - Benefits - Working individually - Importance of supervision (individual and group) and one of the profession's greatest strengths | - Constraints (bound by civil service, less of an EP voice, bureaucracy) - Role is harder as more complex referrals |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|------------------------|
| Setting | EPs working in education settings | | | | |
| Division of Labour Node Theme | The division of labour and EPs' perceptions of role demarcation and task allocation that influence the role | | | | |
| Sub-themes | Job Title | The importance of role definition and boundaries about the role | Other professionals' perceptions of the EP role (according to EPs | Working as a team | Role Challenges |
| | - "Educational psychology" term can 'pigeonhole." | | - Knowledge of schools - Power - Expert - Traditional role of the assessor - Very well qualified | - Would like more multidisciplinary working - Experiences of being a team lead (empowering and facilitating others, fostering supportive culture, supporting self-care) - Experiences of being part of a team (Shared values and beliefs, positive experience, supportive) | |

Appendix DD: Division of Labour Node Contradictions

Table A24

Division of Labour Node Contradictions

| Type of contradiction | Contradictions | Direct Quotation |
|---|---|---|
| Division of Labour Primary contradictions within the Division of Labour Node but Between Both Activity Systems Psychologists in Healthcare Settings versus Education settings | Job Title- differences in what EPs think their job title should be | <p>“See, that's the thing. I'm not an educational psychologist... so I would. I'd see a massive issue with that, too, because I feel we still want to keep our identity to some degree. But just maybe that title (Educational Psychologist) doesn't explain fully what we do.” (DPsy2)</p> <p>“I think if you're CAMHS or primary care or disability services or you're a private psychologist, I think you're a child psychologist. I think if you're working with NEPS, then you're an educational psychologist or a school psychologist.” (DPsy2)</p> <p>“I feel like I'm a psychologist. I don't feel like I'm specifically an educational psychologist or anything else like that” (CPsy14)</p> <p>“An educational psychologist informed by psychology” (SPsy7)</p> |
| Division of Labour Primary contradictions within the Division of Labour Node but Between Both Activity Systems | Civil Servant in Education Psychology settings versus public servant in HSE | <p>“Where we work in NEPS because we're civil servants...And so, in the HSE, you're a public servant. So, you're allowed to sort of speak out a lot more about sort of policy. So, I have to be more aligned. I serve the minister, whereas, in the HSE, you don't really serve the minister.” (SPsy5)</p> |

| Type of contradiction | Contradictions | Direct Quotation |
|--|--|---|
| Psychologists in Healthcare Settings versus Education settings | | "I suppose in terms of legislation, like, I think as a civil servant, we have to be mindful of it" (SPsy8) |
| Division of Labour Primary contradictions Within the Division of Labour Node but Between Both Activity Systems | More team working on casework in healthcare settings versus working more individually in education settings for casework | "We call our team a multidisciplinary team, and I know the word, the phrase that's used currently in progressing disability services is interdisciplinary team... I think we work quite collaboratively" (DPsy16) "It's mostly you working individually from a casework point of view" – (SPsy19) |
| Psychologists in Healthcare Settings versus Education settings | | |
| Division of Labour Primary contradictions Within the Division of Labour Node for Psychologists Working in Healthcare Settings Activity System | Expertise but not 'expert.' | "But I think the underlying beliefs are probably still the same that the psychologist is the expert... Ah, so educating the public a lot, I think. In a gentle manner, not in a 'I'm the psychologist expert' manner. And doing it collaboratively with the family" (DPsy12) |
| Division of Labour Primary contradictions Within the Division of Labour Node for Psychologists Working in Healthcare Settings Activity System | In disability settings, the move from working as a multidisciplinary team to working as an interdisciplinary team and the change in expectations | "What we call our team is a multidisciplinary team, and I know the word -the phrase - that's used currently in progressing disability services is interdisciplinary team." (DPsy16) "I suppose it's changed a little bit 'cause I suppose now like teams that probably were more multidisciplinary are becoming more interdisciplinary. You know, so you're. Yes, we all are |

| Type of contradiction | Contradictions | Direct Quotation |
|---|---|--|
| | | <p>trained in our own backgrounds and disciplines, but you kind of have to be au fait or a bit adept as well with what the other clinicians kind of cover and what they take the lead on, you know. I suppose being interdisciplinary, there is an expectation that you can kind of. You have a fair idea of what the other disciplines do to an extent, you know. "(DPsy6)</p> |
| <p>Division of Labour Primary contradictions within the Division of Labour Node for Psychologists Working in Education Settings Activity System</p> | <p>Not wanting to be seen as 'expert' versus school seeing them as one Expertise but not wanting to be seen as an 'expert.'</p> | <p>"Like I just don't want to be seen as an expert. Now that's not because I'm not confident, and it's not because I don't feel I'm good or anything. It's certainly... I just don't want to be viewed as the expert..." (SPsy3)</p> <p>"Yeah, not as an expert, but just as part of... somebody with some expertise who will be working alongside you" (SPsy3)</p> <p>"When we walk in (to schools), you know, we're the 'expert' " (SPsy10)</p> |
| <p>Division of Labour Primary contradictions within the Division of Labour Node for Psychologists Working in Education Settings Activity System</p> | <p>Teamwork versus working individually for casework</p> | <p>"We don't really work as part of a team from a casework point of view. You're you are on your own other than for supervision and stuff. There were certain things where teams will come together for training, and that was great... But in terms of the day-to-day work and the nitty gritty, it's mostly you working individually from a casework point of view, and you're probably working collaboratively from delivering a CPD point of view." (SPsy19)</p> |

| Type of contradiction | Contradictions | Direct Quotation |
|---|---|--|
| Division of Labour Primary contradictions within the Division of Labour Node for Psychologists Working in Education Settings Activity System | Working in a unidisciplinary way versus wanting more multidisciplinary working | “It would be much better with multidisciplinary, but our level is primary care. So, you can get this like kind of groupthink” (SPsy5) |

Appendix EE: Outcome Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Healthcare Settings

Table A25

Outcome Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Healthcare Settings

| EPs working in healthcare settings | | |
|---|--|--|
| Outcome Node Theme | Outcomes as an influencing factor | |
| Sub-themes | Measuring Outcomes | The importance of and changing nature of reports |
| Supporting Quotations | “On a personal level, I suppose for my own work; I measure my own outcomes based on my feedback from my clients and the families that I work with” (DPsy12) | “So, within the main body of the report, I'm striking that balance between it being a professional and technical report and trying to make it as accessible as possible for [the] mom and dad” (DPsy15) |
| Sample codes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative measures (feedback from families and team members, goals from ISFSP, change over time in different domains, self-reflection - Quantitative (pre- and post-measures, frequency and duration charts, evaluation of workshops - Barriers and hopes (Time, difficult to measure therapeutic relationship, the importance of improving) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Principles (Accuracy truth and respect, adapting it for the audience, collating myriad factors into a concise formulation, supervision to support formulation, iterative process, telling the client’s story, strengths-based report, report as a working document) - Ways report writing has changed- (move to a narrative form, shorter, fewer recommendations, less psychological jargon) Barriers- Time constraints, some deficit-based language still required to justify diagnosis (e.g., DSM diagnostic references) |

Appendix FF: Outcome Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Education Settings

Table A26

Outcome Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Education Settings

EPs working in education settings

Outcome Node Theme Outcomes as an influencing factor

| Sub-themes | Measuring Outcomes | The importance of and changing nature of reports |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Supporting Quotations | <p data-bbox="403 670 1276 758">“That's a really, really good question. We do not have a systematic format for evaluating outcomes” (SPsy19)</p> <p data-bbox="403 798 1276 885">“In terms of our casework outcomes, I'm not sure we gathered that data in any systematic way.” (SPsy7)</p> <p data-bbox="403 925 1276 1125">“How do you measure or evaluate outcomes of your work? Well, I suppose. Good question. I suppose what outcome we're looking for. So, if it's a child who's having behavioural difficulties. The outcomes often are very blurred because when you get involved in it, you find that there's a family system involved in it”. (SPsy10)</p> <p data-bbox="403 1165 1276 1305">“So sometimes not having a diagnosis is a brilliant outcome... And my outcome of that was actually not giving them a diagnosis because they wanted the problem to be within the child, and I was able to come back and say actually, it's their environment” (SPsy10)</p> | <p data-bbox="1276 670 2045 758">“I like to really consider it and then let it percolate for a couple of days and come back to it. It's not something you can rush” (SPsy7)</p> |

EPs working in education settings

Outcome Node Theme Outcomes as an influencing factor

| Sub-themes | Measuring Outcomes | The importance of and changing nature of reports |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Sample codes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Lack of evaluation of outcomes (measuring of inputs vs outputs, not done in a systematic way)- Barriers (challenging, can be blurred)- Informal check-in (teacher+school)- Formal evaluation (training delivered)- Support for future (Psymis, provide clarity at the beginning)- Assessing changes at the environmental level as well as child level | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- How it has changed (Shorter reports, aim for clarity, less jargon, child-centred)- Letter form- More co-formulation with stakeholders- Iterative nature of the formulation- Report as a live document- Barriers (time limits, navigating policy changes that are reflected in the report, child-friendly reports while also ensuring access to resources)- ,integrating data to capture a holistic view |

Appendix GG: Outcome Node Contradictions

Table A27

Outcome Node Contradictions

| Type of contradiction | Contradictions | Direct Quotation |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Outcome Node</p> <p>Primary contradictions within the Outcomes Node for Psychologists Working in Healthcare Settings Activity System</p> | <p>Some variation among EPs in healthcare settings regarding formal or informal methods of measuring outcomes while ensuring quality service</p> | <p>“We need to continue to improve upon because we are very outcomes driven at the moment. But at the same time, I suppose that needs to be nuanced with providing quality service to the children and families as well. And you know that it can't be underestimated.” (DPsy9)</p> <p>“I suppose in the service I work with; it's often done through kind of questionnaires. It's done slightly more informally.” (DPSy15)</p> <p>“I, I suppose for my own work I measure my own outcomes based on my feedback from my clients and the families that I work with.” (DPsy12)</p> <p>“Formally, and informally, a lot of the time, particularly in disability, goals can be ...change can be quite gradual, and so sometimes it's faster than others, but very often it's very gradual changes. It can be changes in perception of the situation, changes in understanding of a child's diagnosis. They are difficult things to measure.</p> |

| Type of contradiction | Contradictions | Direct Quotation |
|---|---|---|
| | | So sometimes I think, so you know supplementing qualitative descriptors and feedback with things like scaling and sometimes formally” (DPsy1) |
| Outcome Node Primary contradictions within the Nodes of Psychologists Working in Healthcare Settings Activity System | Importance of measuring outcomes versus lack of time to do so | “But in terms of time to do it (measuring outcomes), it's not really something that's prioritized” (DPsy1) |
| Outcome Node Primary contradictions within the Outcomes Node for Psychologists Working in Education Settings Activity System | Writing reports that are child-centred and strengths-based whilst also ensuring sufficient detail of presenting concerns or ‘labelling’ to ensure resources | “I put all that down on paper (Child’s strengths). But then you do go, unfortunately, sometimes we do have to write the label” (SPsy5) |

Appendix HH: Object Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Healthcare Settings

Table A28

Object Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Healthcare Settings

| EPs working in healthcare settings | | |
|---|--|--|
| Object Node Theme | Outcomes as an influencing factor | |
| Sub-themes | Whom EPs consider the client(s): changes and views | A degree of uncertainty |
| Supporting Quotation | <p>“Children are the clients, but parents are the extension, and we have to work through them to support the children.” (CPsy14)</p> <p>“The family unit is the client, you know, with the young person who has the additional needs or the disability at the centre” (DPsy6)</p> <p>“I suppose we have really adopted, so because we're progressed, we, we are going off the PDS principles, and so we're very much family centred” (DPsy9)</p> | <p>“It's definitely changed, I suppose, in terms of the family-centred practice that we would deliver in disability services, and it's become more family lead as opposed to professional lead. So, it's definitely changed from that point of view that the family have more say and they have more ownership over their own choices about their child.” (DPsy12)</p> |
| Sample codes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child - Child and Family | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiple - Family centred |

- Mediated through parents

- Changed due to PDS

- Individual family service plans

agendas

ambiguity

context

Appendix II: Object Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Education Settings

Table A29

Object Node Theme, Sub Theme and Codes for EPs in Education Settings

| EPs working in Education Settings | | |
|--|--|--|
| Object Node Theme | Outcomes as an influencing factor | |
| Sub-themes | Whom EPs consider the client(s): changes and views | A degree of uncertainty |
| Supporting Quotations | <p>“There's multiple clients...ultimately though the children and young people are our raison d'etre” (SPsy8)</p> <p>“I think you’ve a number of clients and I think you know you have the child. ...you have the parent or parents and parents. You have the teacher or school staff; you may also have the principle” (SPsy13)</p> | <p>That's a really good question. I don't know. Who is it? The principal? Is it the child? Is it the parents who give their consent? I don't know. And I’m gonna just; I'm gonna leave it at: ‘I don't, I don't know.’ I work from the assumption; I work from the point of view that it's the child or young person. You know? And it's you know, I think, I think sometimes it's a bit of a shifting piece, because it, you know, for a very young child is my client the parent? Is, is it working with the parents to help the support the child? Working with the teacher? Uhm, I suppose it; it varies from case to case. (SPsy19)</p> |
| Sample codes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child - Referring agent - Principal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tension or uncertainty - A grey area - Agendas |

- School

- Ambiguity

- Parents or guardians

- Shifting piece

- Minister (for education)

- Context

Appendix JJ: Object Node Contradictions

Table A30

Object Node Contradictions

| Type of contradiction | Contradictions | Direct Quotation |
|--|---|---|
| Object Node Psychologists in Healthcare Settings versus Education settings Primary contradictions within the Object Nodes but Between Both Activity Systems | Uncertainty as to who the client is for EPs in education settings versus healthcare settings, who appeared more certain (Either child or child and family) | <p>“That's a great question. The answer is I don't know. OK, because is the child the client who can't give consent because they're referred by a school and then signed off by a parent or not signed off by a parent? So, is it the school is the client? Is it the child who's a client? Or is it the parents who are a client? Or is it the Department of Education is a client because we're providing a service?” (SPsy10)</p> <p>“I don't know Eoin the answer to that really, but definitely my priority is the child” (SPsy3)</p> <p>“That's a really good question. I don't know. Who is it? The principal? Is it the child is it the parents who give their consent? I don't know. And I'm 'gonna just I'm going to leave it at. I don't. I don't know. I work from the assumption; I work from the point of view that it's the child or young person. Uhm? You know? And it's, you know, I think. I think sometimes it's a bit of a shifting piece (SPsy19)</p> <p>“So, the clients are the children and families who are attending the service. So, it's child and family” (DPsy16)</p> <p>“So, the client is the children” (CPsy20)</p> |

| Type of contradiction | Contradictions | Direct Quotation |
|--|--|--|
| Object Node Primary contradictions within the Object Node for Psychologists Working in Healthcare Settings Activity System | Some variation among EPs in healthcare settings as to whom they consider the client or clients to be | “I wouldn't consider my client the teachers, and often teachers think they are your clients and again. It's going back to the title of educational psychologist and that they feel that you're a psychologist for the education system. I'm not. I'm a psychologist in the health system.” (DPsy2) “I suppose in terms of family-centred practice, like the family; really the family unit is the client you know with the young person who has the additional needs or the disability at the centre of that you know. And so, I suppose there, you know. They're always probably at the top of the list and then their family as well, the extended family. And I suppose outside of that then their school or whatever other organizations they're involved with” (DPsy6) |
| Object Node Primary contradictions within the Object Nodes for Psychologists Working in Education Settings Activity System | Some variation among EPs in education settings as to who the client is and whom the EP is working for | “There's probably not a short answer. It's like depending on whom you're talking to. Uhm, like for me its child centred” (SPsy5) “that's an interesting question depending on you're asking” (SPsy8) “There is a tension there, Eoin, I suppose maybe with schools sometimes where you, you know... they may feel a sense of coziness with you... but there are times where I had to, you know, maybe say things to them that maybe they might not have liked me to say” (SPsy8) |