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The Nature of Public Provision Outdoor Education in the Republic of Ireland: An Ethno-Case Study of Four Outdoor Education and Training Centres

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Abstract

Outdoor education has been growing as a sector in Ireland since its inception in the 1960s. There has, however, been a lack of empirical research into the development of outdoor education practice in Ireland. In the absence of a coherent theory of practice, and critically reflective practitioners, outdoor education in Ireland is at the mercy of tacit ideological forces that shape its values and purpose in problematic ways. This ethno-case study aimed to examine Irish outdoor education's espoused theory and actual practice. Contemporary outdoor education practice and how this practice has been influenced by historical, political, and societal developments in Ireland was the main focus of this study.

Four publicly funded Outdoor Education and Training Centres (OETCs) were involved in this study and data were gathered during 2016 and 2017. Data were generated, to gain insight into the daily practice in the OETCs, through participant observation and informal conversation. The public view portrayed of public provision outdoor education (websites analysis), and the internal policy of how to deliver outdoor education (centre documentation analysis) were also useful in generating data. Analysis of the dataset was in line with thematic analysis, and this was interpreted through the lens of McDonaldization (Ritzer, 2019). The validity of my analysis and interpretation was shown through a detailed summary of methods, member checks, researcher reflexivity, and internal reliability checks.

The analysis and interpretation of data is presented through creative non-fiction stories. This approach, whilst uncommon in outdoor education research, allowed me to maintain a high level of anonymity, and protect the identities of the research participants coming from such a small, close-knit community. The four key findings of this research inquiry, described in these creative non-fiction stories, show the McDonaldization of public outdoor education practice in Ireland, as well as a lack of theoretical underpinning in practice, with logistics informing programmes more than educational objectives, and an ideological dissonance between espoused values and actual practice.

Irish public outdoor education, with its focus on adventure sports training, has become somewhat haphazard in its vision for practice. This is not helped by the lack of interest shown from local and national government in embedding outdoor education into the curriculum. This thesis argues that a rebranding of the OETCs as adventure training centres, or a shifting of focus to concentrate on health and wellbeing as opposed to education are viable options for future practice. Should public outdoor education aspire to be integrated into the mainstream curriculum, a refocus of practice, along with a major upskilling of practitioners, is needed.

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Abbreviations

AFAS	Association for Adventure Sports
CDU	Curriculum Development Unit
CDVEC	City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee
CPD	Continual Professional Development
DES	Department of Education and Skills
ETB	Education and Training Board
ETBI	Education and Training Boards Ireland
LOTC	Learning Outside the Classroom
OEC	Outdoor Education Centre
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
OEI	Outdoor Education Ireland
OETC	Outdoor Education and Training Centre
PE	Physical Education
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
VEC	Vocational Education Committee

PART ONE

Chapter 1: Introduction

Research Focus; Rationale; Researcher Reflexivity; Outdoor Education in Ireland; Overview of the Thesis Chapters.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Contemporary Irish Society and Outdoor Education; Place in Irish Outdoor Education; Influences on the Development of Irish Outdoor Education; What's in a Name; Current Issues in Outdoor Education.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Outdoor education in Ireland has been described as “accidental in its development” (Hannon, 2018:204) yet this development has not, up until now, been critically examined. The aim of this critical exploration of the conflicted sphere of outdoor education in Ireland is to better understand how, and in what way, outdoor education’s accidental development has been influenced by the dominant political ideologies in contemporary society and is valuable to formal education. Through a detailed investigation into public provision outdoor education in Ireland, this research makes an original contribution to the field of outdoor education research while also offering useful insights for outdoor education policy and practice.

This chapter consists of five sections. I begin with an outline of the focus of this research inquiry in terms of the aims of this research, and why this research is important and useful. Following this is an exploration of the quality and rigor of outdoor education research and how an understanding of the issues here aided in determining the focus of this research. The third section gives a reflexive insight into who I am to be doing this research. This is to inform the reader so that they are in a position to judge how my background may have influenced this research inquiry. After this comes a section detailing the larger outdoor education sector in Ireland as well as situating the subsector I am researching. This chapter comes to a close with an overview of the thesis chapters.

1 Research Focus

A central aim of this research inquiry is to explore the everyday work practices of Outdoor Education and Training Centres (OETCs) in Ireland and to develop an understanding of what they do in practice, and how this has been effected, ideologically, by changes in society. This section describes the reasons why this research is important, both to me personally and to the wider outdoor education sector in Ireland. The aims driving this research are also clearly stated.

From a personal point of view, this research develops my understanding of the outdoor education field in Ireland and, in particular, the policies and practices of the publicly funded OETCs. Developing a better "understanding [of] our work is a prerequisite for improving it" (Allison and Pomeroy, 2000:97). This deeper understanding of practice can create space for the larger outdoor education sector to critically reflect and become more aware of how well their practice matches with the espoused values of the sector (Argyris and Schon, 1992; Thompson and Pascal, 2012). Such criticality aims to create opportunities for improvements to practice by integrating it with theory (Thompson and Pascal, 2012) and questioning taken for granted assumptions (Wattchow and Brown, 2011). This research inquiry starts to enrichen experience with theory to allow for a critically reflective discussion to begin within the Irish outdoor education sector.

Up to this point, no systematic study of practice within the OETCs has taken place. Specifically, the relationship between the policies/operating procedures of, and practice within, OETCs will be investigated. For the purposes of this study the term practice is used to describe the customs, habits, and beliefs, as well as the method(s) of application of same, by outdoor education practitioners in their work. Also, for ease of reading this thesis, the terms *outdoor education, practice of outdoor education* and *outdoor education practice(s)* are used interchangeably throughout this thesis to refer to public provision outdoor education. This research inquiry studied a representative sample of the public Outdoor Education and Training Centres in the Republic of Ireland, and not the entirety of the sector. This research inquiry did not study the private or voluntary sectors, for example (see section 4, this chapter for more details). Any reference to, or claims of, outdoor education in general, should be taken as referring to the public provision subsector of Irish outdoor education.

This investigation of OETC practice situates outdoor education within Irish society before an ideological understanding of practice is detailed. This interpretive account attempts to create an awareness of practice among practitioners by developing a greater understanding of public outdoor education practice. Such increased

understanding may provide an opportunity to contextualise outdoor education practice in relation to the broader education sector in Ireland. For the purposes of this study, interpretive investigation is taken to mean the study of "things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005a:3).

Thus, this research inquiry aims[1] to:

1. Critically examine the practice of public outdoor education in Ireland.

2. Locate this examination within the context of how contemporary society has influenced the practice of public outdoor education in Ireland.

This inquiry interrogates the practice of outdoor education in Ireland, specifically in the publicly funded OETCs. As section 4 of this chapter shows, outdoor education in Ireland is broad and multifaceted. Such broad aims are more suited to the emergent nature of this research inquiry than specific questions. In deciding to focus my research on the publicly funded OETCs, I was choosing a strand of outdoor education with a direct link to the mainstream education sector. The OETCs are owned and operated by local government and receive an annual financial grant from the Irish Department of Education and Skills (Rice, 1997), giving them a mandate for education focused programmes that private providers do not have. Developing a deeper awareness of practice, in line with the overall aim of this research inquiry, allows for a firmer grasp of the processes and outcomes inherent in OETC practice to emerge (Van Maanen, 2011).

Ultimately, developing our knowledge of practice should lead to a greater understanding, or *verstehen* (Schwandt, 2000), of what practice is and means to practitioners and participants alike. Creating such an understanding of practice guides the researcher to a theory of explanation (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2010) in relation to the practice of public outdoor education in Ireland. Improvements and

[1] This research was originally driven by questions, before evolving to focus on aims. Chapter 2, section 1 explores this topic further.

developments of practice can only begin to take place once such an understanding is present. This, to me, is a key point. It would be great to move straight to improving practices and developing more bespoke and authentic programmes, but, as it stands, we do not know what we would be improving, and, as such, have little justification for any change. Furthermore, in Ireland there is extensive outdoor educational activity across both formal and informal education but there is still no evidence to support or justify its inclusion in these educational endeavours. Without a knowledge of what contemporary practice is, how can it be improved?

This section outlined some reasons and justification for why this research is important, and what research aims it is attempting to address. Now that the research aims have been stated, I now turn to a more detailed justification, or rationale, for this inquiry.

2 Rationale

This section is broken into three parts. First, is an exploration of the depth and rigor of the existing research body, before moving on to situating this discussion in an Irish context. This section concludes with a description of how I decided to take a critical interpretative approach to researching Irish public outdoor education.

The outdoor education sector, globally, has a growing body of research aimed at supporting the future development of practice and the acceptance of outdoor education by the larger educational community (Quay, 2019; Humberstone and Prince, 2019). Academic journals and practitioner magazines publish research findings, specific to outdoor education, a number of times annually to further this move from the fringes of education (Mernagh, 1987). There are, however, some criticisms of this growing body of research, including challenges from within the academic journals, in terms of rigor and applicability that are worth considering.

Fiennes, et al. (2015:7) found that almost all of the interventions included in their report on the effectiveness of programmes in the outdoor sector, whilst showing a positive effect on participants, were lacking in academic rigor. Individual studies

were thinly spread across populations and focus, with little strategic linking of studies over time and/or place. There is also a lack of longitudinal and repeated studies. This report also found that the majority of research was of a low standard on the Project Oracle scale, with many studies not even reaching level one of the five level scale. This scale was "designed for organisations to plan and assess their own interventions and evaluations, rather than to assess research reported elsewhere" (Fiennes, et al., 2015:7).

A more recent study (Becker, et al., 2017), using more specific and appropriate tools (Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Checklist for Qualitative Research and the Child Care and Early Education Research Connections (CCEERC) Quantitative Research Assessment Tool) found similar gaps in quality and rigour. Others (Barrett and Greenaway, 1995; Rickinson, et al., 2004; Scrutton and Beames, 2015) concur with Fiennes, et al. (2015) and their conclusion that outdoor education research is of a low to moderate level in terms of rigor. This is, at least in part, due to inappropriate and insufficient data collection and analysis information in quantitative studies or insufficient ethical information and inconsistent links between conclusions and analysis in qualitative studies.

From an Irish perspective, limited research has been completed since Mernagh (1987) noted, over 30 years ago, the absence of research specific to Ireland when he was required to rely on practitioner opinions and anecdotes for "inspiration, models, methodology and research" (p. 4). As the sector in Ireland has grown there has not been a corresponding increase in research activity. Rather, we have relied on "insights from various champions of outdoor adventure" (Barrett and Greenaway, 1995:30). This study begins to redress the balance by decreasing the research deficit in Irish outdoor education whilst laying a foundation from which to develop the research body in the future.

The question was where to start to redress this research deficit? A simple review of papers in relevant academic journals showed a distinct leaning in focus towards programmes and their various outcomes, including understanding place, personal

development, and environmental knowledge (Barrett and Greenaway, 1995; Rickinson, 2001; Lugg, 2004). Few studies focused on the importance of practitioners and their influence on the experiences of learners during outdoor education experiences (Povilaitis, et al., 2019). For example, Teschner and Wolter (1984) discuss the minimum and ideal standard of competencies in terms of "certifications, theoretical knowledge, skills, experience, and/or personal characteristics" (p. 14) of practitioners, and Garst, Gagnon, and Brawley (2019) explore the possibilities of using online training programmes for practitioner continual professional development. Quay (2016) argues that outdoor education practice goes beyond content and process to a "deeper level of educational understanding which emphasizes ways of being" (p. 42), while Blenkinsop, Telford, and Morse (2016) describe five specific pedagogical skills[2] that can be acquired by experienced outdoor educators in Canada. Exploring practice within the OETCs with a focus on what are the ways of being and/or specific pedagogical skills in Irish public outdoor education is an important first step before particular programmes and outcomes can be fully evaluated through future studies.

Thus, my research aims to unearth the assumptions and ideological foundations of practice in Irish public outdoor education. Research can "expose underlying values and principles, often accepted as common sense" (Lugg, 2004:5) in a bid to enhance "clarity and purpose" (Cure, Hill, and Cruickshank, 2018:154). An example here is Nicol's (2002b) research into outdoor education in the UK. He found a philosophically unexamined practice that had resulted in the technical content focused nature of outdoor education being regarded as the *raison d'etre*. Nicol (2002b) goes on to note that the outdoor education sector in the UK is short on rationales for doing what it does, either practically or philosophically. Such sentiments are not recent additions to the literature, with appeals, almost 50 years

[2] These five skills are 1) managing the rhythm and structure of learning outdoors, 2) lateral thinking, 3) trusting the learner and the process, 4) safety management, and 5) eco-reflection and evaluation.

ago, for “educationally sound [outdoor education]… born out of proven evidence and not intuition” (Parker and Meldrum, 1973:19; see also Gillenwater, 1969).

This initial sectoral study focuses on the input of practitioners and centre policies to the practice(s) of public outdoor education. Processes and outcomes can be more fully understood when underpinned with an awareness of the culture of practice, both past and present (Cason and Gillis, 1994; Leather, 2013). Such an awareness can lead to a deeper understanding of practice which, in turn, may improve programme effectiveness. As a member of the outdoor education community in Ireland, I have been exposed to the assumptions of practice mentioned above. One key aspect of developing a credible and rigorous research project, and accounting for my situatedness, is to reflect on my own bias and subjectivity (Olive, 2019).

3 Researcher Reflexivity

> “Oh my god”, I gasped.
>
> I stood in stunned silence, my wet feet steadying me as I bobbed up and down, and side to side, in the boat. “This can’t be right” I thought to myself, “can it?”
>
> But it was true.
>
> It was Thursday afternoon and I was halfway through sailing session number eight of 10 for the week. I had been excited to be teaching sailing as it was a rarity for me. The sailors were sharing the bay with their kayaking classmates so I could observe my own sailors, whilst also seeing how the kayaking sessions were going. What I realised in that moment would become a catalyst for questioning my own professional practice and eventually lead me to undertake this research.
>
> At the time, I had been working as an outdoor education instructor for about six or seven years and had gained qualifications in a range of adventure sports as well as completing an undergraduate degree in outdoor education.

The adventure sports training focused on providing safe and enjoyable experiences where the skills and techniques of that specific sport could be imparted to students. The broader scope of the degree added a curiosity towards the natural environments wherein the adventure sports took place, but also developed key competencies complementary to teaching and learning, such as facilitation skills, developmental and social psychology, and sociology.

What I had discovered was that every kayaking session that week (that I observed whilst teaching sailing), though delivered by different members of staff throughout the week, were near identical. This sudden realisation had me questioning everything about my practice up to that point. The more I thought about it, the more I could see a similar theme running through my own sessions over the years and I struggled to marry my practice with the theorised ethos and principles of the outdoor education sector I had encountered in college and since (mainly through reading books). Outdoor education was supposed to be about providing bespoke and unique educational experiences that met the specific aims of the student group in question. I could hear a former lecturer's voice in my head. He had spent an entire module trying to get us to consciously vary our future, hopefully tailored, practice and not have our practice be like that of a production line. Did what I was doing really align with all of this theory? Should we not be constantly changing programmes in line with why this, and every other, group is here?

I hear the splash of a sail and two students entering the water, screams of laughter follow. I shake this epiphany from my focus and go to help my students back into their boat, but the thought of this mismatch between practice and theory lingers…

Maxwell (2013) notes that personal interest is a major, if usually unexamined, factor in choosing a research topic. My interest in this topic comes from extensive experience of working in the outdoor education sector, in Ireland and elsewhere, over the last two decades. This section is a personal account of me, the researcher, in an attempt to make me more visible in the, often messy and contradictory, research process (Fontana and Frey, 2005; Maxwell, 2013). Such a reflexive turn is more than a simple biographical account of the researcher's background; it should shed light on the connections between the researcher, the topic or question, the participants, and the data to give more validity and reliability[3] to the research findings (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2011; Ravich and Riggan, 2017). Essentially, reflexivity allows the reader to track the footprints of the researcher through the research process and gives enough information for them to decide on the validity of any claims made.

This section is a more personal account of my inherent influence over the research process, with the aim of making visible my bias and subjectivity (I describe my ontological and epistemological standpoint later - see chapter 3, section 2). Embracing the concept of reflexivity recognises the idea that any truth is partial and subject to interpretation in line with the researcher's beliefs and values, and those of the research participants (Haraway, 1988; Cohen, et al., 2011; Madden, 2017; Coe, et al., 2017). Reflexivity, in this context, acknowledges that the researcher is a player in the situation or practice (Fook and Askelar, 2006), and that any knowledge claims are made with this in mind. In essence, the aim of reflexivity is to highlight how the values and background of the researcher impact on any inquiry in myriad ways. Accepting this impact through a process of self-analysis, as part of the research process, can help both the researcher and the reader to better understand any findings (Thompson and Pascal, 2012). After reading this section the reader should feel more informed as to the background of the researcher and so be in a

[3] See Chapter 3, section 5 for a further discussion of why these terms were deemed appropriate.

position to interpret the findings of this research whilst keeping the perspective of the author in mind as an explanatory aid.

My first organised experiences of the outdoors were through the local cub scouts (8-11 year olds) and later scouts (11-14 year olds) where we would go camping and hiking on a regular basis in Ireland. It was also through the scouts that I had my first experiences at outdoor adventure centres. We had a number of weekend and summer camp experiences involving activities such as kayaking, canoeing, hillwalking, sailing, rock climbing, and abseiling. There were also some opportunities through secondary school, most notably transition year (an optional year 4, of 6, in the Irish secondary school system), to partake in trips to outdoor adventure centres as well as experiences organised and delivered by the school itself. I have some vivid memories of these experiences – of being stuck spinning in circles in a kayak, not knowing how to get back to shore, or how I got out so far to begin with; being caught out in heavy fog halfway up a mountain and the teacher getting us to leave a trail of schoolbags to follow back down later; sleeping out under the stars after struggling to get to the camping spot for hours because we could not read the map.

My moment of epiphany, in the earlier story, of identifying a mismatch between practice and theory, allowed me to reengage with these memories of outdoor experiences from my childhood and as a young adult, in a more critical fashion. Some of these experiences were enjoyable, and may have played a role in my social and personal development, though I can remember as many negative moments as positive. I also began to question the outdoor education practices that I saw around me in my workplace, as the idea of identical sessions for every group was at odds with the theory I had been taught in college.

I remembered one particular lecture in college that made a distinction between compelling and compulsion in outdoor education practice and challenged us to think about our own time working with groups – were you encouraging, or forceful? Memories came to me of hanging over the edge of an artificial abseil on a school trip with the pressure to do it from my friends, teachers, and instructor, and of the

pressure turning to disappointment when I did not do it. I have any amount of examples from my work of creating similar situations for groups, where completing the abseil was the goal, regardless of the needs of the group. The more I observed others and paid attention to what I was doing, the more I struggled to marry my practice with the theories and principles of practice espoused in the body of outdoor education literature. It was like I was "losing my religion" (Beames, 2006:4), and was increasingly uncertain about how to align my practice with the theory of the sector.

I have gained many adventure sports qualifications over the years, some to the highest levels. The more experience and qualifications I gained, the more a sense of unease developed about my everyday practice. Looking back now, I can see how my questioning of practice may have been challenging for my colleagues and managers, with heated debates at staff meetings and my propensity, at times, to stray from the usual tried and tested delivery methods. There was an unexamined power of control and compulsion at play by staff, over students and the activity in question.

I have been working in outdoor education in Ireland (and Wales briefly) for over 20 years. I began working in centres as an outdoor instructor running adventure sports sessions, and my work evolved over time to include the training of instructors, both on short-term and long-term programmes. I now lecture in Outdoor Learning across multiple degree programmes with varying foci, from delivering technical skills for safety on fieldtrips, to developing existing practitioner's awareness and understanding of theory and concepts before aiding them in applying this knowledge in practice. I also assist on coach/instructor developer training and assessments (the process of training people to train coaches) through Sport Ireland Coaching.

All of my experience and questioning of what outdoor education in Ireland is trying to achieve led me to agree with Smith, et al. (2011), in their assertion that outdoor and adventure education, internationally, is "experience rich and theory poor" (p. 2). Outdoor education has been instrumental in my personal and professional

development, and I contend that the majority of Irish outdoor practitioners would assert something similarly positive. However, we still do not know very much about the process(es) of outdoor education in Ireland (public or private), about what works best, and how and why it is effective. Without a deeper understanding of the how and why of outdoor education, beyond an implicit acceptance that outdoor education is worthwhile and beneficial, I cannot see how we can move towards more positive, authentic, and focused learning experiences.

Due to this lack of understanding, generations of Irish people have experienced outdoor education programmes in the hope that they would acquire and develop specific skills and competencies. Whilst working in the OETCs, for example, I could break down the technical skills and competencies of any of the activities and sports that I instructed in clear detail, though would have struggled to describe, in similar detail, how my students improved their, say, self-esteem, resilience, or communication skills. I believe that those of us who have developed through outdoor experiences, and trust in the learning and development opportunities therein, have endured enough outdoor education experiences to have come away with something worthwhile.

There is a paradox here. Outdoor practitioners have spent considerable time involved in outdoor education, gaining qualifications and developing personal attributes. Students, for the most part, spend a much shorter amount of time engaged in outdoor education. Not only is there an expectation that students will learn some technical skills in this short timeframe, there is also a presumption of improvements in intra and interpersonal qualities, such as character and group bonding. With a deeper appreciation for the processes involved in Irish public outdoor education, it may become possible to develop more effective, short-term, outdoor education experiences. Students would then learn through “carefully structured, well-thought-out, [experiences] with a sound educational rationale” (Beames and Brown, 2016:34), and would not have to endure experiences with, at best, the hope of success.

In relation to this current academic research, I feel the need to acknowledge a lack of objectivity in a positivistic sense. Haraway (1988) concurs stating that "the only people who end up actually believing … the ideological doctrines of disembodied scientific objectivity … are non-scientists" (p. 576). There is an "authorial power in representation" (Madden, 2017:162) inherent in any exploratory study, especially in those employing ethnographic methods to interpret the personal experiences of the researcher (Humberstone and Nicol, 2020:112). Basically, any findings stemming from this inquiry, having been analysed and interpreted by me, are situated in my subjective understanding of the data, as well as when and where the data were generated. Embracing this concept, I have recognised my own subjectivity here, and, along with the detailed methodological (see chapter 3) and theoretical information (see chapter 4), I contend that the reader has ample material provided to demonstrate the veracity of any claims made by this research inquiry.

Embracing this notion that knowledge is situated in people, place, and time, it is necessary to locate the knowledge created through research, and hence any claims made of research, within these limits (Haraway, 1988; Lang, 2011). This reflexive process has also aided me in identifying areas in which I may have needed support or further training as this project progressed (Prince and Mallabon, 2019). This section closes by situating me in this research – time and place are dealt with more fully in the methodology (see chapter 3, section 2, *Research Design*) – as it is important for the reader to have a full understanding of my subjectivity in relation to any claims made of this research. This creates a form of rational knowledge where claims are read in relation to the researcher and the researched, leading to "better accounts of the world, that is, 'science'" (Haraway, 1988:590).

This section presented a brief account of my values and assumptions with a focus on those pertinent to this research undertaking. My aim in developing this section was to articulate some of the ways in which I have influenced this research. This was inevitable. By bringing this to the fore in my writing, and hence, your interpretation of my writing, my aim is that my subjectivity does not distort, or

disproportionately influence, your reading of this research. The reader may also find this information useful in interpreting this study as they read on.

4 Outdoor Education in Ireland

This section begins by addressing the definition of outdoor education, before situating Irish public outdoor education as a part of the larger formal and informal outdoor education sector in Ireland. The formal sector comprises all levels of education from pre-school to third level, whilst the informal sector includes youthwork, public and private outdoor centres and providers, as well as the voluntary sector. Following this an overview of the OETCs, the focus of this research, is provided.

As outdoor education is a disparate, varied, heterogeneous, and conflicted sphere of thought and practice, a single definition, covering all areas of practice, is limiting at best (Priest, 1986; Gilbert and Chase, 1988; Nicol, 2002a; Roberts, 2012; Quay and Seaman, 2013). Even so, there have been a number of attempts to define Irish outdoor education (See Appendix 1 for a further breakdown). These definitions focus on the use of adventure activities, in natural environments, to promote curricular learning, environmental awareness, and personal and social development (Chief Executive Officers Association, 1990; Rice, 1997; Outdoor Education Ireland, 2005, Education and Training Board Ireland, 2015b; CDETB Curriculum Development Unit, 2015). None of these definitions are supported, or underpinned, by research, and there is no empirical evidence available to support any claims made as accurate in practice. Unclear definitions of what outdoor education is, and what it is expected to achieve, can contribute to poor outcomes, and ultimately to the marginalisation of outdoor education practice within society (Mernagh, 1987; Dyment, et al., 2014). I have chosen to avoid a critical exploration of the definition of outdoor education and, instead, focused on a potentially more fruitful examination of public outdoor education practice and espoused values, as well as the influence of contemporary society on same.

Outdoor education is a part of many aspects of the formal and informal education sectors. The formal education system, of which a full review is beyond the scope of this thesis, consists of early childhood education, primary, secondary, further, and higher education. In the formal sector, early childhood education has arguably the most developed structural support for outdoor education. Aistear[4] (NCCA, 2009), the early childhood curriculum framework, and Síolta[5] (Department of Education and Skills, 2017), both advocate for a mix of indoor and outdoor experiences in early childhood education. The primary P.E. curriculum includes a number of adventure activities, such as walking, orienteering, and challenge activities, within one of six strands of the P.E. syllabus (NCCA, 1999).

The junior cycle, or first three years, of secondary school also includes adventure activities, as one of eight strands of the P.E. syllabus (Department of Education and Science, 2003), with a similar focus on orienteering, campcraft, and team challenges. In the senior cycle of secondary school (the final two years) the focus shifts from *Outdoor Adventure Activities* to *Adventure Education* as one of six models within the curriculum and includes co-operative activities, trust activities and problem-solving initiatives, with a central focus on reflection (NCCA, 2016). With a focus firmly set on adventure activities, these aspects of the curriculum do allow time for students to be active learning outdoors.

While I welcome the presence of adventure activities and education in the curriculum, it seems that inclusion in the curriculum does not mean that it has been part of all students' school experience. One research report highlighted that 89% of primary school students had no exposure to the outdoor and adventure activities strand of the P.E. curriculum (Woods, et al., 2010). Likewise, Varley, Murphy, and Veale (2008) found low levels of engagement with the outdoors in Irish primary school science classes, with only 5% of student's depictions of learning being outdoors. Whilst these reports are now dated, it would seem that there is still

[4] *Journey* in the Irish language.
[5] *Seeds* or *seedling* in the Irish language.

"resistance in Ireland to spending time outdoors during the school day" (O'Neill, 2020, para 14).

Some senior cycle subjects, such as Biology and Geography, include some outdoor fieldwork that can be delivered by outdoor education providers. Though there is no explicit mention of outdoor education within the curriculum for Transition Year (an optional year between junior and senior cycle of secondary school) and the Leaving Certificate Applied (a stand-alone senior cycle programme with a more practical and vocational emphasis), both programmes do allow for the inclusion of elements of outdoor education (Hannon, 2015).

A number of further education programmes across the country provide training for people wishing to work in the field of outdoor education, notably Coláiste Dhúlaigh in Dublin (Outdoor Adventure Management), and Kinsale College of Further Education in Cork (Outdoor Adventure Education). There are also a number of degree programmes focused on outdoor education. Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology offer a level 8 degree (level 10 in Scotland and 6 in the UK) programme in outdoor education, and the Institute of Technology, Tralee offers a part-time level 7 (level 9 in Scotland and 5 in the UK – see Appendix 8 for further information) degree in Outdoor Learning, as well as having modules related to outdoor education in its Health and Leisure, Wildlife Biology, and Early Childcare programmes.

The informal sector includes a variety of organisations and providers of outdoor education. Youthwork organisations, notably Foróige[6] and Crosscare, provide access to adventure sports and outdoor learning for the youth of Ireland. The Garda[7] Youth Diversion Project engages young people in, among other things, outdoor adventure sports with a view to facilitating "personal development [and] promote civic responsibility" (An Garda Síochána, 2020:para 9) with the aim of preventing them from becoming involved in criminal activity. There are also an increasing number of adventure therapy providers in Ireland, some of whom are

[6] A leading youth organisation in Ireland, Foróige means *development of youth* in Irish
[7] An Garda Síochána, or Ireland's National Police and Security Service.

contracted by the Health Service Executive (HSE) on a number of intervention programmes (Hannon, 2015).

The informal sector also includes both public and private outdoor centres and providers. These providers range from large residential centres to small one-person operations and deliver adventure sports training, environmental education programmes, curricular fieldtrips, and outdoor education programmes. In terms of the size of this subsector of Irish outdoor education, Hannon (2015) cited that there were over 200 centres/providers in 1999.

Lastly, the voluntary and charity sectors also engage in outdoor education practices. Organisations like Scouting Ireland and the Irish Girl Guides, with a combined membership of over 60,000 people (Scouting Ireland, 2016; Irish Girl guides, 2020), take part in outdoor educational experiences year-round. An Taisce[8], the National Trust for Ireland, is a charitable body with a variety of very successful environmental education programmes (An Taisce, 2018). Before moving on to a description of the public OETCs, it is worth noting that, apart from a limited amount of research into environmental education (O'Malley, 2014) and curricular outdoor and adventure activities (Coulter, 2012), with all of this outdoor educational activity across both formal and informal education in Ireland there is still no evidence to support or justify its inclusion.

At present (2020), there are 12 public OETCs and one outdoor education support service (serving Dublin) in Ireland, operated under the aegis of their respective Education and Training Boards (ETB), all established between 1971 (Achill OETC) and 2006 (Fastnet OETC), though the latter was not allocated any funding until 2012 (see Appendix 2 for a further break down). All 13 of these centres/services have a shared goal of providing "memorable learning experiences in an enjoyable environment" (Outdoor Education Ireland, 2016:para 3).

[8] Means *the store* or *the treasury* in Irish.

Of the 12 centres, six operate from vacant school buildings, four run out of landed estates, while two were purpose built as outdoor education centres. The City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETB) operate a peripatetic service that has no fixed centre to operate from. They all, barring Fastnet OETC, which is predominantly sailing, offer a range of adventure sports, such as kayaking, rock climbing, and orienteering, with unique activities as per the landscape, for example, caving in limestone regions. In terms of provision, the centres have a variety of capacities. There are two non-residential centres and a third that does have accommodation facilities, though these are used only periodically for elite performance training camps. The remaining nine centres are fully residential centres, six are rural and three urban, that also cater for day groups. There are three distinct types of operation in place across the centres: urban residential, urban non-residential and rural residential (see Appendix 2 for a breakdown of the 13 centres by type and province and a map locating each centre geographically).

This section outlined the areas of the formal and informal Irish education sectors that utilise outdoor education. Outdoor education is present, in some guise, from pre-school through to third level degree programmes and in many areas of informal education from youthwork and adventure therapy to the voluntary and charitable sectors. Despite these varied uses across the education sector, very little evidence exists to justify the inclusion of outdoor education and to show the benefits of this inclusion to the various student groups and stakeholders. Worryingly, it seems that most students do not go outdoors as part of their formal education, regardless of the curriculum (Varley, Murphy, and Veale, 2008; Woods, et al., 2010; O'Neill, 2020).

After this the focus turned to the public OETCs and a description of these centres ensued, giving shape to the public outdoor education sector in Ireland. The OETCs were situated geographically, as well as demarcated in terms of residential or non-residential status. As stated earlier, I chose to study the OETCs as a distinct sector of Irish outdoor education. They are administered by the local Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and in this sense are connected to the education system more so

than other organisations in the Irish outdoor education sector. Even though aspects of outdoor education, such as adventure activities, are included in the school curriculum, the available evidence shows that there is very little engagement with this aspect of the Physical Education syllabi. This paucity of school-based outdoor education practice, coupled with the existing link between the publicly funded outdoor centres and the broader education sector, made the OETCs the most appropriate sample to address my research aims.

5 Overview of Thesis Chapters

The remainder of this thesis comprises of seven more chapters. Chapter two provides a critical examination of the literature relevant to this research inquiry. The first major focus is the cultural, social, and political influences on the development of outdoor education in Ireland. This includes a discussion of place, or rather 'placelessness', within the context of Irish outdoor education practices and highlights a contested relationship between Irish society and place, stemming back hundreds of years. Next, an origins section charts the development of the outdoor education sector in Ireland from its beginnings in the 1960s, with a teacher-led, in schools, curriculum-focused approach, to the more technical skills focused practices of the present day. An example of the impact of rationalisation on the public outdoor education sector concludes section one of the literature review. Section two of the literature review moves the focus away from Ireland and examines the international literature, finding similar issues of placelessness, rationalisation, and student disempowerment as were present in the analysis of Irish specific literature.

Chapter three is a detailed description of the methodological approach taken, and justification of the decisions made throughout this research inquiry. It covers the research aims, conceptual framework, methods employed, why findings are presented as they are, the validity of the research, and ethical considerations. The detail involved in this chapter seeks to establish the depth of thought and time put into considering the means by which the research aims were to be addressed. As noted earlier in this chapter, there is a lack of obvious rigor in the majority of

research into outdoor education (Barrett and Greenaway, 1995; Rickinson, et al., 2004; Scrutton and Beames, 2015; Fiennes, et al., 2015; Becker, et al., 2017). Chapter three outlines the steps undertaken to address this gap, for this research inquiry, by detailing the depth and breadth of the methodology underpinning this research. Describing this research inquiry in such complex and specific terms offers a believable and credible account of how I arrived at my research findings.

Chapter four is concerned with the theoretical lens used in analysing and interpreting the data generated through this research inquiry. After a justification as to why a theoretical lens is needed, I discuss the appropriateness of Ritzer's (2019) McDonaldization thesis as a suitable theory for developing a deeper understanding of the data. The challenge here was to identify a framework that could guide the interrogation of the data generated in a systematic fashion.

Chapter five presents the findings of this research inquiry in the form of two creative non-fiction stories, as well as the data gathered on the qualifications, awards, and experience levels of practitioners.

Chapter six presents the interpretation and discussion of the two creative non-fiction stories in line with McDonaldization theory. Evidence from both stories is categorised across the four principles of McDonaldization, as well as in relation to the irrationality of rationality (see chapter 4 for more detailed information on McDonaldization). As the evidence is categorised and explained, it is also discussed in terms of the relevant literature.

Chapter seven introduces, explains, and discusses the three other findings that emerged from this research inquiry. Whilst chapter six was focused on an interpretation of the evidence from the stories in relation to the pre-chosen theoretical lens, the findings here are driven by the data, or emic[9] in nature. Similar to chapter six in structure, each finding is introduced and explained, with examples from the stories, before being discussed through the literature.

[9] See page 84 for a fuller discussion of distinction between emic and etic interpretation.

Chapter eight concludes this thesis by revisiting the research aims in light of the evidence from this research inquiry before providing a summary of the key findings from chapters six and seven. The implications for both public outdoor education practice and research are addressed next. Chapter eight closes with some concluding thoughts and comments on the overall worth of this thesis.

6 Chapter Summary

This inquiry grew out of an interest in developing my own understanding of outdoor education practice in Ireland, whilst also aiming to make a significant contribution to the theoretical foundation of the sector in Ireland. In this chapter I have discussed how the research aims evolved over time, both in character and specificity, before moving on to highlight the importance of research to develop practice and how valuable this present study may be to furthering our understanding of outdoor education in Ireland. Subsequent to this discussion, I outlined my own background in an effort to be open and honest in terms of my own potential influence on the research from start to finish. Such reflexive information, situating the researcher in the research, benefits the reader by allowing them to interpret the findings from a more informed position. An outline of the outdoor education sector in Ireland followed this, describing the various incarnations of Irish outdoor education, both formal and informal. Finally, this chapter finished with an overview of the thesis chapters.

Through an in-depth examination of relevant literature, the following chapter critically examines the outdoor education literature providing further background information regarding the cultural, political, and historical influences on outdoor education practices.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The previous chapter provided a general overview of the research aims, rationale, and researcher reflexivity, as well as introducing the focus of this inquiry, the public Outdoor Education and Training Centres (OETCs) in the Republic of Ireland. This chapter provides a detailed analysis of issues pertinent to a better understanding of outdoor education in Ireland. There is a dearth of research on outdoor education, specifically from an Irish perspective, available. As a result, this chapter draws on other pertinent Irish literature, as well as the body of international outdoor education literature to develop a deeper understanding of outdoor education in examining some critical issues facing the Irish outdoor education sector.

There are two sections in this chapter. Section one critically explores the origins and evolution of outdoor education and the influence of the wider physical, cultural, and political landscapes on the development of outdoor education in Ireland. Particular emphasis is given to the ideological underpinnings of Irish outdoor education. First, the relationship between Irish society and the Irish physical landscape with particular reference to the notion of place, within the context of Irish outdoor education is examined. Grounding outdoor educational practices in local place is essential in constructing deeper learning experiences, and a more meaningful, authentic relationship with place (Wattchow and Brown, 2011; Roberts, 2012; Beames and Brown, 2016). How the Irish landscape is perceived, or understood, within Irish society gives valuable insights as to the role the landscape plays in outdoor education in both day-to-day practice, and ideologically. Second, is an investigation into the political and social influences on the development of outdoor education in Ireland, from the initial development of the sector through to the present day. Finally, section one of this chapter concludes with an exploration of the potential consequences of the change in focus from education to education and training within the public outdoor education centres of Ireland. All three parts of section one highlight aspects of the ideological development of Irish outdoor education in terms of the dominant values inherent in practice over time.

Section two explores the major, related and connected, critical themes from section one, in the international outdoor education literature. There is a lack of knowledge regarding the Irish way(s) of outdoor education. A similar lack of knowledge existed in Canada with regard to the "Canadian ways" (Purc-Stephenson, et al., 2019:364) of outdoor education. To address this, Purc-Stephenson, et al. (2019) conducted a review of available Canadian research to explain how outdoor education works in Canada. Unlike the Canadian example, the absence of extensive Irish outdoor education research does not allow for a systematic review to further our understanding of practice. As a result of the limited empirical research available, specific to Ireland, I decided to examine the global body of outdoor education research for critical themes in the hope that maybe this research would help me to better understand the situation in Ireland. There appears to be some congruence between the topics covered specific to Ireland, and those unearthed in the international literature.

First, section two critically examines the concept of rationalisation with regard to the adventure in a bun approach to outdoor education (Loynes, 1998). As this section develops, other critical issues emerge, namely the placeless nature of some outdoor education experiences (Wattchow and Brown, 2011), and the concerns around teaching and learning methodologies, such as the teacher-centred focus of practice (Estes, 2004), and the lack of agency in student's learning (Beames and Brown, 2016).

1 Contemporary Irish Society and Outdoor Education

This section explores three related areas. First, the relationship of Irish society with place and landscape is discussed, as well as how this relationship has effected the subsequent development of outdoor education practice. Second, the origins of outdoor education practice in Ireland are situated in relation to relevant societal and political changes. The final section concentrates on one specific change, the move to include training, along with education, in the focus of outdoor education practice.

Place in Irish Outdoor Education

Place, the environment, nature, wilderness, urban areas: outdoor education happens in many different settings, but how are these places understood in the context of Irish outdoor education? This section explores Irish cultural identification with the landscape and addresses how outdoor education is located within this cultural milieu.

This concept of place, and the associated historical, social, and symbolic meanings of place, is a key aspect of contemporary outdoor learning theory (Henderson and Vikander, 2007; Wattchow and Brown, 2011; Beames, Higgins, and Nicol, 2012; Sobel, 2013; Beames and Brown, 2016). It is necessary to briefly explain the term *place* before progressing further. The term begins to make sense when distinguished from *space*. "What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value" (Horton and Kraftl, 2014:268). A space becomes a place through interactions that form attachments that affect us, and effect the place through an ongoing process of becoming or development (Massey, 1999; Wattchow and Brown, 2011; Brown and Wattchow, 2016). One recent edited book fully embraces this notion of attachment, and cites the Hebrides Islands, where the book was written, as an influential independent contributing author (Jickling, et al., 2018). Where we are, and how we interact with the space or place we are in, can have a profound effect on what and how we learn.

Such a relationship with place seems somewhat unexamined, sociologically, in Ireland. In *A Sociology of Ireland*, Share, Corcoran, and Conway (2012) appear to omit society's relationship with local, and/or natural, places from their otherwise comprehensive gaze. Topics such as industrial development and globalisation are broached, though not in the sense of, for example, urbanisation and its effects on Irish people's relationships with place. Their use of the terms 'nature' or 'place', occurs solely in a call to develop a "sociological understanding of the planet" (ibid:410) with regard to the climate crisis facing the world. Whilst this call is

necessary and extremely relevant to contemporary society, it does not explore the (dis)connection between the Irish people and their homeland.

That there should be opportunities for school going students to learn about the place they live is rooted in the literature (Sobel, 2013; Beames and Brown, 2016; Waite and Pratt, 2017). Beames and Brown (2016) reason that every place has something that can be learned, some connection(s) to curricula, and they ask educators and students alike to constantly wonder "*what can I learn here?*" (p. 59 emphasis in original). One impact of not giving time to place based education can be what Sobel (1999) termed Ecophobia, or a sense of disconnection from, and powerlessness to effect positive change in, the natural world. Whilst I find myself agreeing with this concept, I cannot help but wonder if part of this issue could be the lack of acknowledgement in the literature that some people have more of a connection, or relationship, with urban landscapes than natural, rural places. With no empirical Irish outdoor education research to turn to, I wonder do current outdoor education practices in Ireland acknowledge learners' differing levels of familiarity with natural/rural and urban places.

Beames, Higgins, and Nicol (2012) describe four zones of outdoor learning, starting in the school grounds, and moving outward to use the local neighbourhood, day excursions, and overnight trips (such as residential outdoor centre visits or expeditions). In my experience outdoor education in Ireland relies heavily on day and overnight trips, and does little in relation to engagement with students on school grounds and/or in local neighbourhoods. Maybe it is not ecophobia, but rather an eco-unfamiliarity and outdoor education is missing a key ingredient in not engaging with students in their local environments? This is similar to what O'Malley (2014) found in her study into the (dis)connection of Irish children with nature. O'Malley's (2014) study found that young people do have a connection with nature, it is just not the same as that of previous generations due, in part, to urbanisation.

Urban outdoor education is not a new idea, with Daugs (1978) proposing numerous ways and means of learning ecology outdoors through what you might "expect to

find on a wall or in a crack in the pavement" (p. 319). Monbiot (2020) decries the lack of such an "ecological education" (para 13) in society at present and sees outdoor education as a necessary means of re-engagement with the local environment, urban or rural. That is not to say that learning outside the classroom is some sort of panacea, or should replace traditional indoor learning. Indeed, as Beames, Higgins, and Nicol (2012) maintain, the focus should be on "good teaching – wherever it takes place" (p. 112).

Such good teaching was to the fore when, in 1966, the first Irish outdoor education project was launched. One educational avenue explored was through the local community and Trant (2007) found that the local neighbourhood was "increasingly being regarded as part of the educational facilities of the school" (p. 53). Such sensitivity to place is important as an intimate connection to place has been found to be an essential aspect in accounts of valued outdoor experiences (Mannion and Lynch, 2016; Waite and Pratt, 2017). An intimate connection to place can only be developed in students by practitioners with a long-term, ongoing, and constantly developing relationship with the environment in question (Jickling, et al., 2018).

The sensitivity of relationship to place in Irish outdoor education is at best unrecorded beyond the initial outdoor education project started in the 1960s where the local community around the participating Dublin schools was integrated into the learning of students. The cultural socialisation associated with such learning experiences imbues the local space with a social value, creating a place where students can learn together (Loynes, 2001). Such social and cultural place and meaning making is balanced against the value the individual attributes to a space (ibid), as each person will connect with spaces and places differently (Loynes, 1999). The quality of any learning experience, in a space or a place is often charged positively or negatively, and can change over time (for more, see Macnaghten, 1998).

Through meaningful engagement the "blank canvas" (Nairn and Kraftl, 2016:3) of a space can become a place as the experience develops an understanding of the

world (Cresswell, 2015). Ingold (2000) brings the relationship between space and place further in making a distinction between enculturation and enskilment in perceiving landscapes. Humans have learned to see the land through a certain lens, depending on the cultural background in which they grew up, and this lens can either inhibit or enrichen the experience of place. In essence, “places do not have locations but histories” (Ingold, 2000:219) and an understanding of this complexity is needed in quality outdoor education experiences. Both space and place have a place in outdoor education as lenses that can aid students in understanding the world around them as well as any specific, and emergent, goals embedded in an experience.

As a former British colony, part of the reason for this lack of sensitivity to place in Irish society could lie in the struggle out from the colonial past to connect with local places (Lugg, 2004; Hannon, 2018). Reasons put forward for this lack of engagement with place include the influence of the Catholic Church, which stepped into the void left by the British leaving after Irish independence (in 1922) and allowed for little change to the status-quo. Recreating in the countryside was, up to the time of independence, the realm of the landed gentry and British rulers (O’Malley, 2014; Hannon, 2018). As a result, when it came to promoting a national identity for the newly formed Irish Republic, interacting with the landscape, and hence knowing places, was side-lined in favour of the Irish language, music and Gaelic games (Graham, 1997). One result of this side-lining of place and environmental education was that whole generations of Irish citizens did not receive any formal education in terms of landscape and the environment. If it was to happen it was “by osmosis” (O’Malley, 2014:202).

Another factor was the relatively late industrialisation of Ireland, which stifled the romanticising of the Irish landscape in Irish society (Hannon, 2018). British colonisers and visiting tourists tended to see the Irish landscape through sublime eyes, yet the locals did not have the same appreciation. The “intimacy with nature” (Lysaght, 1997:442) that was once present in Ireland had, through famine, deprivation, and a loss of the old Gaelic vernacular, been silenced (Pearse, 1905;

Coolahan, 2016). A lack of leisure time or interest in the landscape, as a result of not going through an industrial revolution, coupled with their colonial history, meant that the Irish people were more aware of impoverishment and oppression than sublimity (Bell, 1993). This highlights the cultural relativity (Pike and Beames, 2013; Beames, Mackie, and Atencio, 2019) of Ireland's history compared to its close neighbours in the UK. Graham (1997) highlights the competing, socially constructed narratives of place, situated "in particular social, historical and political contexts" (p. 7). One such context is the "de-industrialisation and agrarianisation" (Share, Corcoran, and Conway, 2012:48) of Ireland, by the British in the nineteenth century. Prior to the Act of Union, which came into force on January 1st 1801, Ireland had industrialised processes in linen, milling, and wool production, as well as being a global player in food markets (ibid). This loss of control of the land and how it was used may have contributed to a loss of identity, and hence relationship, with the land.

This lack of engagement with place, or the environment in general, is furthered in Hannon's (2015) study where he interviewed 10 key figures in the development of Irish outdoor education. He found little emphasis or focus on place or the environment and recommended that there is a need to "raise awareness of the unique and special 'place' in which Irish outdoor education is operating" (Hannon, 2015:4). There is a contradiction here in Ireland being known for its mystic landscapes and traditional way of life, yet at the same time being disconnected from place, culturally and educationally. This contradiction struck me as important, with a deeper understanding of this confused identity becoming more and more relevant to this research inquiry. What factors combined to create the conditions for confusion? How did Irish society come to accept such confusion? Is it possible to see the signs of this confused identity within Irish outdoor education?

This disconnection from place can also be seen in the "Disney-fication" (McManus, 1997:93), the sanitisation or making superficial (Bryman, 2004), of Irish culture and tradition by the "heritage industry" (Kneafsey, 1998:113). One manifestation of this can be seen in heritage sites focusing on attractive and less controversial aspects of

heritage to ensure visitors stay long enough to eat in the restaurant and buy souvenirs in the gift shop (McManus, 1997). This “selling of Ireland’s culture as a commodity” (Markwick, 2001:37) overlooks, for example, the famine, and resulting mass emigration, that led to the depopulation of the countryside, which allowed for the romanticising of the landscape by colonial powers and tourists (Hannon, 2018). Counter to this movement by the heritage industry, the National Museum of Ireland (2020) offers an unbiased, warts and all, view of Irish history and culture, free of charge.

“Ireland's commodification entails a complex and continuous reworking of marketing myths over time” (Markwick, 2001:47), where the nostalgia of the Irish diaspora is commodified and represented “by a past that may never have existed” (ibid:47). This leads to contested social identities and a lack of connection with place (Foley, Wheeler, and Kearns, 2011). Hannon’s (2015) finding of a lack of awareness of the landscape in the values of Irish outdoor educators is easier to understand in this context. Having no real romanticised conception of the landscape as a society, and a complex, and, at times, confused connection, through commodified media campaigns selling a fabricated product of Ireland, there is little scope for an uncontested and agreed understanding of place in Irish outdoor education.

The commodification of Irish places is not new, with rural Irish towns being marketed as centres for health and restoration from the mid-nineteenth century, and more recently as matchmaking centres (Foley, Wheeler, and Kearns, 2011). Kneafsey (1998) notes the financial ties between the east coast cities of America and the west of Ireland going back as far as the sixteenth century. These global-local narratives are a key feature of commodification and globalisation. Ritzer (2007) coined the term *grobalisation* to highlight the negative effects of cultural hybridisation. Grobalisation describes the “imperialistic ambitions of nations, corporations, organizations, and the like and their desire, indeed need, to impose themselves on various geographic locations” (Ritzer, 2007:15). The term is an amalgam of *grow* and *globalisation*, and manifests through processes like

McDonaldization. McDonaldization is the adoption of the principles of a fast-food restaurant namely efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control, by other sectors of society (Ritzer, 2019). Healy and McDonagh (2009) see McDonaldization in the Irish landscape through the creation of "pseudo-landscapes that are efficient, calculable, predictable, and controlled: a far cry from the wild, untamed, raw beauty from which it has grown" (p. 389).

The tight structural models, and centrally controlled rationalisation processes, like McDonaldization, through industrial development, media influence, and increased economic prosperity can lead, in this instance, to places becoming "devoid of distinctive substantive content" (Ritzer, 2007:36). Rationalisation can lead to less and less distinction in products, services, or places, resulting in homogenisation. This can result in a number of options in terms of choice, though very little, if any, discernible difference between choices. Ritzer (2007) defines such homogenisation, as *nothing*, as opposed to *something* that is "rich in distinctive substantive content" (p. 38). The dynamic between a rationalised *nothing* and a distinct *something* has been explored in a big wave surf company (Beal and Smith, 2010), as a part of the "experience economy" (Varley, 2013:38). The same distinction can be made for Irish places; the more rationalised each place becomes, the greater chance there is of losing the distinction between places and moving towards a homogenised, grobalised nothing (Ritzer, 2007).

Such homogenisation causes the "death of cultures and the destruction of authenticity" (Healy and McDonagh, 2009:382). None of this is helped by the "social/political conservatism/submissiveness" (Mac Síomón, 2014:10) and "blind loyalty" (Browne, 2007:271) of the Irish people to authority. Irish society does not identify with one agreed description of Ireland as a place or places; there appear to be many versions available. Take, for example, a person from Northern Ireland, are they "Irish? Northern Irish? British? Ulster Irish?" (Watterson, 2018). Grounding outdoor educational practices in local place is essential to constructing deeper learning experiences, and a more meaningful, authentic relationship with place (Wattchow and Brown, 2011; Roberts, 2012; Beames and Brown, 2016). How can

Irish outdoor education be grounded in place if the sector, and society in general, does not have an appreciation for the nuanced, and distanced, relationship between the Irish people and the landscape they inhabit?

In closing, place has received little focus in Irish outdoor education. There is a confused, and complex, relationship, or lack thereof, with the landscape in Irish society arising from cultural and historical issues such as colonisation and famine, as well as the commodification and rationalisation of the landscape. Hannon (2015) found discussion of place and the environment absent when interviewing senior figures in Irish outdoor education development[10]. The near absence of such concepts is notable as nature or the environment is mentioned in the majority of Irish definitions of outdoor education (Rice, 1997; Outdoor Education Ireland, 2005; ETBI 2015b). Ideologically this is somewhat challenging. On paper, place and/or the environment are to the fore, though the evidence at a societal level suggests a lack of place-responsiveness in practice. Whilst it may be easy to assume that Irish outdoor education practice has strong connections to the landscape, the analysis here, of some larger societal issues, leads me to question the validity of such a claim.

Influences on the Development of Irish Outdoor Education

This origins section outlines the development of outdoor education in Ireland from the late 1950s to the present day. A number of key developments are discussed and situated in relation to relevant political and societal issues of the time.

By the end of the 1950s, Ireland's economy was faltering with huge national debt and increasing emigration (Loxley, Seery, and Walsh, 2014). The situation became so serious that consideration was given to seeking to re-join the United Kingdom, and in so doing surrendering a "hard-won independence" (Kennedy, 2018:604). The weight of public dissatisfaction during this period was great enough to force the

[10] These interviewees were chosen based on two criteria. 1) the impact that their decisions made on the outdoor education sector, and 2) the "degree to which the individual was representative of a sector within the outdoor education field in Ireland" (Hannon, 2015:38).

government, and the Catholic Church, to leave the comfort of their insular conservatism behind and adopt an "outward orientation" (Barry, 2014:215).

Leaving this comfort behind brought forth connections to organisations like the United Nations, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, and the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) (Coolahan, 1981), the latter being heavily influenced by educational policy from the USA and the cold war. One result of the cold war, and in particular the launching of Sputnik 1 into orbit by the Soviets in 1957, was a concern for greater levels of education within western societies. Coolahan (1981) notes that the White Paper on Economic Expansion in 1958, a product of an OECD initiative to improve western education as a result of the Russians launching a satellite into space before the Americans, heralded the first economic programme for Ireland and it had an emphasis on education as an investment rather than as a drain on resources, which was the view prior to this period (Walsh, et al., 2014). This White Paper, coupled with the Investment in Education report of 1965, allowed space for a policy shift in Irish education, creating a place for outdoor education to emerge.

Walsh, et al.'s (2014) commentary points to the "triumph of marketplace values…reflected in the way the language of the marketplace has invaded the world of education" (Trant, 2007:14) as well as that of outdoor education (Loynes, 1998). This can be seen in the only available report on public outdoor education in Ireland (Rice, 1997) which is predominantly focused on topics such as capital finances, marketing management, investment, inputs and outputs, and safety (there is a four-page chapter, out of 60 pages, focused on education). Somewhat paradoxically, Rice (1997) goes on to state that financial viability is a "secondary consideration" and that, in good marketplace language, "maximising an output of quality [educational] services" (p. 41) is the main focus. I wonder whether the Irish education sector was overly influenced by the ideology of globalisation and the associated economic expansion through the adoption of such an "outward orientation" (Barry, 2014:215).

As a result of the Investment in Education Report in 1965, the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee (CDVEC) employed Dr. Anton Trant as principal of the Ballyfermot Vocational School in 1966 (O'Flaherty, 1976). Trant (2007), embracing the freedom given to him through this "experiment in comprehensive education" (p. 39) instigated a programme incorporating hiking, navigation, hostelling, and field studies into the curriculum, in an attempt to create a more engaging and relevant educational process for the city's children (O'Flaherty, 1976). Trant's (2007) comprehensive programme also included dance, drama, and art in the school's curriculum. This outdoor education project proved quite successful and attracted more Dublin schools in the years that followed. The number of schools participating increased "from 3 (with 6 teachers and 400 students) in 1972 to 19 (with 70 teachers and 3,771 students) by 1982" (O'Flaherty, 1983:1).

In 1972 the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU), of which Trant became the first director, was established and supported by the City of Dublin VEC and the Trinity College School of Education (Trant, 2007). In 1974 Trant proposed that the CDU begin a project in outdoor education, taking over the co-ordination of same from CDVEC. In the CDU's initial evaluation report, O'Flaherty (1976) explored the idea of combining adventure sports with field studies. Doubts about the educational feasibility of such an endeavour were quickly allayed as the results of the pilot programme showed much promise for such learning experiences (Trant, 2007).

The evaluation reports on the project (O'Flaherty, 1976; 1983) also highlight the success of outdoor education as part of school learning. This is due, at least in part, to the aims of the project being focused on training teachers in planning and delivering their own programmes, and developing "an outdoor dimension to other areas of the school curriculum by helping schools to plan and carry out structured fieldwork" (O'Flaherty, 1983:1). This approach was quite forward thinking for its time, with a present-day researcher in Sweden adopting similar methodologies in working with existing teachers to improve "cross-curricular teaching and learning initiatives more locally" (Mikaels, 2018:3).

Quantifying the benefits for students engaged in the project proved difficult. The outdoor education project was originally inspired by the philosophy of Outward Bound (Trant, 2007:163), and so they adopted the Duke of Edinburgh Award (both founded by Kurt Hahn) as its benchmark of success for students. Bronze, silver, or gold awards were given to students who completed all sections of the award satisfactorily (O'Flaherty, 1983). The pre-existing guidelines, regulations and handbook made it easier to access and participate, for both schools and students, without having a large amount of planning and development work to undertake prior to rolling out a programme. The added efficiency, or rationalisation, of the outdoor education project may have opened the programme up to more schools and students, and allowed for easier quantification of results, though I wonder did such a move stifle some of the bespoke nature of the project that existed up until then. Now that there was a universal outcome for all participating students and teachers to aim for, did the same depth of planning go into each specific lesson for student groups in different locations? Success was much more easily quantified from the teachers' point of view as they became qualified leaders in adventure sports, and completed an In-service Diploma in Outdoor Education, which started in the early 1980s.

The Diploma in Outdoor Education grew in popularity over the coming years and by 1986 was fully validated as a diploma course by the Dublin Institute of Technology (now the Dublin Technological University). This diploma had a mixed focus across education and the curriculum on one side, and adventure sports and the associated technical skills on the other. Over time, the technical skills of adventure sports appear to have developed into the major focus of the diploma with the educational input being diluted (Hannon, personal communication, 2020).

By the mid-1980s, the same time as the Diploma in OE was thriving, seven public Outdoor Education Centres (OECs) had been established. A number of the graduates of the diploma in outdoor education went on to become key figures in the development of outdoor education in Ireland, including managing the majority of the newly opened OECs. The substantial focus on technical ability, qualifications,

and the concentration on teaching adventure sports over a broader educational role for outdoor learning, similar to that noted by Nicol (2002b) in the UK, led to a change in tack for Irish outdoor education. Where previously energy was spent on developing the teachers' competence, understanding, and skills to design and deliver outdoor learning experiences linked to curricular objectives, now teachers started leaving the school grounds and local places and bringing student groups to the specialist centre spaces where the focus was on adventure sports and recreation controlled by centre staff.

Along with this physical move, another transfer occurred, that of control of the learning process from teacher to instructor. Such control can lead to limited programmes and fewer options for teachers and students (Ritzer, 2019). Also, so much control being with the outdoor practitioner, or the teacher, conforms to Illich's (1970) illusion "that most learning is the result of teaching" (p. 12) and this can have a debilitating effect on students' ability to control their learning, or engage at their own pace. This results in subjects (in outdoor education's case, adventure sports) being taught, rather than the focus being on students' learning (Jeffs, 2018).

Hannon (2015) notes the strong heritage of adventure sports in the pioneers of Irish outdoor education. Trant (2007), seeing this heritage and the increasing interest in sport and recreation of a more and more affluent society, believed that there was now a danger of "the original aims of the OE [outdoor education] project, promoting personal development and making OE a force for integrating the curriculum…being forgotten" (p. 166). As an example, O'Leary (2015) also observed the increasing levels of participation in adventure sports, and noted the "diminution of its [Tiglin, Ireland's National Outdoor Training Centre] mountain training role" (p. 230) as an unfortunate direct result of the centre's funding coming through the Department of Education. This led to a focus on school and youth group programmes. O'Leary is quoted elsewhere as saying that school groups were accepted as weekday bookings "to help run the place [Tiglin]" (Hannon, 2018:198).

From here a rather ad hoc system of developments, very much dependent on the drive and passion of individual teachers, managers, and organisations (see figure 1), has led to the current state of outdoor education and adventure centres around the country (O'Leary, 2015; Hannon, 2018). One of the key players interviewed in Hannon's (2015) study commented that "there's no central vision" and that "the VEC [now ETB] didn't particularly set a philosophy, it's up to us to set a philosophy" (p. 56). This comment echoes the earlier vision statement put forward by Outdoor Education Ireland (OEI) (2005), the then representative body of the management of OECs, which sought recognition of outdoor education from "decision-makers" (p. 6).

No one was in charge, and hence, no national strategy or approach was developed to focus outdoor education. In the absence of design, "outdoor education shares with mainstream education a philosophy which is more likely to be a reinforcement of the status quo than a visionary pedagogical endeavour" (Nicol, 2002b:90). Mikaels, Backman, and Lundvall (2016) found a similar level of "just making it up" (p. 98) in outdoor education practices in New Zealand. They concluded that adventure had become the main driver of educational programmes in New Zealand, with aspects of the adventure recreation industry creeping into educational practices. This can lead to decontextualised learning experiences where the place, and sometimes the educational goals, can become secondary to the adventure experience.

As noted in chapter one, curriculum policy in Irish education, with the exception of early childhood education's inclusion of learning experiences connected to the outdoors across the curriculum (NCCA, 2009; Department of Education and Skills, 2017), appears to leave outdoor education on the margins. Primary and secondary Physical Education does include some adventure activities and education (NCCA, 1999; Department of Education and Science, 2003; NCCA, 2016), as well as some outdoor fieldtrips in subjects such as Biology and Geography in the curriculum, though research shows little take up of these outdoor experiences (Varley, Murphy, and Veale, 2008; Woods, et al., 2010). It is possible that further aspects of the curricula are met through outdoor education experiences at the OETCs, though

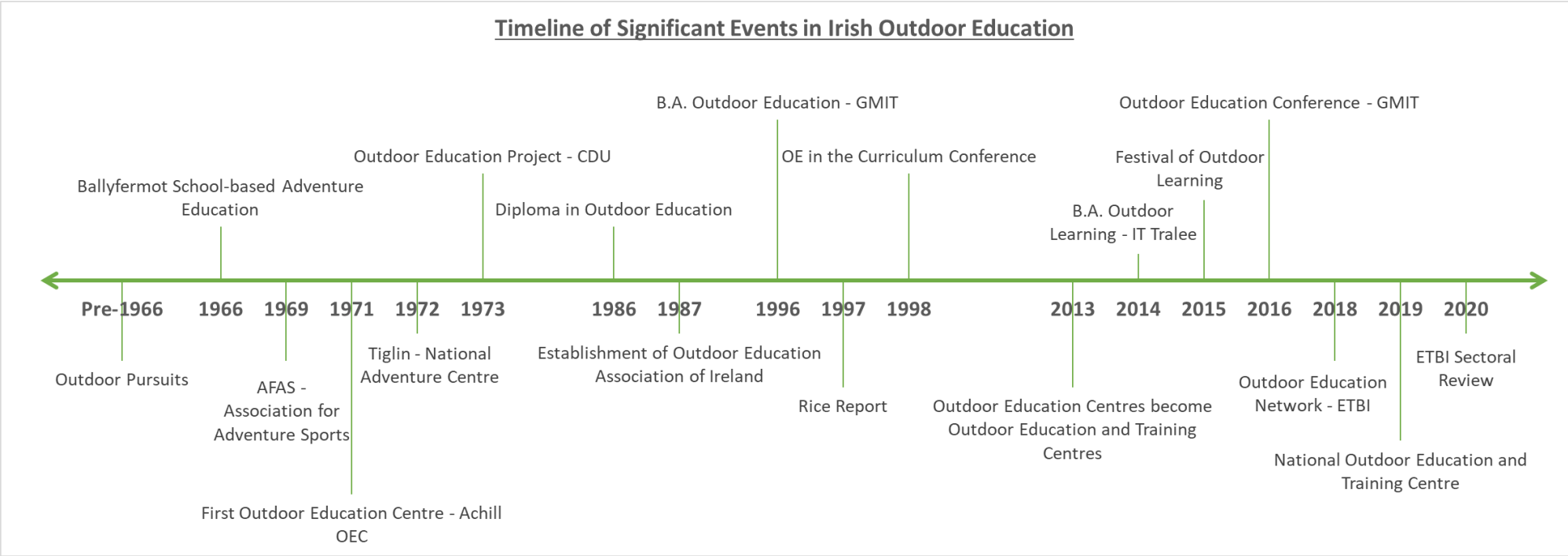


Figure 1 Timeline of Significant Events in Irish Outdoor Education

there is no evidence available, beyond the anecdotal, as to whether such learning occurs. The further and higher education sectors have developed a number of outdoor education related programmes. Though there is no mention of outdoor education in official policy (see Department of Education and Skills, 2019) the goals of a responsive, student-centred, high quality education are common across further, higher, and outdoor education. In terms of education policy, outdoor education does feature strongly in early years education, and has a presence in both primary and secondary education policy, though appears to be missing from the central vision of education in Ireland beyond physical education.

In terms of the public OECs, this lack of central vision can also be seen in the Rice Report (1997). At one point Rice states that the one connecting motive is to aspire to provide a "balanced and enhanced second-level [secondary school] curriculum" (Rice, 1997:11), yet in other places a vision of "sport for all" (p. 17) and for the provision of "Outdoor Education [sic] for all who need it" (p. 54) is put forward. Rice goes on to state that "the programmes, courses and methodology of the OECs are structured and delivered from a predominantly educational perspective" (Rice, 1997:16) as opposed to the recreational approach of other private providers. There is no research evidence available to support Rice's claim in an Irish context. This highlights a conflict of purpose within Irish public outdoor education.

Hannon's (2000) small scale study, part of a very limited Irish research base, of the process of adventure education in one publicly funded Irish outdoor centre, since closed, found, in contrast to Rice's (1997) earlier aspiration, that the programme studied reflected a recreational approach more than an educational one. Hannon observed a fragmented programme of adventure activity sessions with little consideration for the hoped-for outcomes of the teacher of "team building and character development" (Hannon, 2000:192). Hannon's (2000) study also highlighted, as noted by others (O'Flaherty, 1976; Rice, 1997), the need to differentiate between recreation and skills-based courses and the likely longer term personal and social development, or cross-curricular learning, provided for in education focused outdoor programmes. While Hannon's (2000) study goes some

way to describing how outdoor education practice in Ireland is delivered, its use of one centre, now no longer in existence, does not give a full and robust reflection of the practice of public outdoor education across the nation.

This section charted the evolution of the outdoor education sector in Ireland from the 1960s when the term *outdoor pursuits* was the popular term right through to 2020 where *outdoor education* is the most popular phrase, though *outdoor learning* has gained some traction (see figure 1, above). Before the establishment of the public Outdoor Education and Training Centres (OETCs) the focus was firmly on embedding outdoor education practices into schooling (O'Flaherty, 1976; 1983). Once these centres started to establish themselves the practice of outdoor education, then firmly planted in schools as a cross-curricular aid to learning, moved from the school grounds towards the, often far off, OETC grounds.

So far in this literature review there has been evidence of rationalisation and the influence of the commodification of Irish landscape and culture on outdoor education practice. The Disney-fication (McManus, 1997) and McDonaldization (Foley, Wheeler, and Kearns, 2011) of the landscape by the heritage industry for tourism, the adoption of the Duke of Edinburgh Award, from the UK, as the structure for the outdoor education project in the 1970s and 1980s, and the movement of outdoor education from teachers in schools to adventure sports instructors in far-away OETCs, all highlight some aspects of rationalisation. Next we turn to focus on the potential consequences of one such rationalisation within Irish public outdoor education, that of the name change from Outdoor Education Centres, to Outdoor Education and Training Centres.

What's in a Name?

The focus of this section is on the potential implications of the rebranding of the public sector Outdoor Education Centres to Outdoor Education and Training Centres. While this may seem like an innocuous change to streamline the centres in line with rationalisation within the administration of the education sector in Ireland, there are hidden implications. This discussion begins by outlining the reasons for

such a change in name to occur, before making a distinction between the meanings of the terms education and training. The impacts of this seemingly rational renaming are then outlined.

In July 2013 the 33 Vocational Education Committees, a number of whom operated the OECs, were abolished and replaced with sixteen Education and Training Boards (Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI), 2015a; Walsh, 2016). ETBs "have responsibility for education and training, youth work and a range of other statutory functions" (ETBI, 2015c:para 1), one of these being the administration of public outdoor education centres and services. Prior to July 2013, the centres were called Outdoor Education Centres (OECs), but in line with this "transformation process" (ETBI, 2015a:para 2) the centres changed their names to Outdoor Education *and Training* Centres (OETCs).

Another, related, change came in 2019 when Kerry ETB announced Cappanalea, an OETC in the southwest of Ireland (see Appendix 2 for a map of OETC locations) as the National Centre for Outdoor Education and Training. Questions remain regarding the purpose of this designation. ETBI, the national management body for the ETBs, and hence the OETCs, when contacted regarding same had no information as to the rationale for the centre's name change, and directed me to the local ETB management over Cappanalea. Kerry ETB, responding to the same question regarding the rationale for the name change at Cappanalea, stated that this decision "was made after careful consideration of the history and development of the centre and Kerry ETB's plans for its strategic development… [and that] the naming of the centre, as with any Kerry ETB centre, is a matter for Kerry ETB as a statutory body" (Kerry Education and Training Board, 2020:para 5).

The statute in question, The Education and Training Board Act (2013), states that the function of an ETB is to "establish and maintain recognised schools, centres for education and education or training facilities in its functional area" (s.10(1)(a)). It also states that county Kerry is the functional area for Kerry ETB. No attempt to outline a strategy for how this designation will improve practice or benefit the

nation beyond pre-existing practice has been made. There is also no mention of Cappanalea, except in the appendices, of the current Kerry ETB Strategic Plan (Kerry ETB, 201?). It appears to be a change in name only as Kerry ETB has no mandate to function at a national level.

Education and training are used interchangeably in everyday language (Newland, 2008; Collins Dictionary, 2016a; 2016b), yet there is a distinction between the two words. Gardner and Bartkus (2014) stress the need for a clear understanding of such terms. An awareness of the overlap and differences between what education and training mean can lead to a more proactive and responsive practice. Tight (2002) presents two models of the relationship between education and training (see figure 2, below). One shows training as a subset of education, both subsumed under learning, whilst the other shows an overlap between both (Billings, 1981). No such distinction in terms has been proffered by the OETCs or ETBI.

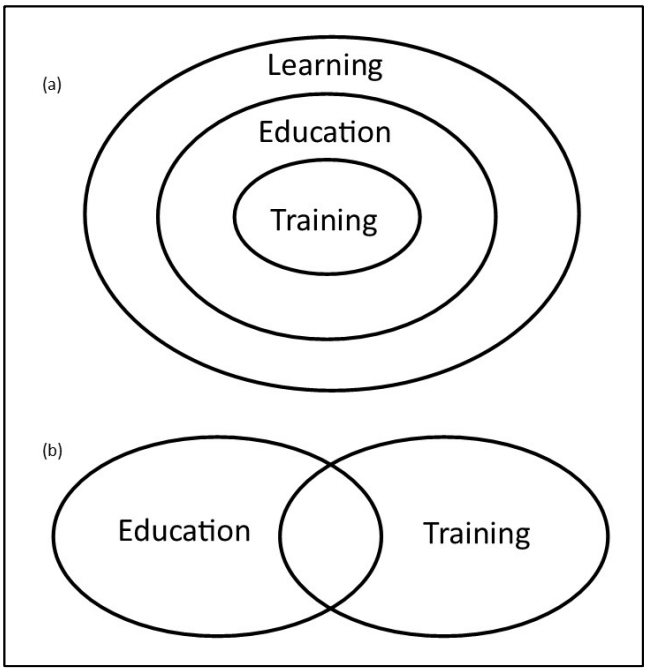


Figure 2: The Relationship between Education and Training (Tight, 2002:14)

Within a broader context, Peters (1967) notes the limitations of training, in that you are trained to be competent in a certain job or task. Education, Peters (1967) contends, transforms one's outlook and allows for synthesis and understanding beyond inert knowledge, "[f]or to be educated is not to have arrived; it is to travel

with a different view" (p. 6). More recent thinking concurs with Peters' earlier observation. In the medical profession, for example, training is seen as dealing with "repetitive skills and uniform performances" (Playdon and Goodsman, 1997:983); it is "job specific" (Megan Grace, 2013:23). Education, on the other hand, builds the capacity to critically discriminate…and…reflect sufficiently to justify the judgements and subsequent actions that" (Newland, 2008:37) are made.

In this sense, a trained person, or trainer, may be more comfortable focused on the technical (training) aspects of their role more so than the complex teaching inherent in good education (Chapman, McPhee, and Proudman, 1995). The educated individual, or practitioner, can deal with unpredictable situations and unidentified outcomes (Playdon and Goodsman, 1997; Megan Grace, 2013). This is somewhat akin to the call to embrace the tenets of uncertainty and unpredictability put forward in contemporary outdoor education theory (Hovelynck, 2001; Beames and Brown, 2016). From an Irish outdoor education perspective, this means that practitioners need to be provided with a robust education to be effective educators, beyond basic skills training.

I am not suggesting that training is not, or cannot be, educative, but that there is a distinction between the terms *education* and *training* (Billings, 1981). Pill (2007) sees it as imperative that physical education "must be able to distinguish itself from physical training and as simply a space for physical activity" (p. 7). This point can be extended to outdoor education practice. While there is value in training and activity, outdoor education practitioners should "be able to articulate [their] contribution to the development of students as learners, to the educative process and the goals of schooling" (Pill, 2007:7). Such articulation is necessary if the aim of public outdoor education, as Rice (1997) posits, is to be accepted as part of the educational development of students.

Another consideration here is how "ideological power plays an important role in the development of educational practice" (Laursen, 2006:279). For the purposes of this discussion, "an ideology is a more or less coherent set of ideas that provides a basis

for organized" (Heywood, 2013:29) educational action, usually in the form of an agreed world view or culture. Ball (2012) highlights the relevance of family culture to educational success, and I argue here that the same relevance can be placed on the culture of practitioners. Outdoor educators are, for example, well placed to promote and deliver "contextualised authentic learning" (Kirschner and Hendrik, 2020:239), though how effectively such environments are created and maintained depends greatly on the culture, or ideology, of practice. While there is a clear awareness of economic and political influence on educational practice, the influence of ideology on the effectiveness of practice remains underestimated (Laursen, 2006).

An example of such cultural influences can be seen in the "attribution bias" (Brookes, 2003b:126) in the claims made of outdoor adventure education programmes in terms of character building and/or personal growth. Brookes' point here is that the claims of practice in outdoor education are "historically constructed around some appealing myths … that owe more to the immediate responses they elicit than any lasting transformative effects" (2003b, p. 128). Mikaels (2018) also questions the dominant systems of outdoor education in his research into Friluftsliv in Swedish P.E. classes. He goes on to point out that a focus on place in teaching outdoors "offers a contact zone of cultural contact" (Mikaels, 2018:5) that could enable more locally focused, innovative and engaging learning experience for students. Both of these authors challenge the accepted culture of practice in outdoor education in the hope of improving practice.

Accepting this cultural influence, the development of the OETC focus on education *and* training as separate concepts could steer the OETCs further towards an ideology focused on adventure activity experiences and the associated technical skills development and away from the more developmental educational goals of the sector (see Higgins (2003) for a similar example from the U.K.). O'Flaherty (1976) and Rice (1997) were mindful, in their earlier works, of this differentiation between adventure sports and the broader scope of outdoor education. It is unclear if current practice is still mindful of this distinction.

The rationalisation of the larger education and training sector in Ireland led to a seemingly innocuous change of name for the Outdoor Education and Training Centres. The influence of broader political and financial issues on this rebranding does little to further a clear understanding of outdoor education in Ireland. This change came with no announcement or explanation of rationale to the public. The only announced development, that of Cappanalea becoming the National Centre for Outdoor Education and Training, also came with no justification. This points to the previously mentioned lack of vision and strategy for the sector, and the influence of rationalisation practices elsewhere in Irish education over the outdoor education sector.

Summary

The purpose of this section of the literature review was to present a critical examination of how and where Irish outdoor education has been influenced, over time, by wider societal, historical, political, and educational developments. In trying to understand how a sector can overlook calls to differentiate their skills training and educational practices for almost 45 years (O'Flaherty, 1976, Rice, 1997, Hannon, 2015), it strikes me that the sector may see its purpose firmly aligned with adventure sports. As a result, a sense of place, and possibly broader educational goals, are side-lined to focus on delivering adventure sports experiences first and foremost.

If the practitioners cannot articulate their relationship with place (Hannon, 2015), how can they pass a strong relationship with place on to their students? Ireland's landscape and heritage has been commodified for tourism and financial gain for centuries (Kneafsey, 1998), though this has become prolific in the last number of decades. It has reached a point where Ireland exists with, at best, a confused cultural identity (Foley, Wheeler, and Kearns, 2011). Foley, Wheeler, and Kearns (2011) also highlight the McDonaldization processes of efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control (Ritzer, 2019) in Irish society's relationship with the landscape. Such confusion and rationalisation create difficulties in being able to

create a sense of place through outdoor education. With so many external forces, embedded over generations, a sense of eco-unfamiliarity is somewhat inevitable.

It appears that the emergence of the OETCs in the 1980s stifled the pre-existing outdoor education project by taking control of programmes out of schools and away from teachers and giving this control to the more technically trained adventure sports instructors in the OETCs. There is an awareness of place and/or the environment in some of the offered definitions of Irish outdoor education (O'Flaherty, 1983; Rice, 1997; OEI, 2005), yet the available evidence (Hannon, 2015) shows a marked absence of a place focus in the values of key practitioners. Hannon (2015) also noted, as did Rice (1997) and O'Flaherty (1976) before him, the lack of distinction between the technical skills training inherent in participation in adventure sports, and the more complex nature, and potential benefits, of a broader focused outdoor education process.

It is difficult to determine the purpose and benefit of practice in the OETCs due to a lack of an agreed vision or strategy at a national level, along with the ad hoc nature of the development of the OETCs. Commodification and rationalisation have increased in Irish outdoor education with a focus on "marketplace values" (Trant, 2007:14) which have pervaded the outdoor education sector in Ireland. Marketplace language, including talk of funding, inputs and outputs, marketing, and capital investment (Rice, 1997), are at odds with a focus on student-centred, non-profit outdoor education (Roberts, 2012).

It seems clear that outdoor education in Ireland, in both practice and ideology, has been influenced by a myriad of cultural, societal, and political forces since its inception in the 1960s. These forces may have exerted greater influence as a result of the lack of agreed national vision and strategy for public outdoor education in Ireland. My focus now turns to the international literature on outdoor education to see what the critical issues are globally and if there is resonance between the global issues and those unearthed in Ireland.

2 Current Issues in Outdoor Education

This section explores the international body of outdoor education literature for critical issues. As a result of a dearth of Irish outdoor education research available, an understanding of some of the critical issues facing the sector globally may help to better recognise and understand Irish outdoor education. This exploration of international outdoor education is useful in developing a deeper appreciation for Irish outdoor education's ideology and practice.

Building on the challenges that emerged in section 1, this section develops this discussion further by examining the myriad of cultural, societal, and political forces that influence outdoor education from an international perspective. In particular, the increasingly rationalised and commodified nature of outdoor education is discussed, before moving on to show how the lack of a place focus in outdoor education practice is linked to such rationalised processes. This section concludes by examining issues in teaching and learning, notably the implications of conflating teaching with learning, and the misinterpretation of teacher-centred methods for student-centred ones. The inter-connected and multifaceted nature of these issues is demonstrated throughout this section as the discussion flows from topic to topic.

A prolific issue, in the international literature, is the "growing schism between market place and community values felt by outdoor adventure providers" (Loynes, 1998:35). This rationalisation of practice, through the adoption of standardised and pre-prescribed processes, is a major issue in the field of education generally, not just outdoor education (Hartley, 1995; Roberts, 2012; Beames and Brown, 2016). Rationalisation is the "systematic, measured application of science to work and everyday life" (Varley, 2013:35). This rational application of science, or the mastering of nature and/or society through organised and logical action and procedure (Weber, 2001; Ritzer, 2006), focuses organisations on developing systems to predict, and efficiently control, how they deploy their staff and other resources to best (profitable) effect (Beames, Mackie, and Atencio, 2019). This type of practice is at odds with the underpinning values of outdoor education, and can

be seen as a result of the influence of neo-liberal ideology[11] on practice (Loynes, 1998; Beames and Brown, 2016; Cooper, 2016; Leather, 2018). Rationalisation, as Weber (2001) contended, stems from the "religious anxiety" (p. 67) felt by followers of Protestant Christianity. The unavailability of forgiveness, leading to feelings of guilt, combined with seeing all work as holy, eventually led to a reliance on science, as opposed to miracles, for salvation. From this worldview, society could only prosper through methodical hard work and scientific progress, or rational thought and systems, which Weber argues allowed for the beginning of capitalism and rationalisation.

Outdoor education traditionally includes goals like "the development of self-reliance, self-discipline, judgement, [and] responsibility" (Barnes, 2005:2), which echo the characteristics Weber (2001) saw at the root of rationalisation. However, there is little time for such long-term developmental work due to the more prevalent algorithmic nature of outdoor education noted by Loynes (2002). Algorithmic, or highly rationalised, approaches to outdoor education, tend to focus on rational, technical aspects of practice, and ignore, or create little space for, the more complex and tailored approach necessary for deeper learning, beyond technical skills, to occur (Ringer, 1999). This can lead to learning experiences becoming mis-educative, as they "use activity at the expense of real learning" (Roberts, 2005:22) and "disassociate people from their experience of community and place" (Loynes, 1998:35; see also Cooper, 2016).

This is an important point. As the reach of globalisation increases in our everyday lives, so too does its influence over teaching and learning practices in outdoor education. Programmes and experiences can become detached from students, place, and/or curriculum, and eventually become a homogenised, repeatable event that does not adhere to the tenets of outdoor education (see, for example, Loynes, 2002). This move away from the values of outdoor education to a "consumption-

[11] An economic system where a competitive free market is seen as the best form of progress. Services are privatised and commodified, and efficiency is the key to success, leading to social policy determined by the market. For more, see Finnegan, 2008; Power et al., 2013; Monbiot, 2016.

orientated" (Beames and Brown, 2014:118) practice has been more cultural than conscious (Roberts, 2005). Thinking back to my earlier epiphany, about the near identical nature of outdoor education sessions at my then workplace (described in section 4 of chapter 1), the concept of rationalisation helps to explain why all the kayaking sessions I observed that week were virtually indistinguishable. Our practice had been rationalised. This rationalisation process has been described through the McDonaldization thesis (Ritzer, 2019) and as the Disneyization of society (Bryman, 1999). These theories are useful here in developing this line of reasoning in an inductive sense. The homogeneity observed during that week of sailing is representative of my practice, and the practice I observed in numerous centres, for many years following the initial epiphany. There is a logic in following this argument through from the original observation to the more general principles of McDonaldization and Disneyization.

McDonaldization is the adoption of the principles of a fast-food restaurant namely efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control, by other sectors of society (Ritzer, 2019). These four principles are a means by which we can identify rationalisation within outdoor education that can lead to homogenised practices[12] (Roberts, 2005; Beames and Brown, 2014). There is nothing inherently wrong with seeking to work as efficiently as possible. Efficient work practices can have many benefits, including the quantification of costs, staffing, and equipment, as well as having some idea of what is going to happen during experiences and being able to manage (control) staff and students. However, losing sight of the values underpinning outdoor education, of emergent, student-focused, and tailored learning, and allowing McDonaldization to proliferate, is "almost always counterproductive" (Loynes, 2018:34). Loynes (2018) is referring here to the irrationality of rationality, or how the spread of McDonaldization can lead to the homogenisation of practice. Essentially, "inefficiency, unpredictability,

[12] See section 2, chapter 4, for more details.

incalculability, and loss of control" (Ritzer, 2019:167) can be the end result of systems becoming more and more McDonaldized.

Where McDonaldization can lead to homogeneity, Disneyization aims to create a predisposition towards maximum consumption within such rationalised systems (Bryman, 2004). Disneyization is "the process by which *the principles* of the Disney theme park are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world" (Bryman, 1999:26 emphasis in original). The four principles of Disneyization are theming, or infusing added meaning onto an experience, hybrid consumption, the combining of products and services to allow for more consumption, merchandising, or the selling of logoed goods, and performative labour, the scripted and rehearsed nature of interactions with customers (Bryman, 2004; Beames and Brown, 2014). Similar to McDonaldization, the principles of Disneyization are not fundamentally bad in and of themselves. For example, the idea of playing a role in social situations in not new (see Goffman, 1956). It is when these principles combine to focus on ever increasing consumption that Disneyization begins to take hold.

The pervasive nature of globalisation, through rationalisation processes, can lead to the principles of McDonaldization and Disneyization becoming normalised into outdoor education practice unbeknownst to the outdoor practitioner (Higgins, 2003; Wattchow and Brown, 2011; Beames and Brown, 2014). More generally, Ritzer (2019) agrees and notes that there is increasingly less awareness of the "irrationalities associated with McDonaldization" (p. 201). With no localised and specific research body to inform practice, I wonder how Irish outdoor education practitioners can be aware of how market-focused values and ideologies are impacting on their work. Humberstone and Stan (2012) show the impact of marketplace values on a small outdoor education centre in the UK, and similar signs of this invasion of marketplace values have been pointed to in the formal Irish education system (Trant, 1997; Walsh, et al., 2014). A result of such an invasion is that learning experiences can become trivialised and sanitised (Bryman, 2004), as well as becoming less authentic and decontextualized (Beames and Brown, 2014).

Another prevalent issue in outdoor education literature, linked to the lack of authenticity and context, is that of placelessness in outdoor education practices. Whilst I have already discussed the contested nature of place in Irish culture and its absence from the limited Irish outdoor education discourse (see section 1, this chapter), the links between place and the rationalisation and commodification processes of neoliberalism (see footnote on page 45) internationally are noteworthy as we have moved from landfull programmes (Baker, 2005), to a "landlessness" practice (Leopold, 1966:210). Relph (2008) notes that "[t]o be oneself [and hence to learn] one has to be somewhere definite" (p. 44). In this sense, decontextualized, or ready-made outdoor education programmes may not be overly effective. As an example, a recent study (Loynes, 2020) suggests that "mapless [and compassless] navigation is differently place responsive" (p. 13) and allows students the opportunity to engage with the landscape in a more holistic, and landfull, fashion.

The conceptual frameworks of McDonaldization and Disneyization reflect the patterns of rationalisation within society (Beames and Brown, 2017; Spillman, 2017) that can lead to "placeless standardization" (Williams and Peach, 2018:425). "As a society, we are less and less comfortable in our localities" (Peters, C. 2011:16). Similar themes have been raised in Australia, another former British colony. The adoption there of universalised outdoor education has been questioned with Brookes (2002) seeing such decontextualised programmes as flawed, where places rich in culture are seen as "empty sites on which to establish social or psychological projects, or merely as examples of more abstract realities such as 'the environment'" (p. 406). Lugg (2004) argues that the predominant focus on imported, rationalised activity in such "blinkered" (p. 10) outdoor education can leave outcomes relating to the environment as incidental.

Coming back to Ireland, similar questions to those asked by Brookes remain unanswered. As space can become place through naming (Lysaght, 1997; Cresswell, 2015), not naming (or mentioning) place, as the interviewees in Hannon's (2015) study do, can make it a space again due to the diminished value attached to it

(Massey, 1999; Horton and Kraftl, 2014). In practical terms, seeing the land as empty space, and not cultural places, can allow for confused identity and limited learning (Wattchow and Brown, 2011). If Irish practitioners are working in spaces, or empty, neutral, sites, any environmental, cultural, or curricular context may be lost to the activity that dominates the programme.

This rationalisation and homogenisation of place can also be seen in the language we use in outdoor education. White-water kayaking is a good example as there has been some critical examination here highlighting the sometimes arrogant, conquering focus of the nomenclature of white-water kayaking (Thomas and Thomas, 2000). Wattchow (2007) shows the "adversarial quality of confrontation with the rapid" (p. 14) through terms such as shoot the rapid, or punch through the stopper. Such an approach does not allow for a deep and caring relationship to develop between the student and the environment (Thomas and Thomas, 2000). This leads me to believe that such rationalised, risk and adrenaline focused, outdoor education may not have "the social and ecological imperatives of our times" (Wattchow and Brown, 2011:28) in mind. I also wonder if the acceptance of marketplace language in mainstream education (Trant, 1997) and outdoor education (Loynes, 1998) has aided the proliferation of McDonaldized and Disneyized practices. Perhaps more time needs to be spent questioning the role of risk and adrenaline in Irish outdoor education and exploring more authentic learning opportunities "to avoid mistaking the thrill of taking risks with learning" (Wattchow and Brown, 2011:39).

This idea of focusing on learning struck me as significant. Along with potentially emphasising risk in outdoor education (Brown and Fraser, 2009; Wattchow and Brown, 2011), do we also conflate teaching with learning? Lave (1996) challenges the tendency in educational research to investigate teaching when interested in learning. Seeing learning and teaching as one and the same can take the "teacher out of teaching… [and take] learner's learning out of the picture" (Lave, 1996:158), making space for teaching to become prescriptive. One example, relevant here to the discussion of place, is how the situated, social, nature of learning can be

marginalized when teaching, and not learning, is the main focus (Lave and Wenger, 1991). My point here is that the experience of where the learning occurs and who is learning is at least as important as how it is being taught. Being more concerned with teaching methods in outdoor education practices may lead practitioners to adopt the "didactic teaching methods that it set out to be an alternative for" (Hovelynck, 2001:4).

The resulting educational process(es) can easily become less and less focused on the learner and their learning, and more and more on prescribed, teacher-centred, practices (Hovelynck, 2001). Estes (2004) highlights a number of inconsistencies in so-called student-centred approaches to outdoor education, including the belief embedded in society that teachers are authority figures that should control learning. Outdoor education practices can be very much teacher-centred, with much of the information processing coming from the teacher rather than the learner. This inconsistency is further developed by Stan (2009), who found that the traditional controlling or detached facilitation styles of outdoor educators are ineffective and that for teaching to be effective the practitioner must share in, as Lave (1996) would agree, a socially constructed learning process with the student group.

There appears to be a lack of agency and autonomy in both teaching and learning experiences. That is, if student learning experiences are pre-prescribed and controlled through teacher-centred methods, there is little room for students to negotiate, or make their own decisions and to be responsible for their actions (Ord and Leather, 2018). Highly technical adventure sports activities bring with them "externally imposed risk and the necessary management strategies [that] can undermine internal decision-making and learners' sense of agency" (Brown and Fraser, 2009:70). It is possible to resist being "controlled by an unseen puppeteer" (Beames and Brown, 2016:64) through awareness of our actions, and creativity in allowing students time and freedom to learn through more emergent, and less algorithmic experiences (Loynes, 2002). We also need to be cognisant of "whose

experience it is" (Chapman, McPhee, and Proudman, 1995:243) – the teacher's, or the learner's?

This section examined current issues in outdoor education within the context of the body of global literature. I have sought to expose the complex inter-related nature of these matters rather than set each apart from the others. In summary, rationalisation processes, such as McDonaldization and Disneyization, create homogenised teaching and learning practices that can fail to take account of the physical and social situation of learning or the agency of practitioners and students. As a result of the connections between these issues, one problem cannot be addressed in isolation. For example, to have more of a learner-centred approach, issues around place and rationalisation require attention. The structures surrounding outdoor education allow for some agency, though systemic change may necessitate structural transformation for any of these topics to no longer trouble the sector.

It appears that the algorithmic nature of rationalised outdoor education can suppress the more emergent, and complex, processes of student focused, outdoor education programmes (Loynes, 1998; Estes, 2004). A good guiding principle, to counter, and increase awareness of, such rationalisation in outdoor education is to ask, "if the lessons to be learned from an experience can be listed before the experience has taken place, and thus independently of the learners' experience" (Hovelynck, 2001:7). If the answer is yes, then it is highly likely that practice has been rationalised.

3 Chapter Summary

Outdoor education in Ireland faces many challenges. The major, interconnected, issues explored in this chapter were the rationalisation of outdoor education practices, which propagates a universalised, placeless, and teacher-centred approach to outdoor education. For outdoor education to be effective, a connection to the place where learning occurs is vital, yet this link has been neglected by Irish society in general, as a result of colonisation, and more recently rationalisation, for

generations. There is now what might be called a level of eco-unfamiliarity present across Ireland that outdoor education does not take into consideration. Irish outdoor education practice is under researched, yet the placelessness apparent in the international literature appears here as well. Irish culture's contested relationship with place and landscape has had a major impact on the Irish outdoor educator's ability to relate an unknown landscape to student groups. Irish culture and heritage have been commodified (Kneafsey, 1998; Markwick, 2001) and this shows in the lack of reference to place, or the environment, by outdoor educators (Hannon, 2018).

Outdoor education in Ireland's roots in adventure sports, along with the absence of an agreed national strategy, or purpose, has an ongoing impact on the effectiveness of Irish outdoor education. The consequences of rationalisation are an additional burden on effective outdoor education practice in Ireland and internationally. Market forces, in an effort to streamline and universalise practice, exert a huge sway over teaching and learning outdoors. For example, the ad hoc development of the OETCs in the 1980s seems to have created a shift in focus from the pre-existing project of bespoke, teacher-supported, cross-curricular outdoor programmes, utilising, at times, the local community, to an emphasis on adventure sports in far-off locations. Also, outdoor education is at risk of depoliticising the learning they offer students if it becomes an ephemeral escape, abstracting students from their place, rather than being bespoke experiences, allowing for perspective and space for focus and critical reflection.

The reactionary move to rename the centres to include a focus on training, in line with rationalisation developments within the ETBs, has still, seven years on, no articulated purpose. As a result, the potential benefits to society of a dedicated, focused outdoor education service have been stifled. With so many converging issues, it is no wonder that practitioners tend to focus on the more manageable, and understandable, delivery of adventure sports skills.

The following chapter details the research design that underpinned this research inquiry, including the research aims, conceptual framework and research methods utilised, as well as addressing validity and ethical issues relevant to this research.

PART TWO

Chapter 3: Methodology

Aims or Questions; Conceptual Framework; Methods; Making Meaning; Validity; Ethical Considerations.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Lens

Choosing McDonaldization; The Principles of McDonaldization; Addressing Criticism of McDonaldization.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter is a detailed, purposeful account of the methodological approach taken as well as the methods used in this research. First, the research aims driving this study will be outlined before the goals are described in terms of the intent and purpose of this research. The philosophical underpinnings and research design are examined next in the conceptual framework section. Following this, the methods section is focused on the processes involved in gathering and analysing the data. The subsequent section on making meaning is focused on how meaning was constructed from the analysis before I outline the ways and means by which the validity of the processes already described can be judged. Ethical issues and considerations are considered next before a summary concludes the chapter.

1 Aims or Questions?

In this section I chart the evolution of my research focus from questions to aims as the project progressed. Over the course of my career, I have often wondered about the effectiveness of outdoor education practice and how well current academic thinking was utilised in programmes. To be able to move from an abstract idea towards a more definite research idea I had to begin forming research questions. Specific research questions are important as they clearly express the focus of a study, as well as guiding the design and implementation process (Day Ashley, 2017b). Poorly formed research questions can disguise discovery, and undermine understanding (Maxwell, 2012). Forming such specific research questions is an iterative process (ibid, 2012), where the intellectual and academic grounds of interest are excavated to see what is already known about the issue and what is still to be discovered (Ravich and Riggan, 2017). One result of such a process is that research questions need to be rechecked as the study progresses to ensure that they are still the most appropriate ones (Madden, 2017). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) concur, stating that “research questions are the consequence, not the driver, of the situation” (p. 228).

After my initial excavation of the outdoor education sector in Ireland, I realised that very little was known about the sector beyond the anecdotal. A lot of opinions were used as statements in a sector with virtually no grounding in research. I decided that an investigation into the nature of public outdoor education was an appropriate next step for the sector and developed key research questions to reflect this focus.

As Bhatti (2017) notes, research can be unpredictable. Over time, and as a direct result of my engagement with the data collection and analysis phases, my research focus evolved into the more bespoke and specific form they now take. What started out as simple, guiding questions, have developed into specific and focused research aims. Hence, through this research inquiry I aim to:

1. Critically examine the practice of public outdoor education in Ireland.
2. Locate this examination within the context of how contemporary society has influenced the practice of public outdoor education in Ireland.

These research aims give a focus to the study as "they tell me what I want to know most" (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, 2014:26). Such specific goals came from an ongoing critical revisiting of the purpose of this research. This required me to be open to changing, or modifying, the research aims over a long-term engagement with the research project. As the study progressed, so too did my understanding of the research process. This allowed for a deeper, more critical, and potentially useful focus to emerge.

2 Conceptual Framework

Pring (2015), on the origins of research ideas and topics, highlights the importance of questioning and probing for explanation "where others find no grounds for puzzlement at all" (p. 13). This research project stems from such thinking. For many years, I have listened to fellow practitioners talk passionately about the power and potential of outdoor education for the development of skills, character, and attitude in people of any age or background. Looking into this further, I found a strong

research focus on programmes and outcomes within outdoor education research (Nicol and Higgins, 2002; Fiennes, et al., 2015; English Outdoor Council, 2015). I have found a dearth of research into practitioners and their role in the process of achieving these outcomes. It is my contention that Irish outdoor education research is not mature enough yet to focus on such a "[d]oes it work?" (Allison and Pomeroy, 2000:95) approach.

Recent research into outdoor education programmes and outcomes (Fiennes, et al., 2015; Scrutton and Beames, 2015; Becker, et al., 2017) has shown that much of this body of research fails to reach a high standard. Becker, et al., (2017) found that methodological standards were low to moderate in their systematic review of outdoor based school programmes. Mertens (2015) contends that a lack of understanding of research paradigms and their accompanying philosophical assumptions can affect the quality of research and it is to this topic that we turn to next.

Philosophical Underpinnings

A research paradigm is "the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator" (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:105) in the choice of methods, but also in terms of the more philosophical matters of what we can know and what is the nature of reality, or epistemology and ontology respectively. Paradigmatic choices inform the entirety of any research endeavour, from theoretical frameworks through to the findings. Here I will outline the relationship between my paradigmatic choices and how they coalesce into a coherent whole. In short, this research adopts a social constructivist view of the world. The remainder of this section discusses the philosophical implications of this decision.

As a researcher, I accept that there may be a singular reality, yet personal and social interpretations allow only for subjective understandings and perceptions of this reality – we all do not experience this reality in the same way. Hence, reality, as we experience it, is relative and multiple. In this sense, knowledge of the world is not out there to be found, but rather is a constructed understanding through active

abstraction (Schwandt, 2000). Schwandt (2000) goes on to say that such constructions are formed "against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, language, and so forth" (p. 197).

This research also embraces the intersubjectivity of knowing (Schwandt, 1999). Epistemologically, this means that the creation of knowledge derives from interactions between all parties involved in the research (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Allison and Pomeroy, 2000; Silverman, 2014); both the participants and researcher's values will influence and direct the research process (Mertens, 2015; Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). Multiple, relative realities combined with participant and researcher interactions fit very well with a social constructivist worldview (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Creswell, 2014; Waring, 2017).

As practitioners' views will affect the research findings (Maxwell, 2013), an appreciation of the wider influences that affect their subjective values will be required to understand their responses more fully. Two of the main factors influencing practitioners' beliefs are the sociological and political context of outdoor education within Irish education and society as well as the background of practitioners in terms of training and experience. It follows that an appreciation of my values and beliefs as a researcher are paramount in understanding any claims made of this research (Waring, 2017).

For Code (2006), knowledge relies on evidence gained through experience and is "indelibly shaped by its creators" (p. 153). Though I will have my own understandings, from the perspective of a middle-class white male, of how the sector operates, the research participants, as co-creators of knowledge, are essential in terms of creating a depth of knowledge and understanding beyond my own interpretations. Haraway (1988), describing such situated forms of knowledge urges for "location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims" (p. 589). From this epistemological stance, one could not explore the practices and processes of any sector or field without a high level of criticality towards the perspective of both

the researcher and the researched (Wigglesworth, 2018) that embraces, rather than ignores the inherent subjectivity of the knowledge created. The relationships between the researcher and the participants need to be authentic and equitable if the data collection is to be accurate and produce meaningful findings. Such an interactive relationship between the researcher and participants leads to overlap between ontology and epistemology (Sparkes, 1992; Guba and Lincoln, 1994) in the sense that what can be known and how it comes to be known are "inextricably linked" (Waring, 2017:18).

In summary, adopting a stance based on the belief that social reality is constructed through our interpretation of experiences means that it is vitally important to create knowledge through concordance among all stakeholders, rather than relying on one interpretation. How the research design took into account the research aims of developing an understanding of practice within the Outdoor Education and Training Centres (OETCs), whilst embracing the perspectives of practitioners, is key. Any such design needs to be responsive to the evolving nature of the research.

Research Design

The following section describes the approach taken to developing the research design. An outline of how this design influenced the data collection methods follows. I also put forward a justification for the chosen methodology and methods. Initially, a number of methods are appraised in terms of their relevance and applicability to addressing the research aims.

Ethnography stood out as a methodological approach, as it seeks a "deeper understanding of social norms" (Bhatti, 2017:85) by exploring and describing (Overholt, 1980) a culture and its associated social processes (Brewer, 2000; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Ethnography as a methodology was later discounted for two reasons. Firstly, even though observations, informal conversation, and documentation were the main sources of data and even though ethnography has broadened its reach to include multi-sited and shorter-term studies in recent times (Madden, 2017; Parker-Jenkins, 2018), I was not going to be

able to spend the substantial amount of time in each location that a classic ethnography would require (Yin, 2009; Hammersley, 2002). Secondly, as ethnographic study is the study of culture (Silverman, 2000; Van Maanen, 2011), it would be presumptuous to accept that there is a definite culture, or cultures, within the OETCs when no evidence exists to support such a claim. Over time, a case study methodology came to the forefront of both my reading and thoughts.

A case study approach is well suited to studying educational communities (Hamilton and Corbett-Whittaker, 2013) as it aims to provide "holistic description and explanation" (Merriam, 1998:29). Case studies describe events or institutions in their "small scale and focused" (Tight, 2017:8) real world setting (Mertens, 2015; Day Ashley, 2017a). A case study can rely on any number of methods of data collection (Yin, 2009; Mertens, 2015). The focus is on the cases studied along with the research aims, as opposed to relying on specific methods of data collection (Simons, 2009).

Over time, I struggled to differentiate ethnography and case study approaches and their associated methods. Both terms are difficult to define due to the broad research applications and the messy, real world contexts that are the focus of such inquiries (Madden, 2017; Yin, 2018). I eventually settled on a case study methodology that embraced ethnographic methods. Parker-Jenkins (2018) offers the term "ethno-case study" in an attempt to reconceptualise this form of research "inquiry concerning people, which employs techniques associated with long-term and intensive ethnography, but which is limited in terms of scope and time spent in the field" (p. 24).

An ethno-case study draws on ethnographic methods to study a bounded case or cases, whilst striving to understand the social norms and context of the case(s) (Simons, 2009; Cohen, et al., 2011). Yin (2018) outlines two steps in describing a case as part of the research design process, namely defining and bounding a case. For the purposes of this research, a case is defined as one OETC. There are 13 OETCs in Ireland, operated under the aegis of their respective Education and Training

Boards (ETB). These ETBs "manage and operate second-level schools, further education colleges, multi-faith community national schools and a range of adult and further education centres delivering education and training programmes" (ETBI, 2015c:para 1). All 13 of these centres/services have a shared goal of providing "memorable learning experiences in an enjoyable environment" (Outdoor Education Ireland, 2016:para 3). See Appendix 2 for more details.

Cases were also bounded temporally (Tight, 2017; Yin, 2018) in the sense that the data were generated within a restricted timeframe across 2016 and 2017. The research aims aid in binding each case in that it is only worth generating data useful to addressing these aims (Baxter and Jack, 2008; Tight, 2017). From this viewpoint, webpages and operating procedures can give insight into policies, whilst participant observation and informal chats help to uncover daily practice routines. These forms of evidence allowed the cases in question to be bounded into more focused and describable forms.

This research studied four OETCs as bounded cases. In studying a number of educational institutions, a multiple case study ethnography, or multiple ethno-case study, is an applicable methodology (Marcus, 1995; Merriam, 1998; Jung, 2014). A multiple case approach can strengthen the validity and stability of each case by allowing for a broader description of similarities and differences across cases than a single case would allow (Baxter and Jack, 2008; Cohen, et al., 2011; Day Ashley, 2017a). Such a broad focus can form a more "compelling" (Yin, 2009:53) collective appreciation of the research (Simons, 2009) "situated in human activity" (Richardson, 2000:254). As previously stated, this is an initial investigation into the public outdoor education sector in Ireland. As there is limited research to support the design of this study from an Irish outdoor education perspective, a broader study is much more beneficial as it can provide an overview of practice across the public outdoor education sector. How the evidence to support this overview was generated is outlined in the following *Methods* section.

Section Summary

In summary, this research aims to explore the policies and practices of four Outdoor Education and Training Centres (OETCs) in Ireland. The purpose is to develop a deeper awareness of daily practice and to situate this practice ideologically. Situating practice in this way may allow for an ideological comparison to other subsectors of the Irish, and international, outdoor education sectors as well as developing a deeper understanding of practice. Such a foundational understanding of practice and any ideology informing practice will highlight research goals for the sector in the future. The research design is in line with the social constructivist paradigm in embracing the overlap between the interpreted nature of reality and the constructed and intersubjective nature of knowing about public outdoor education practice in Ireland. Generating data from real world contexts is a shared characteristic of both case studies and ethnography (Yin, 2009; Simons, 2009). Such a research methodology embraces the axioms of a constructivist paradigm, as the researcher must co-construct the data with the participation of informants before explicating in detail any findings (Geertz, 1973; Cohen et al., 2011). Adopting an ethno-case study approach allowed me to seek out the perspectives, opinions, and practices of the practitioners working in real world settings as a major source of data within the bounded system of an Outdoor Education and Training Centre. The following section describes in detail the data collection methods utilised in addressing the research aims.

3 Methods

This section is concerned with outlining the methods used to interpret the generated data in line with the research aims, principally how the evidence was generated, interpreted, and shown to be trustworthy (Mertens, 2015; Coe, et al., 2017). It begins with an outline of the choice of sample population and how they are suited to this research, along with how access was negotiated. The phases of data generation follow, before moving on to how data were analysed and managed. As outlined above, the data generated for this ethno-case study were obtained, in

line with ethnographic methods. This was achieved through periods of observation in the field, in conjunction with informal conversations with "informants" (Delamont, 2016:8). Alongside these field observations, I collected relevant OETC documentation that can inform the research, such as websites and standard operating procedure documents (Gobo, 2008). This created a rich data set that, once analysed, addressed the research aims.

Sample Population

I concluded that the public OETCs would be the most relevant sample in addressing the research aims as they have a direct link to the education sector, being owned and operated by local government and receiving an annual financial grant from the Irish Department of Education and Skills. In terms of this research, the four OETCs involved, of the 12 nationally[13], are a purposive sample[14]. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to intentionally select specific cases that best suit the research aims (Cohen, et al., 2011; Creswell and Plano-Clark, 2011; Silverman, 2014). The typicality of the OETCs in question made them a more than satisfactory choice.

All 12 OETCs within this "sampling frame" (Mertens, 2015:321) were contacted in an effort to secure access. Each centre received an initial contact email, to the general *info@* address, (see Appendix 3), with a follow up phone call. In an effort to make it easier to record the responses from the OETCs, the email included a link to a short questionnaire where each centre manager could express their interest, or not, in taking part in the research as well as provide specific contact details. The survey was live for one month, between July 8th and August 8th, 2016, and seven of the 12 centres responded positively to participating in the study. Of the remaining five centres that did not respond, I only succeeded in talking to one manager over

[13] The thirteenth OETC, the City of Dublin ETB Outdoor Education Service was not contacted as, at the time, I was not aware that this service was a recognised public provider. This is due to the fact that they were not listed on the Outdoor Education Ireland website, the then official website of the national network of ETB Outdoor Education Centres.
[14] See chapter 1, section 4, and chapter 2, section 1 for more information on OETCs.

the phone. This manager was supportive and positive during the phone conversation, though failed to complete the online survey, thus excluding that centre from inclusion in the research. Numerous attempts to contact the remaining four centre managers proved fruitless.

This initial response rate of 58% (seven of the 12 centres) reduced further during the coming months. In all, I gained full access to five of the seven centres that responded to the survey. The two that I did not get to visit were concerned, as some of the other managers were initially, about me coming during the summer months as they believed that what I would observe would not be the normal work that the centre would conduct with schools. I endeavoured to assure all managers that I understood this concern and that this research would look at the general practice in centres, both during term time and summertime. As I had already secured access to five centres, including residential and non-residential, urban and rural centres, it seemed reasonable to focus on them as a representative sample to generate data.

One of the five centres, the school sailing centre, was not representative of practice across the country, as it is attached to a single school and only serves those students, where the other 11 centres serve schools locally and from across the country, as well as various youth, charity, and private groups and individuals. Including this centre would potentially skew the analysis and so, after having spent two days observing practice and assisting on programmes at this centre, I concluded that it was better to not include this OETC in the sample. So, in the end, my sample reduced to four centres (see table 1, below, for a summary).

Table 1: Stages in Gaining Access to the Four OETCs

1	All 12 OETCs contacted
2	Seven respond positively
3	Two of these OETCs deny access
4	One more OETC not included
5	Four OETCs remain as a representative sample

The management and practitioners at all four centres were very willing to participate and gladly accommodated my research. Seeing as these four centres included residential and non-residential centres, three and one respectively, as well as two each being situated in an urban and rural setting, I was happy that these four OETCs could give a worthy representation of practice across the sector.

Having described how the sample for this research inquiry was chosen was, the following section details how data were generated from the four participating OETCs.

Data Generation

This section delineates the data sources and how they generated the data used in this research. After a brief introduction to this data generation section, there follows a description of the primary and secondary sources of data involved. Subsequently, I move on to describe how the data were collected before addressing the credibility of all data sources.

Addressing the aims of this research project involved working with the management and practitioners of the OETCs to generate an understanding of practice, both in terms of what centres aim to achieve and what actually happens (Stake, 2000). An ethno-case study can give "voices to participants" (Cohen, et al., 2011:219) and their interpretation of reality through combining all data sources in a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973:10) of events. One of the noted advantages of ethnographic methods is the potential to get a more precise understanding of social reality than you would using other methods (Hammersley, 2002). As a result, documentation of the multiple perspectives across and within each case is possible.

Ethnographic work lends itself to an emergent design (Stan and Humberstone, 2011). Data generation is unstructured in that it does not follow a fixed system designed prior to entering the field (Brewer, 2000; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). A hermeneutic approach, or the ability to understand human actions through interpretation (Allison and Pomeroy, 2000), both between the researcher and the

data, as well as the researcher and informants, is an important feature of constructivist ethnographies (Gallagher, 1992; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Gobo, 2008; Maxwell, 2013; Mertens, 2015) and was utilised throughout this project.

Data Sources

This research drew on both primary and secondary sources of data. Secondary sources, such as operating handbooks and staff manuals highlighted the expectations of staff from an organisational and management perspective. The relevant websites were analysed as they represent the public image of the centres connecting and engaging "communities by facilitating the exchange of information, ideas and resources" (Taddeo and Barnes, 2016:421). Observations of practice and staff meetings, along with informal conversations with staff and management, formed the basis of the primary data sources, and developed a picture of day-to-day practice across the centres.

Whist I had numerous informal chats with practitioners and managers, I eventually discounted the idea of using semi-structured interviews to generate another potential data source. Interviews are a staple source of data in constructivist research (Silverman, 2014; Mertens, 2015) and fit well within the framework of an ethno-case study (Parker-Jenkins, 2018). The original plan was for a two-phase approach to data generation, going back to the four centres to interview practitioners after phase 1 (detailed above) was complete. Reflecting on the research aims of this study, I concluded that structured interviews would not be an essential data source in addressing the research aims. Firstly, I had full access to all four OETCs in terms of participant observation, which is seen as a more useful data generation source than interviews (Creswell, 2014). Secondly, interviews can be based on "researcher-provoked data" (Sliverman, 2014:5) which may not be a true reflection of the real-life practice in question.

As I was looking to compare stated policy with daily practice, interviews were not seen as the most appropriate data source. In the more formal setting of a semi-

structured interview, practitioners could answer with their espoused theory, or how they intend to act, and not their theory in use, or how they actually act (Argyris and Schon, 1992). This could be seen as a missed opportunity to triangulate the different sources of data, and gain insight into the relationship between espoused theory and theory in use.

Perhaps semi-structured interviews could also have given space and time for undistracted, freer conversation, away from being potentially overheard by colleagues, management, or students. In the end, during the field observations I recorded a number of informal chats with practitioners which added another level of explanation, or interpretation, of practice, through being able to triangulate data across my own notes, the conversations with practitioners, the websites, and observed practices. I got the essence of what would have come from the interviews by those willing to speak with me casually, without the added strain of recording interviews at the same time as being a participant observer.

Generating Data from Different Sources

Four methods of data collection were used in this study. The OETC websites, including the umbrella website for Outdoor Education Ireland (OEI), were seen as highlighting the public face of what OETCs claim to do. The centre's standard operating procedures manuals (SOPs) were also obtained as it was felt they would be the best source for discovering how the centres organise the delivery of their outdoor education programmes. Observation of practice and informal chats with management and staff were also used to elicit data on the actual daily operation of OETCs. So, in all, websites, SOPs, practitioner observation, and informal chats made up the different methods of data collection.

The website pages for all four OETCs were the first source from which data were generated. I used the *NCapture* extension for *NVivo* in the web browser Chrome to access this data source (all websites were downloaded between 30/06/16 and 04/07/16) (QSR International, 2015). Using NCapture allowed me to capture all webpages and upload the website content into the NVivo software for storage and

analysis. During the observations at each centre, I requested a copy of the SOPs along with any other documentation deemed relevant. I received a copy of the SOPs from all four centres (see Appendix 4 for a summary of documentation supplied by each centre). Two managers were able to give me a digital copy straight away upon request, a third had a printed version I could copy, whilst it took a number of months to get a copy from the fourth centre.

The observation of practice, as well as the informal chats, began with a number of centre visits to observe what I perceived "people actually do" (Silverman, 2014:234). Over a period of 11 months I made 10 separate visits to the four OETCs (either two or three visits per OETC) and observed practice for a total of 25 days (see Appendix 4 for a more detailed breakdown of these centre visits). Saturation was reached, in terms of data generation through participant observation and informal chats at the four centres, "when the ability to obtain additional new information has been attained" (Fusch and Ness, 2015:1408). I would notice, at each research site, that eventually I stopped recording new information in my notebook; the programmes and sessions were not generating data beyond what was already recorded, and the chats became somewhat repetitive. This saturation is in relation to data generation at the four centres involved in this research inquiry that provide a representative sample of the public OETCs in Ireland.

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) note how difficult it can be to research in an area that you are familiar with from the outset, as participants may see you as an "expert or critic" (p. 82). This "reactivity" (Maxwell, 2013:124) or, the effect a researcher can have on informants, is known as the Hawthorne effect (Gobo, 2008; Cohen, et al., 2011). At the outset of the pilot observations, I was perhaps overly conscious of my potential status as an expert or critic. This led me to not get overly involved in delivering the session alongside practitioners. I found that such observing "from a distance" (Gobo, 2008:13) did not provide very useful data and it was clear that the lack of interaction with both practitioners and students was affecting the sessions – we were not constructing knowledge effectively. Staff seemed uptight and nervous (Gobo, 2008), whilst a mysterious note taker in the background, at times, distracted

the student groups. To get the most out of the time spent observing practice I needed to wholeheartedly adopt the role of a participant observer (Angrosino, 2005; Richards, 2014). This was more advantageous, as it allowed both staff and students to accept me into their experiences more readily. As I noted at the time:

> It seemed like I was completely accepted into the "inner circle" at this stage … I took part to a higher degree and was essentially a staff member. Although they all knew me from previous outdoor training and/or assessments I had never really worked with any of the staff on day-to-day sessions so this was the first time they really saw me as an instructor (Pilot, Day 2).

Embracing the idea that my presence in the field was going to have an unavoidable effect on informants, I aimed to take part as fully as possible in daily life in the centres. I asked practitioners to think of me as an assistant instructor and that I can and will help with sessions in any way, though the planning, leadership, and decision making are up to them.

> Talking to the group and saying I was a trainee was a funny feeling. It makes sense to say it but then a staff member refers to me as one of his future lecturers and I feel that anyone who was watching carefully would have seen through the deception with ease. I have previously assessed all staff on this session for their awards in kayaking and when I look back on it, I am not sure how much I effected the end delivery by my presence or my actions (Centre G – Day 1).

This approach proved much more fruitful as practitioners began to view me as an instructor, and the atmosphere became more relaxed as a result. While my presence did affect the behaviour of informants, this impact was lessened due to my familiarity with, and ability to interact with, the sports and environments implicit in practice across OETCs.

The extract below is a sample from one of my observation visits (names and other identifiers have been altered). It serves to indicate the level of detail in the note taking. I always had a notebook with me and endeavoured to write some information down during the course of observations. I also took some photographs of interesting situations to aid my memory in writing up the notes afterwards. Any spare time I had, I would write down as much detail as possible about what had happened previously. Every evening I would sit down and type up the day's observations from a mixture of my notes, the camera, and my own memory of the day.

> I went orienteering with a group of five and one instructor. The instructor brought the group down to the stream and explained map setting and orientation along with interpreting the legend and symbols. Between Joe and myself, we went around to all group members and checked that they knew where they were on the map, how to orientate it and where some of the other controls were. I had most of the group turning to face specific controls as we waited for Joe to finish helping the last group member figure it out. They then went for a run around the first loop of the course (6 controls) before attempting the full course. Joe and I sat talking for a while about orienteering and outdoor education instructing which moved onto the outdoors in general and different sports.
>
> The group had eaten field sorrel yesterday (I pointed it out) and today we tried nettles and I described wood sorrel to them before they entered the woods and they found it themselves as they were looking for the orienteering controls. They all came back eventually and we jumped on the bus and headed back to the centre for lunch. One interesting tool Joe had for orienteering was little prompt cards about the culture and heritage of the place. These were left lying loose on the ground and the first group back took an interest in them and began reading about the area and learning by themselves. At one stage one of the group stated that this job is easy, "you just hand us maps and send us off into the woods – sure the two guys could

> [still not back] be dead out there and we wouldn't know it". One or two good questions from Joe had him thinking about what was actually happening earlier in the session beyond just handing out maps (Centre G – Day 4).

At first, I tried to hide the notebook and the fact that I was taking notes, but this did not seem to faze anyone, staff or student, so by the end of my observation visits I was taking notes in plain sight. I did notice some practitioners would steal a glance at my notebook from time to time. I decided that, seeing as all practitioners are co-constructing the knowledge from this research, that I would leave my notebook on a table, during lunch for instance. Any staff that asked to read it could, and some were surprised at the level of detail, whilst others seemed disappointed that it was simply a detailed description of the day's events. No practitioner that read my notes came forward with any objections or issues with them. I took these reactions as confirmation that what I was recording in my notebook was an accurate representation of the sessions we had experienced together. One aspect of recording my notes that I was quite cognisant of was to do my best to avoid articulating my opinion on what I was recording until I was typing up my notes in the evening. This meant that I had a grasp of the whole day or session before stating my own thoughts, and that the notebook would mostly contain a recording of the events of the day.

Different font colours distinguished between my observations (black), staff and student comments (blue), and my own thoughts or reflections (red).

> One instructor seemed surprised (my interpretation of his reaction) to be assigned to the kayaking group. I was later informed that this was not the original plan and that he was not supposed to be with that group. This brought the ratio from 2:20 to 3:20. There were a number of groups in today – "kiddie's camp", adventure camp, jigsaw, bible school and sailing skills. Another comment was made regarding the manner in which the morning meeting was conducted – it was different than usual and that the manager

> was more "upbeat" than normal and usually has a "bee in their bonnet" about something. From the atmosphere I picked up on it seemed as if people were uncomfortable, or may be not used to this type of meeting. Everyone dispersed to get organised for their sessions and I had a short chat with some staff and management about outdoor education and adventure sports, as well as the IT Tralee Shout course [Outdoor Learning degree] (Centre D – day 1).

Data Credibility

With regard to the credibility of collected data, as the websites and printed media are authentic sources of information relating to, and supplied by, the respective centres, they are deemed credible. Websites are a means by which centres can highlight their "unique attributes" (Miller, Adsit and Miller, 2005:34) and communicate their "vision, values, achievements and the learning opportunities" (Campbell-Price, 2018:1). Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) create consistent practice in regular aspects of a job and highlight the expectations of quality provision for staff (EPA, 2007). Each OETC developed their SOPs individually, and they are now working together to develop a generic template that all centres can use to promote consistency of practice across the centres. All four of the OETCs that I researched agreed to provide me with a copy of their SOPs. The SOPs are a key source of insight into the centre's expectations of quality practice in public outdoor education provision. Two centres had adopted the nationally agreed SOPs document, developed by the centres, while the other two centres had their own versions in use. The nationally agreed SOPs document and one of the other two appeared to be regularly updated, within the last 12 months, while the fourth was a paper copy (the digital copy had been lost previously) that seemed not to have been updated as regularly.

In terms of participant observation and the informal chats, Maxwell (2013) suggests that member validation (Gobo, 2008:192; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:181) is a useful means of validating generated data. Opportunities naturally arose at two of

the four sites, in the course of collecting data to allow for member checking of observed practice[15]. Data were also triangulated (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Mertens, 2015) in a temporal sense through multiple visits to research sites over the course of almost a year – 13/07/16 to 30/05/17 (see Appendix 4 for a breakdown of the observation dates). All data sources – websites and brochures, operating procedures, as well as the observation and informal conversation data – formed the dataset in NVivo. Analysis of data from different sources allows for a check of interpretation, with the understanding that any differences may not be a result of credibility error and could be "illuminating" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007:184) in terms of highlighting differences between data sources.

Once the data generation phase had been completed, the analysis could form a picture of how claimed and actual practice match and to what degree they contrast, by way of analysis of website claims, documented procedures, informal chats, and observations of practice.

Data Analysis

Once all data were gathered and digitised – the observations had to be typed up and all printed media was formatted appropriately – the entire dataset was uploaded into NVivo, which is a powerful data storage and management software package (QSR International, n.d.). Data were filed according to data type and the centre it was generated from. Each centre was identified by a randomly assigned letter – B, C, D, E, and G[16]. As can be seen in figure 3, below, there was a master folder for each of the three main stages of data collection, namely websites and brochures, documentation, and observations (which included informal chats/discussions). As described in more detail below, the data coding followed the six-phase approach laid out by Braun and Clarke (2006). Once familiar with the dataset, I first coded the websites and brochures, which included the parent

[15] See page 74 for more information.
[16] The five letters include the observation data from the fifth centre that was later excluded. None of the data from this fifth centre were used in the final analysis process.

organisation website of Outdoor Education Ireland (OEI). Next the documentation, and lastly the observations and discussions, were coded into a number of separate codes. Due to the substantial nature of the data generated I found it difficult work with the entire dataset so, after the initial coding of all data, I split the codes in line with their respective sources – websites and brochures, documentation, and observations/discussions. This created more manageable chunks of data to be analysed before being recombined later in the analysis process.

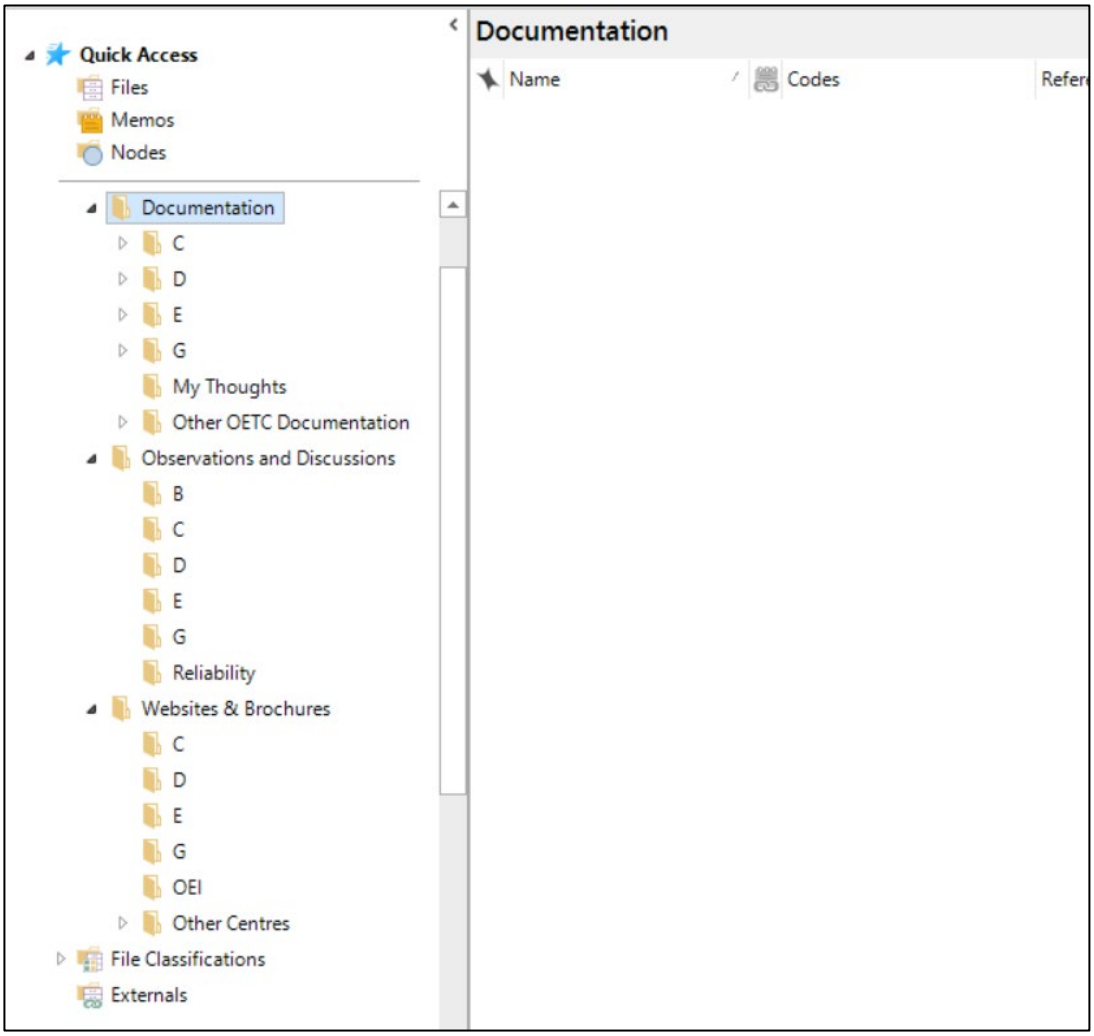


Figure 3: Data Storage in NVivo

All data emerging from the centre visits, documentation and websites was analysed using applied thematic analysis (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey, 2012; Clarke and Braun, 2017). This method establishes precise categories of coding, essentially identifying similar content, or "patterns within the data" (Braun and Clarke,

2006:79) and linking those sections of data together. This process was deemed appropriate as it recognises the subjective influence of the researcher on the data, which is in line with the constructivist ethno-case study approach outlined above. Using text segmentation, of interesting or important pieces, to explore similarities, dissimilarities and other relationships within the text documents (ibid, 2012; Maxwell, 2013), the text is then coded into categories and codes as relationships are identified within the data from one iteration to the next.

Braun and Clarke (2006:87) put forward a six-phase approach for the thematic analysis of data, namely:

1. Familiarising yourself with your data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report

Each phase adds an extra layer of complexity, allowing the data to "pull together" (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014:86) into coherent "summarizers: categories or themes, causes/explanations, relationships among people, [or] theoretical constructs" (ibid, 2014:87) so as to address the research aims. All forms of data collected and analysed throughout this research had this coding structure applied to it. This exercise of content analysis should reveal the vision for practice by which the centres operate. The aims of each centre will emerge from this coding of documentation and websites, and comparison can then begin with the categories coded from the structured observation (Cohen et al, 2011; Mertens, 2015) of practice within the OETCs. The following paragraphs outline the process I undertook to analyse the data.

Phase 1 involved familiarising myself with the dataset. I had collected the data myself so had some understanding of the content before beginning the analysis,

however, phase 1 asks you to “immerse yourself in the data to the extent that you are familiar with the depth and breadth of the content” (Braun and Clarke, 2006:87). This involves actively reading the entire dataset searching for patterns and connections. In all I read the dataset twice before moving on to the more formal coding of phase 2.

Once I was familiar with the dataset, generating initial codes involved going back through the data once more, this time “tagging and naming selections of text” (ibid, 2006:89). As this analysis is data driven, I coded the entire dataset into as many categories as possible to allow for a greater depth of analysis in future phases. In all, phase two produced 94 separate nodes (coding brackets – see figure 4 below). Each node had a title as well as a description. For example, the *Environment and Sustainability* node’s definition was ‘any or all mentions of the environment or sustainability are coded to this node’. These titles and descriptions created a distinction between nodes that assisted in coding content to the most appropriate node.

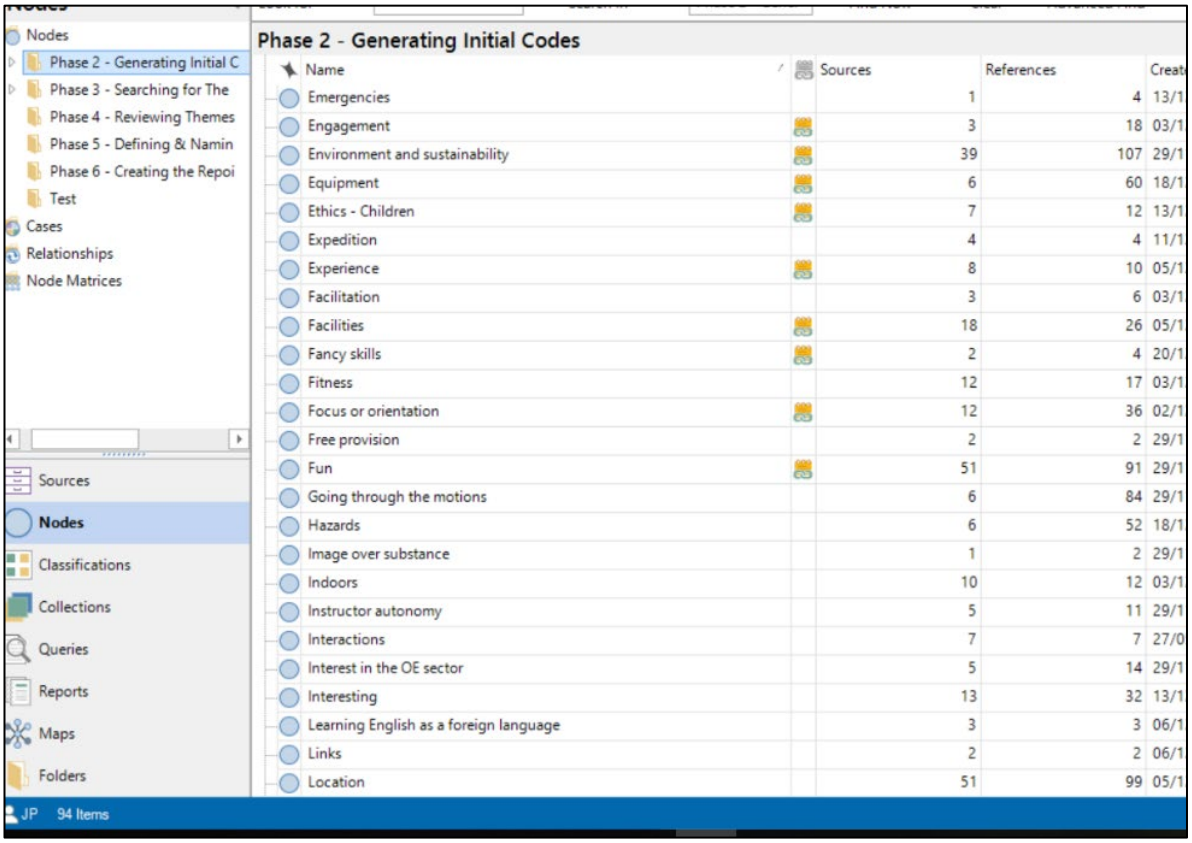


Figure 4: Phase 2 Coding

Phase two finished with a selection of nodes coding the entire dataset. Next, in phase 3, I exported a summary of the nodes into Excel and used this file to create a set of initial themes by grouping related nodes together. Originally, I attempted this theming in NVivo, though struggled with the functionality of the programme. Excel, a programme I was more familiar with allowed me greater flexibility in moving coded data between initial themes than would NVivo. Once completed, and the themes were generated in NVivo, I was able to split the data-by-data source using a matrix coding query. This split permitted a comparison of the content of each theme between the websites, SOPs, and observations (see figure 5 for an example and Appendix 5 for the audit trail for phases 2 through 6).

Purpose	
64 : Purpose	132
36 : Going through the motions	83
48 : Mismatch of practice	23
33 : Focus or orientation	22
43 : Interesting	6
38 : Image over substance	2
3 : Adults	1
Outcomes	
12 : Competition	19
23 : Engagement	18
32 : Fitness	5
35 : Fun	25
39 : Indoors	3
4 : Amount of activity	18
41 : Interactions	1
52 : One off experiences	7
55 : Outcomes	6
59 : Personal development	1
63 : Progression and development	22
68 : Relationships	22
80 : Student autonomy	56
81 : Support	8
84 : Team theme	13
9 : Challenge	3
90 : Variety	1

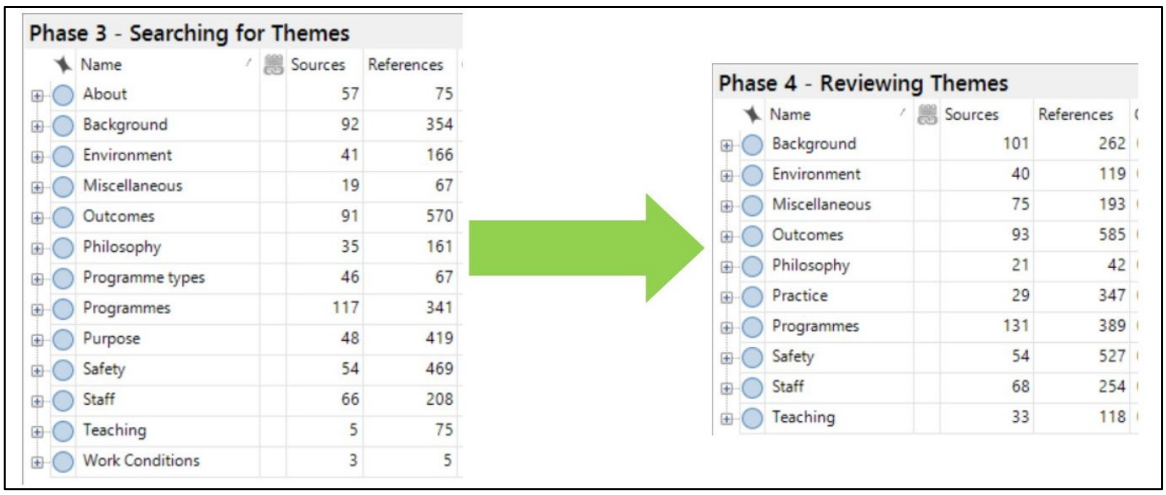
Safety	
16 : Court cases	2
26 : Ethics - Children	1
65 : Ratios	37
70 : Safety	31
91 : Warm-up	2
92 : Weather	2
Programmes	
53 : Organisation	82
10 : Commercial reality	10
62 : Programming by logistics	9
6 : Bespoke programmes	2
Background	
30 : Facilities	2
1 : About - history	1
11 : Community initiatives	1
46 : Location	1
Environment	
24 : Environment and sustainability	24
61 : Place based	10
Miscellaneous	
47 : Methodology	17
2 : Activities	1

Figure 5: Phase 3 Themes from Observations and Discussions

A review of the themes was the focus of phase 4, where I applied two different levels of review to the existing themes. The first level involved "reviewing at the level of the coded data extracts" (Braun and Clarke, 2006:91). This meant that I had to read all of the content of each theme and consider whether all of the data fit in

each theme. Level 2 of this review is connected, though it looks at how the themes relate to the dataset in general. Phase 4 is essentially a micro and macro check of the themes created in phase 3 to ensure they are coherent and reflect the content of the dataset. During both levels of review minor aspects of nodes and themes required revision and in the end, I went from having 13 themes to 10 (see figure 6).

Phase 5 focused on defining and naming themes. This required a detailed analysis of each existing theme for the purpose of creating a coherent and consistent account of each theme, individually and collectively. I began phase 5 by summarising the content of each theme as a means by which to check the coherency and consistency of each theme and its contents. Although some of the collected data had been set aside in phase 4 as not being relevant to answering the research aims, I still found difficulty in seeing the big picture within and across themes due to the amount of data. The summary, whilst highlighting minor inconsistencies in the themes, allowed for a condensed view of the contents of each theme that eventually led to the main themes and findings.



Phase 3 - Searching for Themes

Name	Sources	References
About	57	75
Background	92	354
Environment	41	166
Miscellaneous	19	67
Outcomes	91	570
Philosophy	35	161
Programme types	46	67
Programmes	117	341
Purpose	48	419
Safety	54	469
Staff	66	208
Teaching	5	75
Work Conditions	3	5

Phase 4 - Reviewing Themes

Name	Sources	References
Background	101	262
Environment	40	119
Miscellaneous	75	193
Outcomes	93	585
Philosophy	21	42
Practice	29	347
Programmes	131	389
Safety	54	527
Staff	68	254
Teaching	33	118

Figure 6: Phase 3 to Phase 4 Coding Refinements

To compile this summary, I read through each theme and described in as few words as possible the general content of each theme and subtheme. The summary turned out to be sizeable (approximately 8,000 words) so I decided to summarise the summary, in a similar fashion to the original summary, by describing the content of each section in as few words as possible. This summarised summary was abridged

to a point (approximately 2,000 words) that I found much more manageable and it was from this that the themes of phase 5a were drawn. Once completed, the themes were checked for consistency again by rereading the entire content of each theme to ensure all subthemes matched their overall theme. These newly developed themes became phase 5a as, even though the data had been coded and themed following the appropriate steps as laid out by Braun and Clarke (2006), I was not yet in a position to explain the findings in a clear and concise manner. Something was missing. I went through a period of reading phase 5a over and over as well as going back to the academic literature and eventually began to see patterns in the themes that led me to the final themes of phase 5b (see figure 7, below).

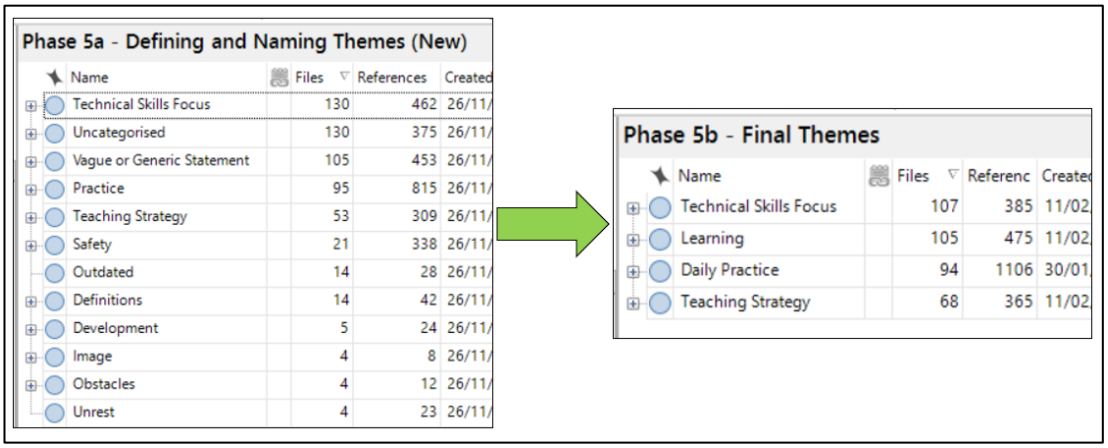


Figure 7: Phases 5a and 5b

Bazeley (2009) makes a distinction between identifying themes within data and developing these themes into a "more comprehensive model of what they have found" (p. 6). Whilst the four themes that emerged from phase 5b do relate to each other, how they integrate with each other in a comprehensive model was not obvious. Next, I set about generating an explanatory model that incorporated all four themes in an integrated representation that explicitly addressed the research aims. This involved rereading the four themes and comparing differences within each theme as well as relating each theme to the other three (Bazeley, 2009).

There was one theme from phase 5a, *Vague and Generic Statements*, that was the last theme to be assigned to a theme in 5b. This theme seemed important to the research and I eventually connected this data to the Learning theme in phase 5b. Thinking more about the struggle to place that specific theme eventually led me to begin to relate aspects of the four themes together and begin to develop a comprehensive model that outlines the final themes in a interconnected manner that also addressed the research aims (Bazeley, 2009).

The four final themes were Daily Practice, Learning, Technical Skills Focus, and Teaching Strategy. From these four final themes four major findings were developed that incorporated aspects of the four themes into a coherent interpretation of the data. First, the chosen theoretical lens, Ritzer's (2019) McDonaldization of society, was utilised to interpret the data and show to what extent outdoor eduction practice in Ireland has been McDonaldized. The three other findings emerged organically from the creative non-fiction stories as a result of noticed patterns of recurrence of certain behaviours or practices.

As the evidence of the principles of McDonaldization became more ordered and classified among the principles, the four findings became more obvious. The writing of the creative non-fiction stories also aided in clarifying my thoughts on the content of the themes and making the key findings more visible. The four key findings were the McDonaldization of Irish Outdoor Education, A Lack of Engagement with Theory, Programming by Logistics, and Ideological Dissonance (these key findings are explained further in chapters 6 and 7).

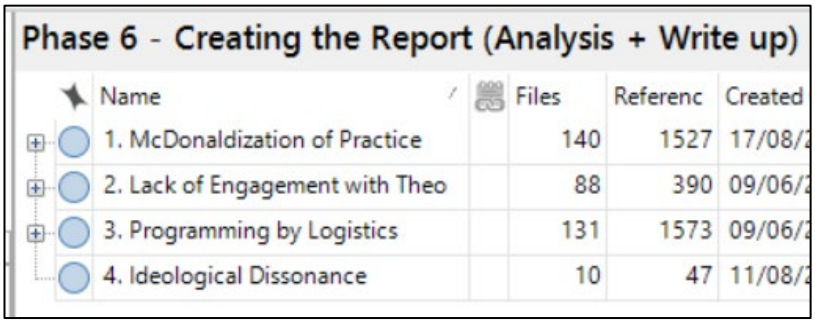


Figure 8: Phase 6 Findings

It is worth pausing here to distinguish between these findings in a little more depth. The first finding, the McDonaldization of Irish outdoor education, is different in origin to the other three findings. McDonaldization theory was used to interpret the analysed data and as such this finding has etic roots, in that it derived from a more objective approach to analysing and interpeting the data (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2011). Such an etic approach relies on a external, or "brought in" (Stake, 2005:461), theory to organise and interpret the data analysis, as was the case with my use of Ritzer's (2019) McDonaldization thesis in interpreting the data. The other three findings, A Lack of Engagement with Theory, Programming by Logistics, and Ideological Dissonance, are the result of a more emic approach to the data analysis and interpretation. An emic approach allows for a more subjective reading of the data (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2011), and for findings that might otherwise be hidden, to emerge (Lanier and Rader, 2015).

Essentially, the etic aspect of this research inquiry employs a theoretical lens (Ritzer's McDonaldization) to further interpret the data, while the emic aspect revealed three themes that emerged directly from the data. Both approaches are useful, with an observer's outside perspective from the more general etic stance and a more personal, idiographic outlook combining to further any understanding (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005a) reached of practice in Irish public outdoor education.

Once the key findings had revealed themselves the final phase of work in NVivo began. A folder for each of the findings was created in the phase 6 folder (Creating the Report) with subfolders containing content from each of the four themes within both findings folders (see figure 8 above). I then reread the content of all four final themes and coded any relevant sections of each theme to the approriate finding. The contents of the findings folders in phase 6 formed the basis of the vignettes representing the findings of this study.

Selecting a Theoretical Lens

The choice of lens with which to interpret the analysed data was made well into the data analysis stage. All data had been collected and was being analysed through the

phases outlined above. This is reflected in the Methodology chapter preceding the Theoretical Lens chapter, as it was only as the methodology progressed and evolved that the theoretical lens emerged. As the data analysis evolved the lens that emerged as most applicable was McDonaldization, which offered a widely accepted, ready-made means by which to interpret my data.

After examining various other theories, this lens was deemed appropriate due to the overlap between McDonaldization and the rationalisation of outdoor education practice shown in the literature (Loynes, 1998; Roberts, 2005; Roberts, 2012; Beames and Brown, 2014). McDonaldization is also applicable in a number of other fields of research. It has been applied to research in, for example, the fitness sector (O'Toole, 2009), sport (Andrews and Ritzer, 2018), medicine (Dorsey and Ritzer, 2016), psychotherapy (Montgomery, 2016), banking (Dumbili, 2013), and private security (van Steden and de Waarp, 2013). Ritzer's (2019) recent publication of the ninth edition of *The McDonaldization of Society* book further validates the widely accepted nature, and usefulness, of McDonaldization theory for academic research.

The data generated during this inquiry was interpreted through the lens of Ritzer's (2019) McDonaldization thesis. This theory, drawing on Weber's (2001) earlier work on rationalisation and bureaucratisation, has four basic principles. These principles of efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control describe a rationalisation process in Western society through the example of the fast-food restaurant. As these principles of rationalisation develop more efficient and predictable systems, some negative consequences are inevitable. Ritzer (2019) calls this aspect of McDonaldization the 'irrationality of rationality'. As a result of this irrationality, an overly McDonaldized process can end up becoming inefficient, unpredictable, incalculable, and out of control. A more detailed breakdown of McDonaldization can be found in chapter 4.

Data Management

All digital data were stored in a password protected cloud server. I was the only person who knew the password to access this cloud server account. All paper

documentation, including field notebooks and copies of some SOPs, were stored in a locked filing cabinet that only I had a key for. This filing cabinet was in my office, which was always left locked when no-one was there. An external hard drive was available to back up all files and was updated regularly. Two computers were used for the data analysis, my laptop and my office desktop. Both were capable of accessing the cloud server, so they were password protected as well. This meant that I was the only person capable of accessing any materials related to this project with two locks, a door and a filing cabinet securing any paper documentation and two passwords preventing access to the digital files.

Data management was through the NVivo project, as this allowed for all of the data strands to be uploaded and secured in one location, while also supporting the data analysis in a systematic and transparent manner (Johnston, 2006). Once familiar with how to operate it, the use of such data analysis software can lead to greater levels of speed, consistency and efficiency during the analytical processes (Richards, 2014). The use of qualitative data analysis software allows for ease of accessibility and the recording of the analysis process as well as data retention (Miles Huberman, and Saldana, 2014). I altered some file names by changing or deleting aspects that could identify the centre in question to protect the anonymity of both the centres and the practitioners (Bazeley, 2013).

Section Summary

This section of the methodology began by describing the purposive sample population used in this study, four OETCs, and demonstrated how access was negotiated with all four centres. The data sources (centre websites, operating procedure documents, participant observations, as well as informal chats), how data from these sources was collected, as well as the credibility of these sources made up the data generation section. The following data analysis section detailed how I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phase analysis process in interpreting the data and developing themes and findings. A short section on the management of data – where it was stored and how secure it was – brought this section to a

close. Having discussed the generation, analysis, and management of data, the next section expounds the means by which the analysed data were represented and how these choices support and develop an interpretation of the analysis that aimed to address the research aims.

4 Making Meaning

Another aspect of the research design that requires elaboration is the representation of findings and analysis. As Van Maanen (2011) points out, "we cannot represent others in any other terms but our own" (p. 12). How can research findings be reported in a way that embraces the co-constructed nature of these findings, between the researcher and participants, whilst also being aware of criticisms of traditional academic writing as "writing for other academics and policy makers" (Finley, 2005:683)? The traditional academic representation of research has been challenged by some as boring or dull (Sparkes, 2002b; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005a; Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005; Caulley, 2008), and esoteric (Lather, 1996; see also Denison and Rinehart, 2000; Richardson, 2000; Parry and Johnson, 2007). This issue is known as the crisis of representation which acknowledges the idea that any representation of research is partial and thus cannot capture an objective truth (Clough, 1999; Schwandt, 2007; Berbary, 2015). Accepting the relativity of any representation of research as at least "partial truth" (Frank, 2000:482), creates an opportunity to move "towards telling the story that needs to be told from the data, creating provocative representations, and making research accessible to the public" (Berbary, 2015:15).

To overcome the constraints of traditional academic prose (Sparkes, 2002b; Angrosino, 2007), ethnographers have sought ways to show rather than tell the stories of their research to the public (Diversi, 1998; Reinhart, 1998; Sparkes, 2002). Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) label any such work that adopts unconventional writing styles as creative analytical practices (CAP). CAPs are used with the aim of representing meaning "rather than simplifying and reducing to generalize" (Parry and Johnson, 2007:120; see also Coates, 2010) and thus allows for research to be

portrayed in a more persuasive and evocative manner than can be achieved through more traditional forms of representing findings (Denison and Rinehart, 2000; Richardson, 2000; Goodley, 2004). A number of researchers in outdoor and adventure education have understood the usefulness of this approach (Beames and Pike, 2008; Coates, 2010; Beames, Higgins, and Nicol, 2012; Higgins and Wattchow, 2013; Coates, et al., 2016) and, in so doing, have developed means by which to communicate across the sector and beyond.

One such practice is ethnographic fiction, or creative non-fiction (Richardson, 2000; Sparkes, 1997; 2000; 2002a; Berbary, 2015). Creative non-fiction represents actual events (non-fiction) by utilising fictional techniques (Sparkes, 2002a/b; Caulley, 2008). The use of such techniques has been long accepted in social science research by some. Geertz (1973) and Barone (2008) both point to the idea that all ethnographies are to some degree fictitious, as they are shaped to a greater or lesser extent by the researcher and their perspective on what they have observed (Richardson, 2000), as opposed to being concrete facts. Bearing in mind that any research findings are representations of the researcher's perspective as much as they are a faithful representation of the reality being investigated allows the reader to accept, at a minimum, the "partial truths" (Barone, 2008:112) of the finding's stories.

The findings of this research are represented as two creative nonfiction vignettes. In line with the tenets of creative non-fiction, all events depicted in the vignettes actually happened and I witnessed, or read, all of them during the data collection phase. The vignettes have been fictionalised – names of practitioners have been changed, along with temporal and geographic adjustments – in an attempt to anonymise the practitioners and OETCs in this study (Klein, 1993), as well as giving the reader "a sense of realism, truth, authenticity, and authority" (Caulley, 2008:432) that can be lacking in a traditional academic representation. The stories have been written as taking place over two days of observations at an OETC. These two days are a combination of events from all four centres (Klein, 1993) over the course of the fieldwork, with interactions combined and tangled to tell the story of

the findings. For example, one character in the CAP story can be a mix of practitioners and events from across some, or all, of the OETCs.

Research participants have been combined and aspects of practice merged to form distinct sessions. So, whilst all events depicted actually happened, the order in which they occurred and who was involved have been altered to keep the focus on practice in general and address the research aims specifically. The story has been crafted to reflect the themes that came out of the data. As a result, some aspects of the stories may seem overly specific to be drawing conclusions from. Such points in the story are included as representations of that type of practice due to the recurrence of such behaviours across the dataset. Lastly, each day in the story is particularly focused on certain findings or aspects thereof. Both stories combined give my account of practice in relation to the main findings, as observed during the fieldwork for this research.

This section detailed the motives I had for drawing on creative non-fiction in writing up the findings of this research inquiry (for more on these motives see Confidentiality and Anonymity in section 6, this chapter). The purpose of such detail is to give the reader enough information to determine how authentic the findings are. More such issues of validity are my focus in the next section.

5 Validity

An overriding concern within all research is the question of how we can be sure of the faithfulness of research findings. Findings should be recounted faithfully to give the researcher, as well as the researched community, in this case outdoor practitioners, confidence in the authenticity of the interpretation (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). This section begins with a discussion of validity and how it has been defined in relation to this research. Next, the methods utilised to demonstrate the validity and reliability of the data and analysis are grouped into five principal methods – trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, confirmability, and subjectivity – before concluding with a section outlining the internal reliability checks conducted in NVivo.

Validity and reliability have been considered "controversial" (Maxwell, 2013:122) and "contentious" (Richards, 2014:117) within the paradigms of qualitative research, with some discord relating to whether the terms can be applied to qualitative data, as the concepts are seen by some as unsuitable due to their quantitative roots. In order to be as accessible and clear as I can (Lather, 1996) validity, for this research, is defined as the "quality of being well-grounded, sound, or correct" (Merriam Webster, 2019) for the purposes of this research. Maxwell (2013) uses the term validity as a way of presenting a believable and credible account of any research findings. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) posit that rather than adhering to an external and independent validity check, it is worthy in itself to contribute "fruitfully to the public discussion of values and goals in a society" (p. 292). Reliability refers to the stability and replicability of the findings (Silverman, 2014). Together, a full and transparent outline of validity and reliability can demonstrate how authentically and consistently the research methods used were applied. To be able to demonstrate the consistency of analysis, it is necessary to show that the research has been interpreted in a "well founded [sic] and applicable" (Richards, 2014:158) manner.

Validation Methods

Criteria suited to validating constructivist research include trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, and confirmability (Denzin and Lincoln, 2017:20, Tight, 2017). Trustworthiness and credibility refer to the "consistency" (Richards, 2014:118) of data, or the stability and faithfulness of the researcher's interpretation of the data (Silverman, 2014:83). Trustworthiness comes from the researcher documenting the systematic process which they followed (Kirk and Miller, 1985) (I have detailed the phases of analysis that were followed in the Data Analysis section 3, this chapter).

An audit trail of the coding process is useful in demonstrating trustworthiness, as it "means that any reader or another researcher can follow the progression of events in the study and understand their logic" (Sandelowski, 1986:34; see also Koch,

2006). Nvivo allows you to save your work after each phase, as you generate the next phase of analysis in a new folder. Therefore, an audit trail of the analysis process is possible, highlighting the "decision trail" (Koch, 2006:92) followed, thereby allowing the reader to judge trustworthiness and credibility for themselves. Appendix 5 contains the audit trail of the data analysis process.

For others to be in a position to decide on the transferability of a particular research project, they must have access to a sufficient depth of information pertaining to the stages of the research (Koch, 2006; Cohen, et al., 2011; Mertens, 2015). A thick description (Geertz, 1973) gives sufficient information to the reader to enable them to interpret the level of transferability. Such a depth of description is possible through the following chapters explicating the findings, as well as a detailed audit trail. Outlining the reasons behind how and why decisions related to data collection and analysis evolved, adds to the information available to the reader allowing them to judge the transferability of findings in a more lucid manner.

In my case, I am researching at four different sites. This, according to Bazeley (2013) and Tight (2017), can add to the transferability of findings, as each location can be said to replicate the others – if similar findings are found at each site, then some dependability is present across the data, adding to transferability. Data generated from a number of sources will enhance the likelihood of impartiality on the part of the researcher as the various methods support each other (Maxwell, 2013; Silverman, 2014; Richards, 2014).

Accounting for researcher subjectivity is the focus of confirmability (Given, 2008). This means that methods used to collect and analyse the data should be described upfront and in detail (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, 2014). Such transparency was achieved through three complimentary means, namely the explicit account of data generation and analysis (see Methods, in section 3, this chapter), along with the audit trail (Appendix 5), the reflexive awareness of the assumptions and values of the researcher (section 3, chapter 1), and member checking.

Member checking is where the researcher reengages with participants to ascertain the level of agreement they have with the recording, analysis, or conclusions of the study so far. This can be useful during data collection as well as analysis (Given, 2008; Mertens, 2015; Coe, et al., 2017). Sandelowski (1993) urges caution with such checks, as members may have forgotten their response or the context of their response, or indeed may not fully appreciate the depth of interpretive analysis achieved by the researcher. I have checked my daily field notes during observations with participants at two of the research sites – they asked me if they could read my notes. On both occasions, any participants that were interested in reading through my notes agreed that they were an accurate representation of the day's events.

In terms of further member checks, after the analysis process was complete and the analytical stories had been written, these were checked by four practitioners, whom were part of the research inquiry, for their views on the overall accuracy and realness of the experiences portrayed. This small group was a convenience sample, in that they were easily accessible and had shown interest in the research inquiry (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2011). Once the stories were drafted a copy was sent to four outdoor practitioners that had been working in the centres during my research visits. All four responded that they believed that the stories were a fair and accurate representation of OETC practice from their point of view. As well as confirming that the vignettes were consistent with practice from their perspective, three of the four practitioners were somewhat reflective in their comments. One commented that they were not shocked by any of the content, though some parts of the stories made them think. Another remarked that the instructor thoughts section gave a good contrast to what actually happens. A third practitioner remarked that I painted a better picture than they expected.

Maxwell (2013) states that subjectivity and reactivity are impossible to eliminate and require acceptance by the researcher as part of the research process. I am a member of the community being researched as well as being the researcher and do have personal and professional relationships with a large amount of the research cohort. It is unavoidable that I would have preconceptions of what to expect within

the OETCs. Developing an awareness of these preconceptions allows for the subjectivity of the researcher to come to the fore, and ideally be utilised as an extra check on the credibility of the research findings as the researcher can be seen as "an active part of the situation being studied" (Richards, 2014:39). Such experience can be constructed to reflect a "critical subjectivity" (Maxwell, 2013:45) on the research to allow for a more practical interpretation of any or all data. This approach aided in the "convergent validation" (Fielding, 2012:127) of the various data sets and led to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Such self-awareness of the researcher is a critical aspect of credibility (Koch, 2006; Coe, et al., 2017). Self-awareness can be enhanced in the form of journaling all of the decisions and developments within the project (Rodgers and Cowles, 1993; Bazeley, 2013:102; Mertens, 2015:271). This allows for reflexivity on the part of the researcher to add extra analytical depth to the research (Seale, 1999; Bazeley, 2013; Coe, et al., 2017), thus enhancing credibility.

Having worked in the public outdoor education sector in Ireland for many years, I am researching within a culture that I am somewhat familiar with. Here, the exercise of caution with regard to the use of ethnographic methods is necessary (Gobo, 2008). One of the main difficulties is that of looking past the assumptions embedded in a familiar culture, whilst also maintaining a level of objectivity that allows the researcher to refrain from over identifying with informants (Delamont, 2016; Gobo, 2008). Gobo (2008) refers to this as the "apparent paradox of participant observation" (p. 6), where one must engage fully in the observations whilst remaining sufficiently detached to be able to record reliable data. To address this issue, a detailed reflexive account, from the point of view of the researcher (see section 3, chapter 1), can make any value-laden assumptions explicit and how they informed the project more obvious (Delamont, 2016; Gobo, 2008; Coe, et al., 2017).

Reliability in NVivo

During the period of analysis, it was deemed prudent to check the reliability of the coding categories I was developing. As I was using NVivo for data management and storage it was possible to utilise the reliability functions within it. Richards (2014) distinguishes between two types of coder consistency tests, one where there is only one coder, and another where there is a team of coders working together. As I am the only coder in the research the former testing method was deemed most appropriate, though, as Richards (2014) points out, care must be taken in interpreting the results of such tests.

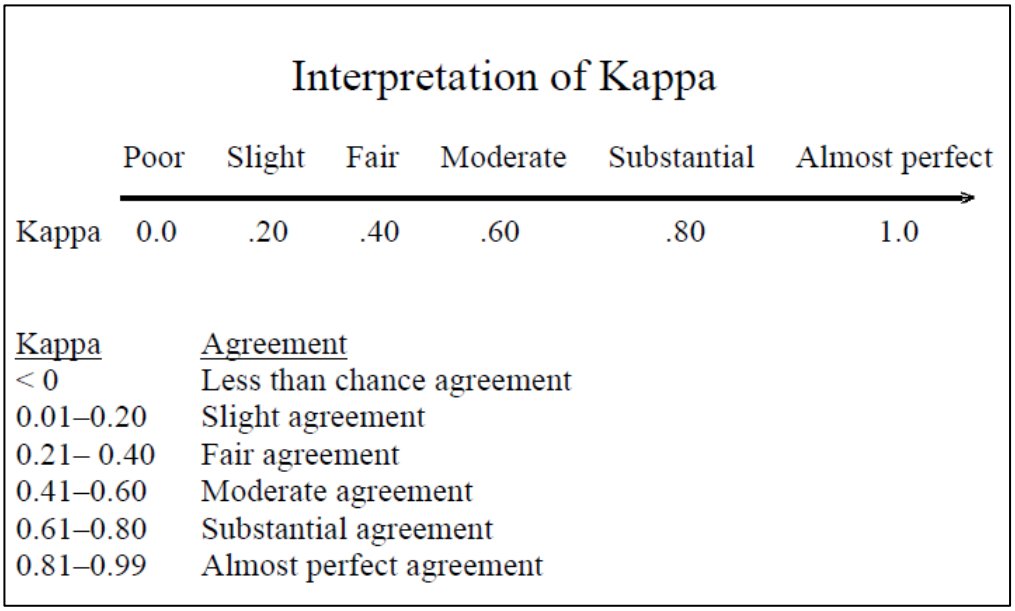


Figure 9: Kappa Interpretation Scale (Viera and Garrett, 2005:362)

The scales used for such tests (see figure 9, above) tend to seek objectivity in the subjective (Sandelowski, 1986; Schwandt, 2000). Such testing methods can be seen as "untenable" (Van Maanen, 1988:34) within ethnographic research. Sandelowski (1993) goes on to point out that the adoption of standardised measures overlooks the interpretive nature of reality as "multiple and constructed" (p. 3). Keeping all of this in mind, I chose two observation days at random and copied the coded files into a separate folder. I then signed into NVivo under a different username and coded for percentage agreement which shows how closely the coding of both coders, me both times, agree with each other. In this case the percentage agreement averaged

out at just over 97% as can be seen in figure 10. Whist this figure is substantial, the percentage agreement figure does not adjust for the random chance that both coders might agree with each other. Viera and Garrett (2005) explain that the Kappa result takes account of chance with a reading of 0 equating to total chance and a reading of 1 representing perfect agreement. My Kappa agreement result was 0.63, which is just in the substantial agreement section of the scale (see figure 10).

	A	B	C
1	Code	Kappa	**Agreement (%)**
2	Amount of activity	0.3867	96.4
3	Challenge	0.6725	99.68
4	Competition	0.3088	96.5
5	Environment and sustainability	0.8874	99.46
6	Equipment	0	96.87
7	Fun	0.4329	98.99
8	Going through the motions	0.3686	83.94
9	Interest in the OE sector	0.9975	99.99
10	Interesting	0.8303	99.62
11	Methodology	0.8258	98.63
12	Mismatch of practice	0.2573	88.72
13	Organisation	0.9218	96.96
14	Positive staff culture	1	100
15	Programming by logistics	0.2056	97.15
16	Progression and development	0.8058	97.88
17	Purpose	0.799	95.32
18	Ratios	0.9938	99.99
19	Relationships	0.3135	98.3
20	Safety	0.5289	96.89
21	Staff perceptions	0.6572	94.15
22	Student autonomy	0.7055	96.33
23	Support	0.304	96.97
24	Teacher involvement	0.9947	99.98
25	Teaching and learning	0.6045	99.2
26	Team Theme	0.9974	99.99
27	Technical instruction	0.6729	96.53
28	Unrest	0.5279	96.04
29			
30	**Averages**	**0.63**	**97.05**

Figure 10: Percentage Agreement and Kappa Scores

As noted above, such figures are not overly consistent with research set in a constructivist paradigm (Sandelowski, 1986; Silverman, 2014; Richards, 2014). The Kappa score does show substantial similarity, though the difference is still stark. My understanding of the data had evolved over the intervening period between coding runs, which should account for the difference in agreement. This is no way detracts

from the validity and reliability of the research, it merely highlights the natural evolution of understanding that emerges through qualitative research of this kind. In terms of consistency of coding, the high level of agreement found in the Kappa score can be understood as showing a level of coding consistency across the coding process.

Section Summary

While validity is a contentious term in qualitative research, I have used it in a logical fashion to show the "well-grounded, sound, or correct" (Merriam Webster, 2019) means by which this research was designed and conducted. I have sketched out what I believe to be a relevant framework within which the validity of this research project can be judged (Maxwell, 2013). Trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, confirmability, and subjectivity have all been addressed in detail and, taken together, offer a means by which the reader can judge the validity for themselves. Maxwell (2013) and Mertens (2015) point out that ethics are an integral part of any methodology and it is to ethical issues that we turn to next.

6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues permeate any research undertaking (Silverman, 2014; Mertens, 2015). From the inception of the research idea through to writing up the thesis, and beyond, ethical issues need to be taken seriously and dealt with in a respectful and appropriate manner (Richards, 2014). Ethical dilemmas can occur at any stage and require a weighing of the potential benefits to the research aims against any possible harm to the research participants (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2011). Mertens (2015) and Lee (2001) point out that it is not always possible to grasp the fullness of ethical dilemmas before they arise, yet this section will outline the key ethical issues as they are understood at present. Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden (2001) recognise that researchers are bound to an ongoing ethical process. Ashworth, Maynard, and Stuart (2016) put forward four key ethical considerations for social science research in outdoor studies. These four features, namely, purpose and gain, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, and risk of harm (ibid,

2016:205), guide the researcher in ethical issues by providing a framework to inform research practice.

Purpose and Gain

Before informed consent can begin to be negotiated a consideration of the purpose of the research and its possible benefits is needed. The aims and scope of the study should be as explicit and accurate as possible while remaining easily understood by all stakeholders. Such transparency can highlight any issues with regard to the needs of the research and those of the researched before they become an additional complication (Orb, Eisenhauer, and Wynaden, 2001; Ashworth, Maynard, and Stuart, 2016). To this end, distribution of a number of information documents to staff and management in the centres, to allow them time to process the research aims, before a face-to-face discussion upon commencing data collection at each centre was deemed appropriate. See Appendix 3 for copies of these documents.

Informed Consent

The British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011) state that voluntary informed consent is a pre-requisite condition to any research study. The principle of informed consent is essential for the protection of those involved in the study and also as a necessary foundation for the relationship between researcher and researched to begin (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2011; Mertens, 2015). Participants should be capable of making an independent decision on whether to participate or not based on full disclosure from the researcher as to the demands of participation (Ashworth, Maynard, and Stuart, 2016). Silverman (2014) sees informed consent as a "process of negotiation" (p. 149) ongoing throughout the research, where consent is sought from participants at key stages in the research (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2011). This means that as each stage becomes clearer, and the ethical considerations are to the fore, another negotiation can take place. Participants can then make a more informed and conscious decision to remain involved or not.

Directly linked to informed consent, according to Ashworth, Maynard, and Stuart (2016), is the principle of the right to withdraw. It is recognised that all participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any stage and without having to justify this decision. However, Malone (2003) is critical of the traditional notion of informed consent and some of her thoughts are applicable here too. Staff can give informed consent but there are a number of issues that influence any or all decisions to partake in the study.

Firstly, the gatekeepers (Wiles, Crow, Charles, and Heath, 2007; Coe, et al., 2017) in this study are the managers of the OETCs whose permission is necessary before beginning the research. Some managers may feel compelled to grant access as the research aims fit with their stated objectives (Outdoor Education Ireland, 2005). The staff may subsequently feel compelled to engage with the research as the "unequal power relationship" (Malone, 2003:803) between themselves and their managers, who may have allowed, or even guaranteed, access, may leave them feeling that they have no choice but to accept involvement in the study (Cohen, et al., 2011). Wiles, et al. (2007), in their study of informed consent in research highlight the fact that participants can struggle to assert their right to withdraw (Ashworth, Maynard, and Stuart, 2016). Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, (2011:78) provide a set of realistic guidelines for informed consent. These include giving practitioners a fair description of the aims and methods, highlighting any benefits from the research, ensuring that the researcher is happy to answer any or all questions or concerns, and reminding them of their right to withdraw consent at any time. See Appendix 6 for informed consent materials.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

The third ethical principal to be considered was confidentiality and anonymity, which appear to be the biggest ethical issues with regard to this research. One could assert that claims of a lack of completely un-coerced levels of participation are, at least to some extent, covered by the aspects of confidentiality and anonymity within informed consent. However, the outdoor sector in Ireland is a small and

close-knit community (Hannon, 2018) where claims of anonymity become “myths” as “anybody who mattered would know” (Malone, 2003:809). The alteration of identifying features, such as the use of pseudonyms or changing geographical locations, can increase the level of anonymity. A guarantee of absolute anonymity may be a hard promise to keep (Coe et al., 2017) with a traditional analytic representation (Berbary, 2015), even with a high level of alteration (Howe and Moses, 1999; Lee, 2001; Orb, Eisenhauer, and Wynaden, 2001; Van den Burg, 2001; Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2011). Very little can be done to avoid the uncertainty related to such issues, yet, in obtaining informed consent, which included a description of the risks to privacy in taking part, and what was put in place to minimise issues of anonymity and confidentiality, the participants exercised their autonomy of choice in accepting the risk (Howe and Moses, 1999).

Upon explaining all of this to informants during the initial research brief at each centre, it was found that no one had any concern with regard to the risk to their anonymity or confidentiality and were overall quite positive and interested in the research. During data collection visits, a very small number of informants re-checked, after some informal chats, to ensure that anything they had disclosed was confidential. Once I assured them that any identifying information would be changed, they were more than happy to remain part of the research. Sparkes (2002a) points out that those participants who do consent initially may not agree with the rendering of the portrayal of their participation in the final representation of data.

The fictionalisation of research data is one means by which the ethical issues outlined above – the inability to effectively anonymise and keep the research findings confidential and avoiding research participants being unhappy with their portrayal – can be addressed (Richardson, 1998; Sparkes, 2002; Angrosino, 2007). Angrosino (2007) goes on to specify that the primary ethical responsibility of the researcher is to “*the people with whom they work and whose lives and cultures they study;* responsibilities to scholarship and the scientific community and to the

general public, while important, are secondary to that relationship" (p. 84, italics in original).

I have discussed the research with a number of participants and, on describing a situation I had encountered during the data generation phase, they have all moved to figure out where it happened and who it was, regardless of the actual events. This focus on figuring out the where and who of the situation, as opposed to how and why, further convinced me that employing literary techniques, notably fictionalisation (Ceglowski, 1997), would give me the means by which to have the readers focus firmly on the practice described, as they would be unable to figure out where it took place. This is not a concern for most of the academic community that may read this research, though it has the potential to impact members of the outdoor education community in Ireland that read it. By combining aspects of the data set "in a way that altered time and spanned space" (Sparkes, 2002a:12) it became possible to overcome this identity hurdle and hide individual participants to a point where they are unrecognisable while at the same time keeping the focus firmly on what happened in terms of practice (Richards, 2014).

Another issue with regard to anonymity again stems from the close-knit nature of the community of the outdoor education sector in Ireland. I worked with four of the OETCs for this research and it is relatively straightforward for any member of the community to discover the four centres and then begin deducing who did what (Coe, et al., 2017). Fictional techniques, such as combining participants or altering/merging locations and activities, addresses this concern as well, whilst preserving the context of the experience (Sparkes, 2002a). In an effort to anonymise the findings of this research to a point from which it would be near impossible to distinguish specific individuals or locations, I created one fictitious OETC from an amalgamation of data from all four of the OETCs used. Klein (1993), in his ethnographic study of elite bodybuilders, combined all four of his research sites into the fictitious Olympic Gym in a similar effort to "enhance anonymity" (p. 281).

Risk of Harm

The fourth and final ethical consideration is the protection from any risks stemming from participation in this research. These include physical, emotional and psychological risks to both the participants and the researcher. Effective outdoor learning has an element of uncertainty and risk inherent in the experience (Barton, 2006). As this research will be undertaken in the participant's workplace and under normal operating conditions, there should be no physical risks apparent beyond those pre-existing risks inherent to work in any outdoor sports environment. Adherence to the usual risk management and daily working practices of each OETC should mitigate any such issues. The focus of this research is on the professional lives of the participants and, as such, there is no intention to address any issues that could be distressing. That said, with the emergent nature of the research project and, in particular the informal chats, aspects of discussion could potentially lead to sensitive topics. One issue of note is the wariness of the community towards academia in general and research in particular. While this is not representative of the entire sector, there have been comments, during informal conversations about the research, such as 'don't make me lose my job' from one OETC senior instructor. While this shows an amount of guardedness towards the study, there is also an implied message that there is room for improvement within practice. Being open about the aims of the research and focusing on the benefits of this research to the field of outdoor education in Ireland may mitigate such suspicions should they become evident throughout the research.

Due to the nature of being a participant observer in an OETC, contact with underage students (<18 years old) was unavoidable. Centre staff were always in charge of the sessions and time I spent observing in each centre; I was an assistant at most. This research does not focus on the children present during the centre visits, however, to maintain the ethical integrity of my research process, all centre received a copy of my Child Protection in Sport Awareness Workshop certificate. Also provided were copies of my Garda Vetting (the Irish equivalent to the Protection of Vulnerable

Groups scheme in Scotland) for two of the larger National Governing Bodies of adventure sports in Ireland. See Appendix 7 for copies of these documents.

7 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology supporting this research inquiry. Maxwell's (2013) model was used to describe the research aims, goals, conceptual framework, methods, and validity. From here the data generation, analysis, verification and management was drawn out and delineated. Basically, once the centre managers responded positively to taking part in the research, through the short survey, the research began with a phase of gathering data by downloading the website content. The next phase involved observations of practice and informal chats with staff, whilst gathering standard operating procedures manuals (SOPs). All forms of data were analysed through a number of cycles of coding using applied thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This reduced the collected data into four major themes – Daily Practice, Learning, Technical Skills Focus, and Teaching Strategy – before the two interconnected findings emerged. Finally, I explained the ethical considerations specific to this research using Ashworth, Maynard, and Stuart's (2016) model of purpose and gain, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity through creative non-fiction, and risk of harm.

Having discussed the methodology in detail, it is now appropriate to present the theoretical lens with which I analysed and interpreted the findings.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Lens

This chapter presents the theoretical framework underpinning the subsequent interpretation of the data gathered through this inquiry. It is divided into three sections. First, I discuss the process of choosing McDonaldization as an appropriate theoretical lens for this research. Second, the McDonaldization thesis is explained in detail with regard to its applicability to this research, before finishing the chapter by addressing criticisms of McDonaldization. This chapter follows the methodology as the theoretical lens was chosen during the data analysis, and, as such, was not pre-determined prior to starting the data analysis. As the data were being analysed through the six phase process (Braun and Clarke, 2006), the applicability of McDonaldization came to the fore over other potential lenses that were also in consideration. As a result of this, presenting the theoretical lens before the methodology would not reflect the emergent nature of the lens as the data analysis progressed.

A central aim of this research inquiry is to explore the everyday work practices of the Outdoor Education and Training Centres (OETCs) in Ireland, and to develop an understanding of what they do in practice, and how this practice has been effected by changes in society. The use of a theoretical lens gives a systematic means by which data can be "framed and understood" (Moller and Tollestrup, 2013:17) in order to create meaning. It allows for a deeper level of thinking about the data (De Boer, et al., 2013; Beames, Mackie, and Atencio, 2019), so that an understanding of what everyday practice is may emerge (McDermott, 2012).

With so little Irish specific research available, it is difficult to determine the root of any ideological confusion, or gap between espoused values and actual practice, present in Irish public outdoor education. To find ways to better probe the challenges of rationalisation, placelessness, and the disempowerment of students within the field, it is necessary to develop a theoretical framework. This framework can act like a lens, focused on developing insights into the experiences of those involved in the teaching and learning of outdoor education in Ireland. The adoption

of such an appropriate lens permits an explanation of the data as well as being able to frame the analysis in ideological and societal terms, furthering the bridging of the gap between practice and research in Irish outdoor education overall. McDonaldization provides a comprehensive framework for analytical and self-critical research on outdoor education theory and practice.

1 Choosing McDonaldization

The more I developed my understanding of the relevant literature, the more I saw patterns emerge in relation to the rationalisation and commodification of the outdoors. These key concepts within the outdoor education literature have highlighted the susceptibility of both outdoor education and recreation to rationalisation processes (Loynes, 1998; Beedie, 2016). This can lead to a situation where "learning becomes secondary or incidental" (Cooper, 2016:399) to a "rationalized, repeatable package" (Varley, 2013:41). Concentrating on the physical adrenaline rush through adventure can limit the agency of students in the learning process (Krein, 2007; Brown and Fraser, 2009; Wattchow and Brown, 2011; Brown and Beames, 2016). Rationalised programming can also lead to experiences becoming shorter, and more controlled, with the assumptions underpinning practice being questioned less and less (Higgins and Nicol, 2002; Brookes, 2003a; 2003b), until a point is reached where reproducing the same one-size-fits-all session can be seen as relevant and educative for all student groups and types.

As outdoor education practice is universalised, places can become spaces to produce decontextualized programmes (Lugg, 2004; Brookes, 2002; Hannon, 2015; 2018). Universalised, risk-focused, short-term programmes, supported by uncritical claims (Wurdinger, 1997) include the hallmarks of rationalised systems in their delivery. Rationalisation is the "systematic, measured application of science to work and everyday life" (Varley, 2013:35). With such a focus on rationalisation in the literature I began to explore this area more for a theoretical lens to analyse this research.

Adopting Ritzer's (2019) McDonaldization thesis as the theoretical lens became a most obvious choice as it recognises the rationalisation of contemporary society and offers a relevant and appropriate framework with which to interpret the data. The applicability of the full theory of McDonaldization, and its links to rationalisation processes, allowed for a suitable and ready-made framework through which to interpret my data and findings.

In the end, the McDonaldization thesis became the lens through which the data were analysed for two reasons. Firstly, the evidence of rationalisation evident in outdoor education literature (Loynes, 1998; 2002; Roberts, 2005; 2012; Beames and Brown, 2014; 2016) made this theory appropriate as Ritzer's theory draws on the rationalisation and bureaucratisation theories of Max Weber (Ritzer and Chen, 2015; Beames and Brown, 2014), and Ritzer (2019) describes McDonaldization as "a more contemporary term for rationalisation" (p. 24). I deemed this useful as, with so little research informing outdoor education practices in Ireland, McDonaldization theory, as well as interpreting the data from an academic perspective, may be able to shed light on the level, if any, of rationalisation of Irish outdoor education. The use of McDonaldization here is in contrast to how it was encountered earlier in this thesis (see chapter 2, section 2). The deductive nature of the discussion here takes the general principles of the theory, shown to be accurate through the body of relevant research, and applies them specifically to interpreting the findings of this research inquiry. The explanation of the principles of McDonaldization in the following section should be read in that manner. Second, having assessed a number of different potential theoretical lenses, such as Foucault's (2005) concept of episteme, and Argyris and Schon's (1992) theory in use and espoused theory, I kept going back to the McDonaldization thesis as the most applicable theory to aid the analysis of my data. While other theories could explain aspects of the data generated, Ritzer's work provides a suitable typology, providing an overall coherent explanation of what I was seeing in the analysis of the data. This became clear

through constant reflection, critique, and development of my research aims[17], during the data generation phase while also reading through the literature and analysing data as it emerged.

In summary, this section gives an overview of the process of choosing a theoretical lens through which to interpret the data generated and analysed during this research inquiry. Ritzer's (2019) theory of the McDonaldization of society was the most appropriate match in allowing for an analysis of the data whilst keeping contemporary ideological and societal impacts of rationalisation to the fore. By drawing on Ritzer's (2019) McDonaldization thesis I was able to connect current practice and ideology in Irish, and global, outdoor education to a contemporary theoretical lens. The overt ties of McDonaldization to the rationalisation of practice explicit in international outdoor education literature is another reason why choosing this theory to interpret my data was useful. As rationalisation is an important issue in contemporary outdoor education, using a theoretical lens unequivocally based on rationalisation theory could lead to a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding outdoor education today. Next, I will describe Ritzer's (2019) McDonaldization thesis in more detail, particularly in relation to outdoor education.

2 The Principles of McDonaldization

This section focuses on developing a deeper understanding of what McDonaldization is and how it has evolved over the years. The five subsections explain, in turn, the four principles of McDonaldization, namely, efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control, as well as the "fifth dimension" (Ritzer, 2019:6) of McDonaldization, the irrationality of rationality.

McDonaldization is a development of Weber's (1946) earlier work on rationalisation, using the example of a fast-food restaurant in place of the

[17] The idea to explore McDonaldization as a theoretical lens came to me on a run in the woods, whilst trying to make sense of my data analysis up to that point, most notably the commercial elements of practice captured in the data.

bureaucracy. Ritzer (2019) defines McDonaldization as "the process by which the principles of the fast-food restaurant… are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world" (Ritzer, 2019:4). Weber is seen as one of the main proponents of rationalisation theory (Kaesler, 2017). Weber (2001) saw rationalised systems as logical, systematised, and methodical ways of living and working. He measured the rationality of an action by the amount of force exerted in completing a task; the ease at which a need is met increases the rationality of the action (Weber, 2019). The principles Ritzer includes in his McDonaldization theory stem from the earlier work of Weber (1946), where he believed that we could "master all things by calculation" (p. 139). Such mastery, through rational and technical advances, allowed for a disenchantment to grow in society. People grew tired, rather than satisfied, with life and the lack of "magic" (Ritzer, 2019:174), spontaneity, or break from the routine, they experienced as a result of these technical and rational advances. As the rationalisation of practices increases, more areas of society are consumed by it.

Originally, Ritzer's (1983) McDonaldization theory consisted of five principles, namely, efficiency, predictability, calculability, substitution of non-human for human technology, and control over uncertainty. Whilst the first three principles have remained the same, the final two, have evolved and merged into one principle now labelled 'control'. Rather than a focus on controlling uncertainty, which is dealt with more fully through the principle of predictability, this dimension of McDonaldization focuses on the "increased control of humans through the use of nonhuman technology" (Ritzer, 2019:109). Nonhuman technology controls humans, who are seen, at least in a McDonaldized system, as being a "great source of uncertainty, unpredictability, and inefficiency (Ritzer, 2019:110). Without such control, the other principles of a rationalised system would be harder to administer.

The irrationality of rationality was seen, at the outset, as a "seemingly inevitable byproduct [sic] of the [McDonaldization] process" (Ritzer, 1983:106), and not as "the fifth dimension of McDonaldization" (Ritzer, 2019:6) as it is currently perceived. Another evolution in the theory of McDonaldization is the move away

from “brick-and mortar sites” (Ritzer, 2019:46) towards an ever-expanding digital marketplace. This digitisation of consumption has allowed other companies to expand rapidly, building their success on the processes inherent in McDonaldization. These companies have become so successful that Ritzer (2019) contemplates whether terms such as “Wal-Martization”, or Amazon.comization” (p. 47) would now be more appropriate labels as these companies have come to dominate these considerable digital consumption markets.

Away from digital markets, McDonaldization, as with other forms of rationalisation, can consume traditional outdoor education practices in a move towards more efficient practices. Rationalised practices have become so prevalent, in education as well as other areas of everyday life, that society is largely unaware of the socially constructed nature of same; people have grown accustomed to rationalised practices and see them as a normal part of contemporary living (Lippmann and Aldrich, 2003). The following sections detail the normalised principles of McDonaldization.

Efficiency

Ritzer (2019) sees efficiency as finding the “optimum means to a given end” (p. 57). The principle of efficiency, or the “stripping out [of] all but the essential processes” (Beames, Mackie, and Atencio, 2019:166) is discussed by Ritzer in terms of streamlining, simplification, and putting consumers to work. Streamlining is the process of organising work practices into the most efficient form possible, and of reducing down-time and increasing activity. To achieve such streamlining and efficiencies, a lack of complexity in operating systems is sought.

Such simplicity, in an educational context, ignores the complexity inherent in contemporary society and education (Beames and Brown, 2016:28-30; see also Jacobson, Levin, and Kapur, 2019), thus creating a tension or conflict within, in this case, public outdoor educational practices. How does one teach, or learn, for a complex world in a simplified (efficient) system? For example, does maximising the time spent outdoors on activities, and leaving little time for talking about, or

reflecting on, experiences lead to lasting learning? This simplicity of function also allows for the movement of aspects of practice, traditionally the domain of the practitioner, to the consumer or student. Through these means of streamlining, simplification, and the creation of *prosumers*, or "those who both produce and consume" (Ritzer, 2019:56) efficient systems, in terms of speed and ease, are established.

Calculability

Similarly, McDonaldization's permeation of society can be seen in the "tendency to rationalise value from quantity rather than quality" (Roberts, 2005:19). Calculability seeks "numerical standards…for both processes and end results" (Ritzer, 2019:80). For processes, speed (the faster the better) is the goal, and size and quantity become the focus in terms of end results. An example of efficiency and calculability pervading Irish public outdoor education practice is the use of sit-on-top kayaks that have become more popular in recent years. These kayaks drastically reduce the time needed in having to correctly fit students to the boats, and the large handles make it easier for student groups to carry these boats from storage areas to the water's edge. As a result of this move towards efficiency, more time can be spent on the water having a longer experience, and less (qualified) staff are required to deliver the session. This can lead to prescriptive sessions with few, if any, links to any curriculum or measurable gain for students beyond experiencing an adventure sport (Beames and Brown, 2016). Such efficient and calculated programmes and sessions allow both students and practitioners to know what is going to happen next, and it is this predictability that comes into focus in the next section.

Predictability

Predictability relies on an ordered, consistent, and routine delivery (Ritzer, 2019). Practices are systematised to the point where they become "identical, over time and in all locales" (Ritzer and Chen, 2015:828). Everyone knows what to expect, and there are no surprises in the sterile experiences "bereft of risks, nuisances, and unpleasantness" (Ahuvia and Izberk-Bilgin, 2011:365). I refer back to the example

from my own practice, in chapter 1, section 3, of all 10 kayaking sessions that week being near identical, which is somewhat at odds with the rhetoric of outdoor education as being bespoke and student-centred. A balance must be struck between the need for structured efficiency, calculability, and predictability within centre practices, and the necessity for uncertainty in educational experiences (Hovelynck, 2001; Beames and Brown, 2016).

Control

For practices to be predictable, control must be exerted over the behaviours of staff and students (Beames, Mackie, and Atencio, 2019) as they are a "great source of uncertainty, unpredictability, and inefficiency" (Ritzer, 2019:110). One method of controlling people in outdoor education, and thus maintaining predictability and efficiency, is through systems and processes. This can be seen in the adoption of stringent operating procedures that can limit the freedom of practitioners to do or go where they want, or need to, educationally, while also predicting and controlling the behaviour of students. Such processes can create a system that "stresses and rewards punctuality, obedience and respect for authority" (Share, Corcoran, and Conway, 2012:158) from students, as well as the adherence to scripts for interaction with groups by practitioners (Roberts, 2012).

The Irrationality of Rationality

The benefits of evolving practice in line with a system based on one, some, or all, of the principles of McDonaldization are clear. This section recognises the usefulness of more efficient and predictable practice, though is focused on the inevitable negative consequences of McDonaldized practice (Dumbili, 2013; Ritzer, 2019). The irrationality of rationality is the term Ritzer (2019) uses to denote such negative consequences as inefficiency, unpredictability, incalculability, and a lack of control.

McDonaldization has become embedded into the fabric of contemporary society for many reasons, mostly associated with the four principles described above. There is an increased quality in goods and services and these goods and services are readily

available whenever a consumer should want them (Ritzer, 2019). Affordability, due to mass production has also resulted from the adoption of McDonaldized processes (Ritzer and Chen, 2014). Regulation and control of products and services has made for safer products, and the uniform treatment of employees has decreased the likelihood of discrimination (Ritzer, 2019; Ritzer and Chen, 2014). "'[D]oing more with less', or 'optimising resources'" (Hartley, 1995:412) is a hallmark of educational practices in recent times, and the ability to calculate finances in terms of overhead costs and revenue streams is essential for sustainability and repeat business (Beames, Mackie, and Atencio, 2019). Whilst there are positives to be taken from these developments, they must be balanced against the more negative aspects of McDonaldization, namely the *irrationality of rationality* (Ritzer, 2019).

The irrationality of rationality, or the negative features of McDonaldization, have become so acute that they could be labelled as "the fifth dimension of McDonaldization" (Ritzer, 2019:6). The key point here is that, as was pointed to in the preceding paragraphs, "[r]ational systems are often unreasonable" (Ritzer, 2019:168). What may initially seem a good idea to make work easier can develop to a point where applying this, originally good, concept may now be detrimental to quality learning.

McDonaldization can lead to inefficiencies for students as the focus is placed on increasing efficiency for staff and/or management. Perhaps it was decided that student groups should carry the canoes down to the water's edge, and this is enforced even with small primary school students that struggle to lift them. The predictability so sought after in McDonaldized settings can lead to generic, repeatable programmes that may not specifically address the needs of any particular group, but can be delivered across time and age ranges to a satisfactory level from the efficient organisation's point of view. The "disinterested knowledge" (Share, Corcoran, and Conway, 2012:157) of such a system can lead to a lack of authentic learning. Efficient systems may be desirable, but "as educators it is important to ensure that our pedagogical choices open up, rather than restrict,

opportunities for students to be responsible for their learning" (Beames and Brown, 2014:125).

Another issue with the rationalisation of practice is increased disenchantment, or loss of magic in experiences (Ritzer, 2019). Here, Ritzer (2019) is referring to the power of McDonaldization to eliminate the "meanderings and aimlessness" (p. 174) of systems. Such leanings in outdoor education can be limited through systematised, controlled, and predictable experiences suitable for generic distribution. Magic, mysterious, or open-ended diversions are seen as inefficient. Scripting, or prefabrication, of interactions, of, say, the meeting and initial briefing of student groups, can lead to uniformity taking "the place of authentic human relationships" (Ritzer, 2019:182).

This is due to the homogenisation of practice; there is no place for unknowns in a system striving for control and predictability. What this leads to is a process of dehumanisation, what Ritzer (2019) feels is the "main reason to think of McDonaldization as irrational, and ultimately unreasonable" (p. 181). A result of this dehumanisation students expect a certain standard of service in their education, and, consequently, practitioners becoming more and more focused on their product. The mass delivery of activity over bespoke programmes for known groups propagates an "illusion of freedom" (Roberts, 2012:101) and can lead to practitioners becoming, similar to how Weber (2001) described bureaucrats, "specialists without spirit" (p. 124).

This section explained the underpinning principles of McDonaldization (Ritzer, 2019). These principles of efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control overlap and combine to further the rationalisation of society, and particular to this research inquiry, Irish public outdoor education. This overlap and interconnectivity can be so great that, in highly McDonaldized practices, it is hard to have any one principle without at least a little of the other three. For something to become as efficient as possible, for example, the inherent processes need to be quantified before so as to predict the utility of resources. Once this has been achieved, it is now possible to

start predicting how programmes may run, but to be fully efficient staff and students need to be controlled through stringent procedures such as operating procedures and scripting. See figure 11, below, for a brief summation of McDonaldization.

Along with explaining how outdoor education practices have been influenced by McDonaldization, in line with these four principles, the "fifth dimension" (Ritzer, 2019:6) of the irrationality of rationality was introduced. This concept explicates the disadvantages of the McDonaldization process, such as inefficiency, disenchantment, and most particularly, dehumanisation (Ritzer, 2019). One point of note here is that it appears quite difficult to overcome such rationalisation processes once they have become established.

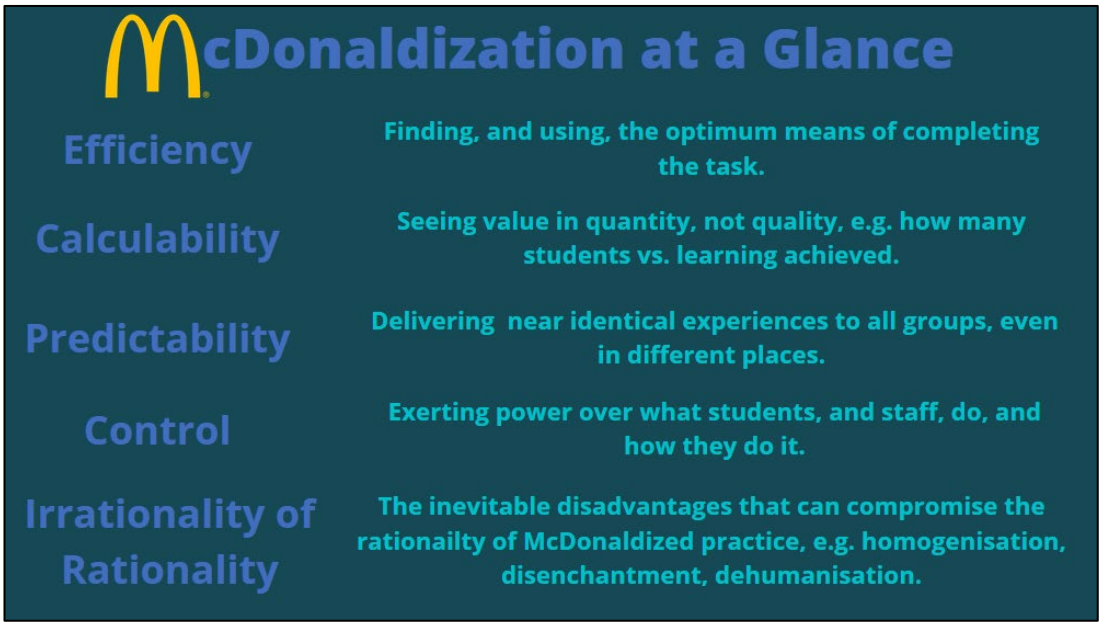


Figure 11: McDonaldization at a Glance

The only enchantment comes in the form of enticing customers to spend more (Ritzer, 2009) and the closest that society comes to de-McDonaldization, or de-rationalisation, is a simulated version that remains rationalised at its core (Ritzer and Stillman, 2001). Ritzer and Stillman (2001) use the example of ballparks in America to further explain simulated de-McDonaldization. Specific aspects of the ballparks, such as varying stadium shape (making them smaller), using real grass, and having retractable dome covers, are de-rationalised in an effort to "enchant

them and attract them to the game" (ibid, 2001:110). Fans did not enjoy the artificial grass, or the closed-roofed, super-sized stadium, so, in an effort to keep fans attending games, the older, less efficient or predictable alternatives were reinstated. Any such modifications do not affect the experience of fans at the games in terms of efficiently getting to see the game, or the predictability of available amenities, such as toilets or food stalls, for example. The stadium is still very much McDonaldized. Changes that may, on the surface, appear to be de-McDonaldization, are made in an effort to maximise the consumption points within the stadiums.

Another result of this rationalised, homogenised landscape, as a result of the "rise of market economies" (Roberts, 2012:89), is the dehumanisation of outdoor education through the prescribed delivery of identical experiences that, at best, touch on learning beyond the sport in question. Having explained and explored the McDonaldization thesis, I now move on to address some of the criticisms of McDonaldization in more depth.

3 Addressing Criticisms of McDonaldization

One criticism of McDonaldization is the pessimistic inevitability Ritzer suggests of such rationalisation, in that the irrationalities of rationality associated with McDonaldized practices are unavoidable (O'Neil, 1999). Peper (1996) highlights the absence of a consideration of how social actions could reduce the irrationalities within such rationalised systems. Indeed, somewhat paradoxically, "all the efforts to escape this situation [McDonaldization] are doomed to fail. On the other hand, however, people are endowed by the potential to be creative, thoughtful, and thus able to resist McDonaldization" (Peper, 1996:69), as shown by the resistance to rationalisation O'Toole (2009) noted in a McDonaldized gym.

Perhaps such irrationalities are unavoidable, though this does not mean that all rationality will be replaced by irrationality. Lanier and Rader (2015) argue that our focus is blinkered somewhat by our methodological and theoretical leanings. They go on to give the example of gambling, where rational and irrational experience co-

exist. The ultimate argument here is “that the world cannot be completely rationalized” (Lanier and Rader, 2015:497). It seems, whilst Ritzer (2019) does predict an inevitable McDonaldization of society, he agrees that we “are unlikely ever to live in a totally predictable, McDonaldized world” (p. 147).

Some commentators have noted that Ritzer’s replacing of Weber’s bureaucracy with the more contemporary fast-food restaurant has led to more opposition to Ritzer’s thesis as students are more affectionate towards McDonalds than to any bureaucracy (Rinehart, 1998). Smart (1999) sees the bringing of McDonalds to the fore, over a nameless bureaucracy, as a more inviting way for students to engage with the concept of rationalisation. He also questions the analytical value of McDonaldization as, Smart (1999) argues, Ritzer has added little to Weber’s original concept of rationalisation beyond replacing the bureaucracy with the more contemporary example of a fast-food chain. In the case of this specific research inquiry, this modernisation of Weber’s work is particularly useful. As this research aims to influence the sector, it is arguably easier for practitioners, management, teachers, and the public to understand the concept of rationalisation of practice through a more contemporary example. There is also a powerful image in an educational sector that is comparable to a fast-food restaurant in terms of practice. Both of these factors can combine to increase the reach of this research, as word spreads of the research findings of McDonaldized practice in outdoor education.

These critical points are thought provoking, though critics of McDonaldization are complicit in the lack of articulation of how to resist such processes (Kellner, 1998). Kellner (1998) goes on to point out that some of these critiques are more in defence of commercial capitalist culture, than assaults on McDonaldization as a theory. Others point to the fact that McDonaldization is waning in countries such as the USA and Europe, though it is still growing in China and India, for example (Ahuvia and Izberk-Bilgin, 2011). This slowing, even shrinking, of McDonaldization, with the rise of companies more focused on “variety, unpredictability, and market-mediated control” (Ahuvia and Izberk-Bilgin, 2011:371), makes me question the inevitability of rationalisation, let alone the certainty that irrationality always accompanies, or

follows, such change. A general example here is handwriting. Writing has evolved from block letters to cursive text through a number of rational developments to increase the speed (efficiency) of writing, and to be able to teach more and more people to write (predictability, calculability, and control) (see Eaton, 1985). Whilst Eaton (1995) highlights the rationalisation of handwriting, this processes did not lead to irrationality, or negative consequences, barring handwriting being overtaken by typing in recent times.

I chose the McDonaldization theoretical lens as a means of defining, or highlighting, aspects of public outdoor education practice in order to be able to identify rationalisation of practice within my data and discuss the worth of such systems for the future development of Irish public outdoor education. Such an awareness of rationalised practice opens up a discourse around "what form of society, values and practices we desire" (Kellner, 1998:xiii). Even if Smart (1999) is correct in his argument that Ritzer's only addition to rationalisation theory is to use McDonalds as an example, this could also add to the much-needed discussion around practice in Irish outdoor education.

4 Chapter Summary

This chapter charted the journey undertaken to draw as much meaning as possible from the data generated through this research inquiry. This included an involved process of reading and rereading, both the outdoor education literature and relevant educational and sociological theories, all while gathering data. Any number of theories, or aspects of these theories, were intriguing and potentially applicable and useful in analysing this dataset, and McDonaldization was finally chosen as eminently suitable to this analysis. McDonaldization was chosen as a suitable theoretical lens after the analysis process was well underway. This allowed some time and space to reflect on the appropriateness of the lens in relation to the dataset, as opposed to applying a pre-chosen lens to interpreting the data.

Not only did McDonaldization theory aid me in developing a much deeper understanding of what I was seeing in the data than other theories, it also made

evident the permeation of rationalisation in the outdoor education sector over time (see chapter 2 for more). Criticisms of McDonaldization were taken into account when this decision was being made, though the benefits of using this model by far outweighed any challenges to the theory.

This seemingly straightforward model of the four principles of efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control, coupled with the concept of the irrationality of rationality, displays the complex interactions and processes inherent in Irish public outdoor education. Each principle can be identified as a standalone concept within the data, though, with some further examination, the threads of all of the principles are strongly intertwined with each other. This etic approach of applying a theory to the data is balanced against the emic findings that emerged from the data as a result of the (etic) application of McDonaldization theory to the dataset.

Now that the methodological route chosen has been explained and justified, and the theoretical lens used to analyse and interpret the data has been defined and explored, the following chapter contains the findings in the form of the creative non-fiction stories, as well as some background information on the demographics, qualifications and experience of practitioners.

PART THREE

Chapter 5: Findings Stories

Day 1: Experts, Eggs, and Rugby; Day 2: Saints, Surfing, and Success; Practitioner Qualification Levels.

Chapter 6: McDonaldization of Outdoor Education

Calculability and Predictability; Efficiency and Control; The Irrationality of Rationality.

Chapter 7: Key Findings

A Lack of Engagement with Theory; Programming by Logistics; Ideological Dissonance.

Chapter 8: Conclusions and Implications

Revisiting the Research Aims; Overall Summary of Key Findings; Contributions to Knowledge; Implications for Outdoor Education; Concluding Comments.

Chapter 5: Findings – Stories and Qualifications

The focus of this chapter is to present the findings of the data analysis and interpretation as two creative non-fiction stories, as well as to detail the qualification and experience levels of practitioners in the Irish public outdoor education sector. Creative non-fiction represents actual events (non-fiction) by utilising fictional techniques (Sparkes, 2002a/b; Caulley, 2008). The stories take place over two days at the Centre, a fictitious location combining evidence from across all four research sites. Both stories, one for each day, consist of an amalgamation of data from all four research sites, including participant observations, conversations with practitioners, as well as their consent forms and information from participating centre websites, brochures, and operating procedure manuals[18]. Characters and scenes in the stories consist of a blending of the people, places, websites, and operating procedures manuals from all four locations. All incidents and situations in the stories actually happened and were either observed by me during my data gathering phase or appeared in the relevant documentation.

Also included in this chapter is a breakdown of the findings in relation to the qualifications, awards, and experience levels of practitioners. This background information is integral evidence in the subsequent analysis and discussion of the findings stories. A detailed exploration of the technical qualifications, academic awards, and experience levels of practitioners is presented to contextualise the findings and allow for a more thorough exploration of the implications of this research in the final chapter.

[18] For a full list of data sources see Appendix 4, and for more information on the approach of creative non-fiction, see *Making Meaning*, section 4 of chapter 3.

Centre Background

The centre's website talks about how the centre has been administered by the local Education and Training Board for over 25 years, is approved by the (Irish) Department of Education and Skills, as well as the relevant National Governing Bodies for adventure sports. In addition, comments about how outdoor education practitioners are highly qualified, experienced, professional, expert, friendly, dedicated, and enthusiastic are peppered across most webpages.

Years ago, they used to try to have a bespoke programme designed a month in advance of a group's arrival and would contact the teacher to allow for their input and advice on what was needed. They are now resigned to delivering what they delivered to each group the year before as that seems to be what satisfies the teacher.

Day 1: Experts, Eggs, and Rugby

Morning Meeting *(09:10; staff room)*

The manager, Katie, started the meeting. "Right, how did the activities go last night? Good yeah?" Some staff nodded in agreement. Pat, who had worked with one of the groups last night, commented that he felt the nightline (the students are blindfolded and taken on a journey around the grounds of the centre having to get over, under, and through a number of obstacles along the way) had not worked and was pointless. Katie, rather defensively, jumped in with "that is probably the best reason for them to do it!" After a brief silence Pat continued, saying that the teachers, after hiding along the maze route to throw water at the students in what they called "teacher's revenge", had the group up until 2 o'clock in the morning playing basketball and soccer tournaments. No one was allowed to sleep and the teachers splashed water on sleeping students to wake them. There were

mixed feelings amongst staff – some seemed fine with this while others were not so sure it was a good thing.

Jason, the senior instructor, took over and moved on to talk about today's programme. "Karl and John, you guys are going to be assisting with the biology fieldtrip, we've hired Mary for the day again to run this. Find her when she gets in and see what she needs". Karl and John looked at each other and nodded. "Carol, Pat, and Seán, you guys are with the Glen primary school this morning. It's their first day so go through the usual briefings [centre layout, daily routine, dorms, activities, and recycling]; you know where the briefing notes are. After this, go do the team games, as an ice breaker, for the rest of the morning. The theme for today is friendship. Cool?"

As everyone moves to leave, Jason says, "last thing on this group, the teacher is into this, she gets the activities, but is a bit anal about it… so we might try to have slightly longer sessions... she gets on the water too… oh, don't forget to include everyone, and Challenge by Choice!"

***Primary School Briefing** (10:00; student common room)*

"OK, is everyone listening?"

Carol stood at the top of the room, beside a flipchart easel, ready to go through The Rules with the primary school children that had just arrived this morning. She turned the page on the flipchart to reveal a page showing a list of six pre-written rules with the date from three weeks previous scribbled out in red marker. The rules were:

1. *No littering*
2. *No cursing*
3. *Respect each other and staff*

4. *Nobody near water without staff*
5. *No chewing gum*
6. *Be on time*

These rules were elaborated on next.

"If we say don't run, just don't run, simple, there might be rocks, and you could fall and cut your hands".

"Never, ever, go near the water without an instructor!"

Once this was finished, the students were split into three more manageable groups and Carol, along with Seán and Pat, facilitated discussions about activities and groupings for the two days. Some of the students, having been to the centre a number of times previous to this, seemed to know what answers the staff were looking for.

***Team Games** (11:30; centre grounds)*

With the briefing done it was time for some fun and games outside! One example of a team game was Stepping Stones. This game involved the team moving from one place to another without standing on the ground. Each team was given a number of stepping stones (wooden blocks) to stand on, one less than the number of students in the group – 8 students with 7 stepping stones. A set time was allocated for each game. One group tried their own idea to complete the stepping stones game. Seán seemed surprised at this idea while Carol commented, with a positive tone, that it would waste time. Sometimes slipping off of a step was ignored, other times the group had to restart the game. At one point a student took out her phone. This was against the rules, so the phone was taken off of her. She complained and stormed off. Carol turned to Pat and Seán and said, "she has no interest, so feck her". Once the teams completed the game, Pat showed them the way to do the game according to the centre.

Another game involved the group linking arms in a circle and, facing inwards bent over to form a round table. Seán started to throw eggs into the air over the group. If they moved, they were considered "chicken" (scared or nervous). When nobody moved he smashed an egg over one student on purpose. It could have been random, but the student that Seán picked out had been late arriving for the session. Carol and Pat later questioned this game wondering why you would throw eggs at students. Seán's reply was that "that was the whole point!"

They completed all of the planned games ahead of time and to keep the group busy up until lunch time a few more games were thrown in the mix. The morning was finished off with a game of tag rugby. This lasted over 30 minutes and ended with a fractured and divided group of students. As the rugby had to finish for lunch, Carol announced that the team that scored the next goal would win and the team that was winning 6-2 lost. Through the discontented discussions that ensued, Pat managed to ask if it was fun even before the rugby. "NO!!" was the resounding response. The session sort of fizzled out from here. Seán brought the group back inside whilst Carol and Pat tidied up.

***Lunch**: (13:00; dining room)*

During lunch staff sat at their own table, away from the groups. Katie, the manager, along with both teachers, joined the staff table of Pat, Sarah, Karl, and Seán. Karl was delighted with his day, so far, as he learned a lot about local plants from Mary. In an effort to move on from Karl's delight, one of the teachers made a, somewhat confused and disbelieving, comment that he couldn't "understand how people do this job, though I suppose you get used to it". Staff were responding to this comment with the benefits they see in taking part in outdoor education programmes when Katie, thinking aloud, said "we are a money-making business, sometimes you forget about it [the education]". She then asked her staff what they think the students get from

outdoor education experiences here. After a silent moment, and some sideways glances, Pat, Sarah, and Seán gave their thoughts.

> *"First time away from home, putting on a wetsuit and trying adventure sports in a fun, safe way; get a little bit (a few minutes) of space from adults. Happiness and fun."*
>
> *"Exercise, teamwork and communication. The idea of being outside on a damp and stormy day, instead of being inside on an Xbox. The residential experience and how it can help in communication and opening up through walking beside each other or in bunk beds–no eye contact, which makes it easier."*
>
> *"A sense of (mini) accomplishment. Actually achieving something either small or big (all about perspective) from jumping off a big jump or simply getting into the gear and being on time. Wouldn't it be great to have people remember experiences with me in 30 years? A short-term boost in confidence, overcoming fears and dealing with anxiety. Maybe keeping that feeling with them in future situations."*

"See", Katie went on, looking at the teachers. "Outdoor education is essential to the mainstream education system and curriculum."

Day 2: Saints, Surfing, and Success

"Are we going to start the meeting?" Sarah asked Jason (the senior instructor).

"Yes, at 09:10." Jason responded. All staff looked at each other, slightly confused. It was 09:06, and everyone was there, waiting. While waiting, staff could not help but look out the window at the cold, heavy rain filling the puddles in the car park. Such a change from the warm and sunny weather earlier in the week.

Once the clock turned to 09:10 Jason began. "Right, the Transition Year [fourth year of secondary school] school group. Pat and Laura, you are with them. Let me see, what have they not done yet? Oh yes, they have not been surfing yet, so it is off to the beach for the day."

"What's that?" Jason asked when he saw Pat and Laura exchange unsure glances. "Well,", Pat started, "we were thinking that we could do something different. Maybe, seeing as they are from a religious school, we could spend the morning visiting local religious sites and then go for a surf in the afternoon. We don't think that the group would enjoy a beach day in the rain." Jason, after a brief pause, said "Ok, see what their teachers think. If they are happy enough, do that."

"The rest of you are with the other group. There are 48 of them and as it is their last morning as well, each group will be doing whichever activity they have not done yet." There was a list on the wall for staff to check if needed (see sample in table 2, below).

Table 2: Sample Activity Programme

	Monday (pm)	***Tuesday (am)***	***Tuesday (pm)***	***Wednesday (am)***
A	*Caving (12)*	*Orienteer (12)*	*Climbing (12)*	*Kayak (12)*
B	*Kayak (12)*	*Caving (12)*	*Orienteer (12)*	*Climbing (12)*
C	*Climbing (12)*	*Kayak (12)*	*Caving (12)*	*Orienteer (12)*
D	*Orienteer (12)*	*Climbing (12)*	*Kayak (12)*	*Caving (12)*

The meeting finished up soon after this. Staff left to get organised for the day and Pat went off to find his group's teachers. Later, Laura saw Pat coming

and turned to ask how it went. He said that the teacher was fine with the idea. Laura asked how he sold it to the teacher. Pat looked at Laura, with a look of slight confusion on his face, and said simply "I just told him". "Oh, that's great", Laura said, somewhat relieved. "It would have been hard to keep them entertained all day at the beach".

***A Day Out** (10:00-16:00; various locations)*

The morning was spent visiting a saint's grave, as well as an Abbey that he established. The Abbey had an interactive information centre about the history of this particular religious site and its founder. The students accepted this tour and took some interest in the sites and history, though were no more or less engaged than during the canoeing and archery the previous day. On the way to lunch they stopped at a scenic viewing point over some sheer cliffs and, while the group were getting out for a walk, Pat dressed up as the Abbey's founding saint from earlier on and began to interact with the group. During the drive to the beach Pat and Laura were discussing the morning. Pat commented that "I feel like I am cheating today [not working]". Laura, nodding in agreement, "I'm not a surfer, not sure why I am here".

Once at the beach, with surf of an average of six inches (15cm) rolling in, Pat began his well-practised routine of getting the group into wetsuits and explaining how to surf. "Has anyone surfed before? Hands up. Oh, most of you have. Well, I am just going to go through the basics for everyone". 20 bored surfers stood and watched as Pat described and demonstrated how to carry the board, put on the leash, lie on the board and catch a wave before being allowed into the waves.

***Dinner** (18:30; dining room)*

The day's sessions were over, and most staff were waiting for dinner. Sarah, Seán, and Pat were having a chat about how their day went. Seán was

disappointed because he did not get to do the trip he has wanted to do for a few weeks now. "We did the level 2 [kayak instructor] training and it was all about the journey, and I don't think I've gone on one [journey] since!!" Sarah was happy with the climbing session as most of the group had "successful attempts" at getting to the top, though she admitted that the group were hard to motivate and had to be controlled at times. Pat was uncertain as to how his day really went. The afternoon surfing was fine, but the "cheating" tour in the morning was hard to figure out. Pat, musing further, said that "the centre has a standard way of doing things" and, though it is never exactly the same twice, there is an atmosphere of the same old routine that is comfortable and easy. This is reflected in the repetitive nature of the descriptions and timings of what to do and when to do it in the Standard Operating Procedures manual.

Once dinner was over, staff took their plates and cutlery and placed them on the tray for the students to wash. The group of students washing up looked a little surprised at this, but nobody noticed.

Practitioner Qualification Levels

What follows here is a detailed examination of the reported qualification levels of the 39 practitioners involved in this research inquiry. This information was taken from the informed consent forms, which practitioners completed prior to engaging with this research inquiry (see Appendix 6 for a copy of the consent form).

There are four topics addressed in this section. First, the awards and qualifications held by practitioners are split into relevant categories so as to group similar levels of awards and qualifications together. Second, the average number of awards and qualifications held by practitioners are presented in terms of the overall average, as well as the average technical qualifications and academic awards held by practitioners. Some awards that were omitted from the consent form questionnaire

are highlighted next. This section concludes with a description of the experience levels of practitioners.

Practitioner awards and qualifications were split into six specific categories in order to appreciate their depth and breath. Sport Ireland Coaching (the Irish equivalent of United Kingdom Coaching) developed the Adventure Sport Framework (ASF) to support the development of adventure sport training and to incorporate adventure sport practice into the national coaching framework (Coaching Ireland, 2008). This framework is useful in categorising the adventure sports awards held by practitioners. It has four tiers that aid in distinguishing the experience and competence of instructors and/or leaders in adventure sports. These tiers are: Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, and Specialist[19]. A fifth *Academic* category was used along with the ASF tiers to group all academic awards (diplomas and degrees, for example) held by practitioners. The final sixth category was titled *Other* and consisted of a small number of awards (first aid trainer, Leave No Trace trainer, and Sport Ireland Coaching's Instructor Developer award) that could not be accommodated by the existing five categories.

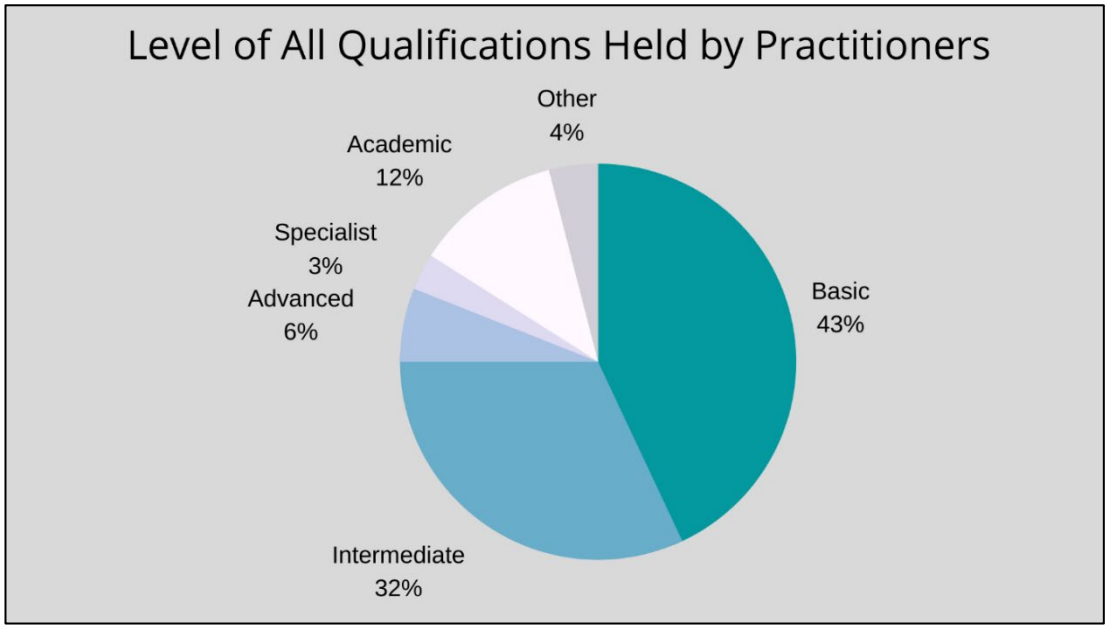


Figure 12: Level of All Qualifications Held by Practitioners

[19] Not all of the awards held by practitioners are recognised by this framework. Those that are not recognised have been assigned a category based on the remit of the award and nature of the environment in line with the criteria of the Adventure Sports Framework.

Figure 12, above, presents an overview of the awards held by practitioners across the six groupings. As can be seen, 75% of the qualifications held by practitioners are either at a basic or intermediate level according to the ASF, whereas advanced and specialist awards make up 9% of all awards held by practitioners. Academic awards held by staff account for 12% of all awards, though this figure drops to just under 8% when only relevant awards are included (awards deemed irrelevant included Business, Computing, and Philosophy degrees). The *Other* category comprised of six practitioners who held three different awards (4 Instructor developers (equivalent to the UKCC Coach Educator), 1 Leave No Trace Advanced Trainer, and 1 First aid trainer).

77% of practitioners hold a basic award, whilst 54% hold an intermediate level award (see figure 13, below). Only 25% of practitioners hold an advanced or specialist (or equivalent) award. 15% of practitioners hold an award in the other category (see Appendix 8 for a detailed breakdown of all awards). In relation to the academic awards held by practitioners, 12% of all awards are academic in nature, with 28% of staff holding at least one academic award (the most academic awards held by one person was three). Refining this list to focus on directly relevant awards, only 21%, or eight people, hold a relevant academic award. Figure 12 compares the number of qualifications in each category with the number of practitioners that hold those awards. A clear trend can be seen of practitioners holding substantially more basic and intermediate awards than any other award type, both in terms of number of awards, and the number of practitioners holding the awards.

This shows a heavy reliance on basic to intermediate level technical adventure sports qualifications, with an average of 3.3 awards per practitioner. This is almost seven times (6.8) more than the average academic awards held at 0.48 awards per practitioner overall. When adjusted to include only directly relevant awards, at an average of 0.28 awards per practitioner, the technical awards are almost 12 times (11.8) more prevalent than academic ones.

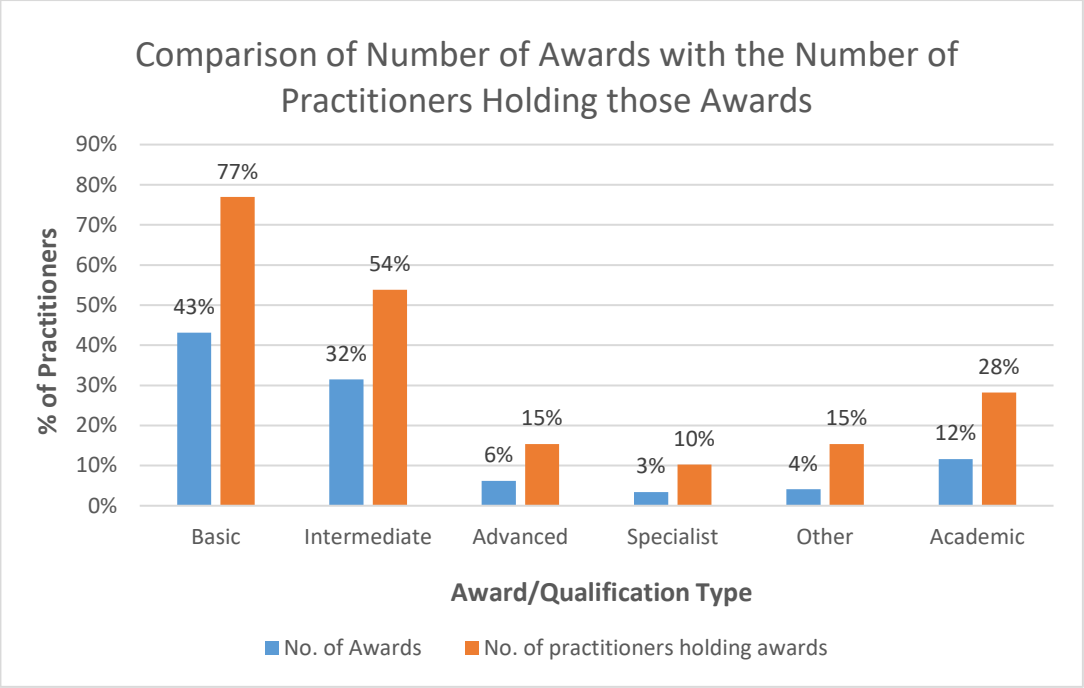


Figure 13: Comparison of No. of Awards and No. of Practitioners

As well as the information on qualifications available from the consent forms, a number of data sources mention the qualifications of practitioners. Of the 150 data sources from public marketing materials (147 webpages and 3 brochures), 102 (68%) of these pages and brochures mention that practitioners are well qualified and experienced, sometimes to expert level. When looking at the self-reported qualification levels of all 39 practitioners (13 female, 26 male) involved in this research, however, there appears to be a misalignment between the actual levels of qualification and those asserted by the centres through websites and brochures.

Another point of note here is the omission of awards by some practitioners. As noted previously, in chapter three, I am a member of the outdoor education community in Ireland and have professional and/or personal relationships with a number of the practitioners involved in this research project. Whilst analysing the data on qualification levels, I noted that some practitioners had left out awards that I knew they held. These awards ranged from basic instructorships to postgraduate degrees (see table 2, below, for further information). In discussing these omissions

with some of the practitioners, they were initially surprised by their omission and could think of no particular reason for leaving it out.

Table 3: List (of known) Awards and Qualifications Omitted by Practitioners

Award	Holders
MSc Sustainable Development	1
MSc Architecture in Advanced Environmental Systems	1
BA Public Health and Health Promotion	1
HND Outdoor Adventure Management	1 (at least)
Level 2 Kayak Instructor	1
D1 (Minibus) Driving License	Numerous
Instructor Developer (UKC Coach Educator equivalent)	2

For the degree level awards, some practitioners did not feel that these awards were relevant to their work. Similarly, one of the practitioners who left out their instructor developer award said that they had omitted other awards as well as they were not applicable to, or associated with, their day-to-day work. It appears that staff are underqualified academically. Such an academic education could build on the existing training of staff and assist in developing methods to deal with unpredictable situations and unidentified outcomes (Playdon and Goodsman, 1997; Megan Grace, 2013), as discussed in contemporary outdoor education theory (see Hovenlynck, 2001; Beames and Brown, 2016). On top of this uncertainty as to the relevance and applicability of academic awards, they also appear to be unsure as to the relevance of some of their technical qualifications to their day-to-day work. I now move on to focus on the experience levels of practitioners.

The average practitioner has worked for their current centre for 6.8 years, and been employed at 3.4 other centres previously. The longest any practitioner has worked in their current centre is 21 years, and the shortest is two and a half weeks. In terms of the experience levels of practitioners, the average amount of time a practitioner has spent working in the outdoors is 9.7 years, with 34 years and two and a half weeks being the most and least experienced practitioners, respectively.

Although some staff have a substantial amount of experience working in the outdoors, there appears to be a trend, as figure 14 shows, where almost 50% of

staff have worked in the sector for more than 5 years (8-34 years), and the other half have less than 5 years of experience (2.5 weeks-5 years). As a result, it can be concluded that 46% of practitioners have a wealth of experience to draw on, whilst 54% have spent 4 years or less working in outdoor education (public and/or private) and therefore may not be overly experienced yet may have a fresher perspective to challenge the status quo.

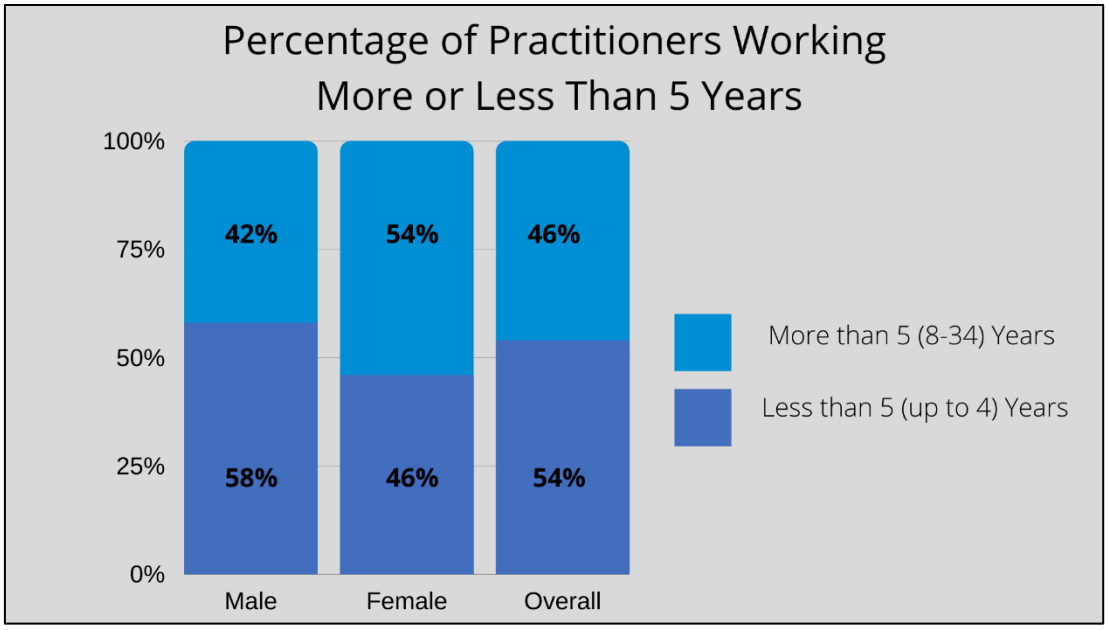


Figure 14: Percentage of Staff Working More or Less than 5 Years

This section provided a detailed description of the qualification levels of practitioners across the four OETCs involved in this research. A strong leaning towards technical adventure sports qualifications was shown, with a limited number of practitioners holding any form of academic award, and even less holding an award relevant to outdoor education. Levels of experience are mixed, with roughly 50% of practitioners having substantial experience of more than eight years, and the other half having less than four, or less, years of experience working in outdoor education. One last point of note is that some practitioners left some relevant awards and qualifications off of their forms, citing a lack of relevance, in their opinion, of these awards to their work.

Now that the findings stories have been presented, the following two chapters detail the key findings stemming from the stories. The next chapter, chapter six, presents the interpretation of the stories in line with McDonaldization theory. Parts of the stories relating to each of the four principles of McDonaldization, namely efficiency, predictability, calculability and control, will be detailed. Following this, a section outlining the irrationality of rationality, or the negative and illogical results of McDonaldization, will be presented. Chapter seven sets out the other three key findings of this research inquiry. Similar to chapter six, that was focused on the McDonaldization of practice, each key finding will be expounded in turn, using evidence from the stories, and supported by the literature. Together, these two chapters contextualise the findings of this research inquiry, before discussing the implications of the key findings in Part 4.

Chapter 6: McDonaldization of Outdoor Education

This chapter presents my interpretation of the findings stories from chapter five. These stories have been interpreted through the theoretical lens of McDonaldization theory (Ritzer, 2019). McDonaldization is the main focus within this chapter, though I also draw on evidence of practitioners' levels of qualification and experience in contextualising and explaining the interpretation of both findings stories (see section 3, chapter 5 for more details).

The two stories, or creative non-fiction vignettes, one for each day, take place at *The Centre*. This centre was created as an amalgam of the evidence gathered and analysed across all four research sites. Both stories combine to give my account of practice in relation to what I observed and read during the fieldwork for this research. It is worth reiterating here that, while the stories are quite specific with regard to practice, the specific examples cited are, for the most part, good examples of recurring practices across some or all of the centres visited, and should be read with this in mind. I observed these events, and they were dominant and recurred enough to be considered exemplars of practice.

The interpretation of findings, presented here and in chapter seven, provides an enhanced understanding of contemporary practice in Irish public outdoor education. As well as presenting the findings from this research inquiry, this chapter and the next chapter also include a deeper critical discussion of these findings, both in relation to the literature and some personal observations. As explained in the Methods chapter (p. 64), a representative sample of four public Outdoor Education and Training Centres (OETCs) was used to generate data for this research inquiry.

The four interconnected principles of the McDonaldization theoretical lens, namely efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control, as detailed in chapter 4, are applied to the two stories in order to interpret the data (see chapter 4, section 2 for more detail). Whilst there is some intersection between the principles of McDonaldization the first story, or Day 1 as it will be referred to for the rest of the

chapter, has a focus on calculability and predictability, and Day 2 concentrates more on efficiency and control. This was a conscious choice on my part to convey each principle more clearly. The original draft of the stories was substantially longer and, whilst more detailed, they were too long for the purpose of providing a precise and concise telling of the findings of this research inquiry. To that end, the best means by which I could shorten the stories without losing the core findings was to focus each day/story on specific principles.

Each principle will be detailed in the following order. This chapter begins with a section on calculability and predictability, before moving on to a second section focused on efficiency and control. Overlap of principles was inevitable, so the sections embrace this by combining principles across two separate sections. Whilst mainly focused on one specific story, each section, addressing two principles, draws most of its evidence from either the Day 1 or Day 2 findings stories. Additional content in each section comes from the other story. All citations from the findings stories are specified by a page number referring to the page in this thesis that the point is taken from. These page numbers are in italics, to identify them as citations from the findings stories, not direct citations from the literature.

The overlap across the McDonaldization principles highlights the complex nature of public outdoor education practice in Ireland and that Ritzer's McDonaldization principles are inextricably linked. Indeed, in Ritzer's (2019) book he merges the principles of McDonaldization (efficiency and calculability, and predictability and control, respectively) in his chapters. Evidence of the irrationality of rationality, or the negative consequences of McDonaldization, is presented thereafter in Ritzer's (2019) book, though in this chapter of the dissertation it is intermixed between both sections.

Whilst it can be argued that some of the examples of the four principles of McDonaldization in the findings stories can be seen as advantageous to practice, the disadvantages of such rationalised practice are noteworthy. Ritzer (2019) uses the term *irrationality of rationality* as a label to describe all of the negative impacts

of McDonaldization on society in general, and specifically in this case, public outdoor education practice in Ireland. The, often unintended, irrationality of rationality emerges from the extreme application of the processes of McDonaldization to practice (Dumbili, 2013). For example, increased efficiency can be taken as "generally a good thing" (Dorsey and Ritzer, 2016:15) by which the delivery of education can be improved. The more efficient a system gets the more likely it is that irrationality can creep in, especially as something like efficiency is seen as a positive development, so there is less potential for critical appraisal of changes and progress. The final section of this chapter summarises the key points made throughout this chapter regarding the McDonaldization of Irish public outdoor education.

1 Calculability and Predictability

This section will explore examples of calculability and predictability from the findings of both stories (Day 1 and Day 2), highlighting instances where calculability or predictability are to the fore. Evidence of both McDonaldization principles (Ritzer, 2019) from the stories will also be discussed with reference to the literature. Both principles are combined here as a result of the interconnected nature of the principles of McDonaldization. It was difficult to isolate either principle completely from the other and still maintain a coherent and readable dialogue, while avoiding repetition.

Calculability refers to the numerical, or quantitative, measurement of standards of practice (Ritzer, 2019). In relation to outdoor education this can include, but is not limited to, the organising of staff and students into activity groups through programming, and the means of calculating and quantifying the quality of practice. It can also embrace the calculated nature of the background, preparatory processes used in setting up learning experiences, as well as the provision of outdoor experiences in a premeditated and deliberate fashion. The faster the better, and the more the merrier, as far as calculability is concerned. Ultimately, calculability refers to developing a precise understanding of how many resources are required –

staffing, equipment, and time, for example – to complete activities and learning experiences with the least amount of overlap or waste.

In terms of McDonaldization, predictability refers to the drive towards delivering near identical experiences in an effort to "try and control as many factors as possible to minimize disruption" (Beames and Brown, 2014:120) to this delivery. Predictable outdoor education practice strives to ensure a certain outcome, and that an experience in one centre will be the same as that found in another (Roberts, 2005). It creates a uniformity of practice (Carroll, 2013). In the stories (see chapter 5) this principle is present in a number of ways, such as the use of specific scripts for briefing groups and also in how practitioners respond to unplanned, novel, situations. Both of these situations will be explored in this section. Calculability and predictability are closely related in terms of McDonaldization, though a distinction is possible. Predictability is focused on ensuring a certain outcome is repeatable, where calculability is more concentrated on making sure things are planned and organised in a way that allows for the uniform production of practice.

The essence of calculability can be seen in the morning meeting for staff, on Day 2. The programming style highlighted the calculated manner in which the students, and practitioners, were allocated to activity sessions. The structured table of the activity programme is not only a good example of quantifying the different activities, but also the time allotted for each (*p. 125*). Management match staff with activities, and then split the student cohort into smaller groups for each session. Once this is done, the student groups rotate through a number of stand-alone sessions for the duration of their experience. Everyone receives the same, or at best extremely similar, experiences in an ordered and thought through (calculated) system.

This was the approach taken to programming across all four centres, with the sole exception of the "Day Out" (*pp.126-127*) in the Day 2 story. Even then the senior staff involved felt they were "cheating" and the idea to run the day as they did stemmed from the belief that "it would have been hard to keep them [students]

entertained all day at the beach" (*p.126*). The direction and focus given to practitioners in the stories was minimal, including telling those working with the Glen primary school (during the Day 1 *Morning Meeting*) that the theme is friendship, with no further direction or timetabling tweaks to include this theme (*p. 121*). This "implies a trading of that good [learning] … rather than a sharing in its production" (Loynes, 1998:38); that learning is a product to be delivered. This calculated programme, applied across all centres, quantified the time spent at each activity, how many practitioners and students were involved, as well as the learning to be covered by those students and practitioners in that time. A certain amount of calculation must go into programming, though the sessions that students and practitioners are assigned to appear overly calculated, to a point of irrationality. Programmes are calculated to a high degree of certainty on paper, but very little uniformity is sought in the briefings for practice.

This is something that stood out to me during my data collection days: not only were there similar patterns of programming, in the same calculated manner, across the centres, but there was a repetitive similarity in experiences across centres, places, and activities. With few exceptions a very calculated, 'tell, show, do' approach was adopted for older and younger groups, going out on the water, or remaining on land. Practitioners would tell students the plan, and explain the specific techniques involved, before giving a demonstration. Once this was completed, with students remaining compliantly stationary throughout, everyone would have a go at putting the abstract explanation into some form of action (*p. 126*). This is an example of the detached power relations present between facilitators and groups in outdoor education that see the role of the practitioner as "either in control of the participants' learning experience or as a passive witness to it" (Stan, 2009:23).

Brown and Wattchow (2016) distinguish between the traditional (western) view of place being something to study externally, as an abstract thing, as opposed to Ingold's (2000) view of becoming more involved in the landscape and "the historical context of journeys previously made" (p. 219). Any such context appears missing

from the experiences of students in the findings stories from this research inquiry. Indeed, such a "formulaic model overlooks the nuanced embodied, social, cultural and geographic components of the learning process" (Wattchow and Brown, 2011:xxiv). An examination of whether Irish public outdoor education is becoming more place responsive will be dealt with in more detail in section 1 of chapter seven, but for now it is important to note the uniformity of experiences, across the centres as a result of the calculated and predictable nature of programming and practice.

This treating of outdoor places as "facilities" (Loynes, 1998:36) allows McDonaldization to infiltrate practice and loosen links to the outdoors, adventure, and learning. Loynes (2002) argues later that such a "production line approach tempts the provider and the client to consider participants as objects, resource or labour,…as a cog in a machine rather than as a human being" (p. 116). The calculated approach to sessions in Irish public outdoor education, which may seem like a useful programming tool, can also impinge on the learning and development of students, with place-based, and bespoke experiences, at best, limited as a result. This reliance on adventure recreation in programming echoes Mikaels, Backman, and Lundvall's (2015) tension between learning and adventure in outdoor education practice in New Zealand. Mikael's (2018) later study went on to show that such a perception of outdoor education as leisure or recreation can limit the educational potential of outdoor education experiences, to the point where friluftsliv becomes another activity within P.E. programmes.

Another piece of evidence of calculability is drawn from the beginning section of the Day 1 story which contains some background information quantifying (calculating) the quality of practice at the centre by highlighting affiliation with other bodies, years of practice, as well as staff attributes and qualifications (*p. 120*). Examples from the two stories that support or refute the claims made in the opening section of the Day 1 story are cited in discussing this point.

The information at the start of the Day 1 story refers to how the centre is approved by a number of National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of sport, and how the centre has been open for 25 years (*p. 120*). Listing approval by, and affiliation with, a number of other organisations can be seen as a standard means of quantifying capability and competence. Approval by the (Irish) Department of Education and Skills is mentioned first, though there are no specifics as to what the centre is approved for. Presumably this is approval for running outdoor education programmes, though there is no formal or published approval listed by the Department. The amount of time that the centre has been open for, 25 years, is also an arbitrary measure of quality. As McDonald (1997) noted with regard to elite performance in adventure sports, the "duty nights, weekend work, foul weather and busman's holidays [experienced working in an outdoor centre] conspire in different ways to blunt the dedication" (p. 59) to climbing. Perhaps time spent working in outdoor education can increase the quality of practice, though it is just as likely that extended time working in the sector could blunt one's dedication.

As the outdoor education sector in Ireland is not regulated through legislation, or any other means such as a voluntary charter or nationally agreed operating guidelines for example, these affiliations may be seen as a means by which to communicate to the public a sense of standardisation or quality assurance. With respect to NGB affiliation, Mountaineering Ireland, Canoeing Ireland, Cycling Ireland, Leave No Trace Ireland, and Remote Emergency Care (a first aid training organisation) are all referred to. Such lists can be impressive, and may imply credibility through association, though these organisations do not have a broad educational remit, and are focused on the technical training and promotion specific to their sporting discipline or environmental message.

The practitioners will also, no doubt, have heard the claims, by the centre, that they "are highly qualified, experienced, professional, expert, friendly, dedicated and enthusiastic" (*p. 120*). It is not stated what exactly practitioners are highly qualified in, though I will assume it is in their respective adventure sport/discipline areas. Staff will be very aware of their own levels of qualification, both in relation to other

practitioners, as well as to the NGB award schemes and academic standards. Section 3 in chapter 5 outlined the levels of qualifications of practitioners and showed a cohort of practitioners qualified to a basic or intermediate level, for the most part, in adventure sports training (see figure 15, below). Academically, less than 8% of practitioners held a relevant academic award at any level (see Appendix 8 for more detail). The (calculated) quantification of competence by the centre, of having "highly qualified, experienced, professional, [and] expert" (*p. 120*) staff is not commensurate with the actual qualification and experience levels of practitioners, which is much lower than claimed.

Brookes (2003a/b) and his neo-Hahnian critique of outdoor adventure education can help in understanding this dissonance between claimed and actual qualifications. In this critique, Brookes (2003b) highlights the effects of attribution bias – where changed behaviour equals character development – in allowing for the development of a perception amongst practitioners that their practices are more impactful than they really are. Combine this idea of attribution bias with the point already discussed about the more recreational focus of educational experiences and it is easier to see how the claim of highly qualified practitioners can be made. Through attribution bias, if I believe that my centre's practice has a disproportionately positive effect on the learning and development of students, and that this happens through one-off introductory adventure sports experiences, then the leap to practitioners being regarded as overly qualified with only intermediate awards is explainable. Students change their behaviour during outdoor education experiences to best fit in with living/being at the centre, no more than they know how to behave in a library, or at home. If this change in behaviour is seen as learning, and attributed to the basic adventure sports sessions, then it is possible to conclude that any practitioner with a basic or intermediate level adventure sports instructorship is highly qualified.

There is also an irrationality in the qualification levels of practitioners. Specifically, there appears to be an amount of disenchantment with regard to qualifications and further training. This is evident from the way that some practitioners omitted

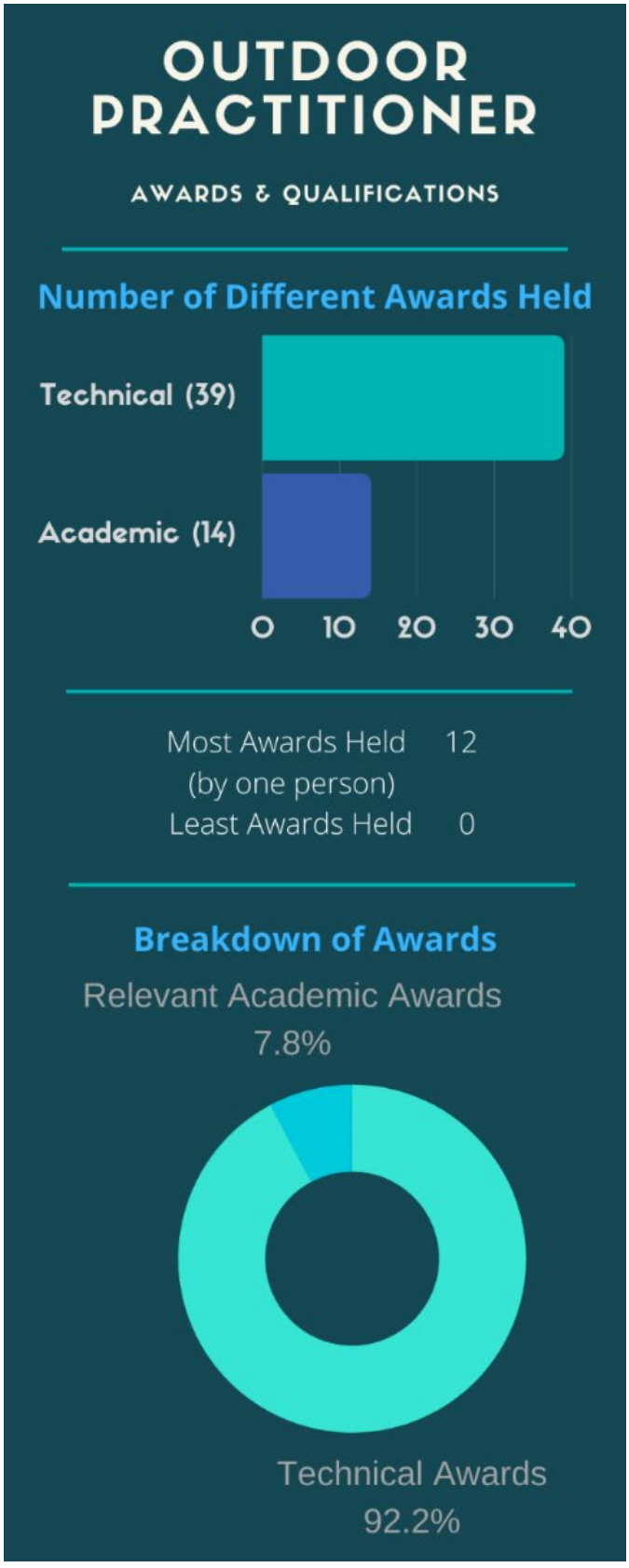


Figure 15: Summary Breakdown of Qualifications and Awards

qualifications - notably their higher-level technical skills, and postgraduate degrees - as they did not see the relevance of these awards to their day-to-day practice. Practitioners can spend months, if not years, going through training programmes and consolidating experiences, before sitting sometimes stressful assessments and/or examinations, to achieve these qualifications and awards. It is understandable for them to feel disheartened when they realise that this work has been undertaken for very little return, as these higher-level awards and qualifications have a trivial bearing on practice and they potentially could have not troubled themselves in achieving the awards at all.

A similar theme of irrationality can be seen in the qualifications required for the various roles within OETCs. In

terms of practitioners, only a basic or intermediate level of technical qualification is essential, with an academic qualification desirable (Donegal ETB, 2018; Limerick and Clare ETB, 2018; Kinsale Outdoor Education Centre, 2020). One recent senior instructor advertisement specified as essential a level 8 degree (equivalent to a level 10 in Scotland or a 6 in England) or a level 7 (equivalent to a 9 or 5, respectively) with three years' experience (Cork ETB, 2017a). Some manager's jobs have the same degree qualification, which is essential for the senior instructor's role, as desirable (Cork ETB, 2017b; Mayo Sligo Leitrim ETB, n.d.). Other management jobs have a degree as an essential qualification (Donegal ETB, 2017). Such confusion and inconsistency, when a clean driving license can be more essential than a relevant academic degree for a management position (Cork ETB, 2017b; Mayo Sligo Leitrim ETB, n.d.), is reflective of an irrationality of calculability in terms of the quantifying of competence through qualifications and experience. Whilst there is a surface impression of highly qualified practitioners and staff, on deeper inspection such calculated competence is lacking.

In terms of the associated claim of the friendliness, dedication, and enthusiasm of practitioners, there are some good examples given by staff with regard to their perceptions of what students can get from public outdoor education experiences. The calculated responses of practitioners included success at "jumping off a big jump [into water] or simply getting into the gear and being on time" (*p. 124*), "help in communication and opening up through walking beside each other or in bunk beds-no eye contact" (*p. 124*), and "happiness and fun" (*p. 124*). These examples, from the conversation over lunch on Day 1, show a depth of enthusiasm from practitioners believing that their students get, with their help, some fun and improved skills from public outdoor education experiences. This is very much an echo of the description of practitioners as friendly, enthusiastic, and dedicated. However, these examples are balanced against the attitudes of staff happy to "waste time" (*p. 122*) if a group decides to do something their own way, or to "feck her" (*p. 122*) for not following the rules, and notably, see merit in such activities as the egg task (*p. 123*).

Ritzer (2019) has argued that people are becoming less and less aware of the irrationalities stemming from McDonaldization. Such contradictory behaviour, as outlined earlier in this section, is further confirmation of this. There is a genuine passion in practitioners to help their students, yet this does not always come across in practice. Lippmann and Aldrich (2003), for example, discuss the "misguided anger of employees" (p. 140) that can occur within McDonaldized workplaces, and the behaviour of practitioners in the stories seems an apt example.

So far in this section there have been examples of Ritzer's principle of calculability. These examples show inconsistencies in calculating quality and competence in Irish public outdoor education, in that, the claims of the sector are not reflected in the data generated by this research inquiry. Affiliation with external bodies is used to demonstrate an educational focus, yet, with the exception of the Department of Education and Skills, none of the organisations cited have a broad educational remit. Falsely calculated claims of expertness vouch for the quality of practice, as the centre claims its practitioners are highly experienced experts. Practitioners' qualifications are more in line with providing adventure sports experiences than educational experiences and the claims of professionalism and friendliness are questionable at times.

This is comparable to the "public secret" (Fletcher, 2010:6) inherent in adventure tourism, where clients and guides maintain a perceptual paradox believing they are safe whilst taking risks. In the case of Irish public outdoor education, the public secret, or contradiction, is not focused on risk and safety. Rather the conflict is in how the quality of practice is calculated. Association with National Governing Bodies implies educational content, when these organisations are limited in their educational role. Practitioners are adequately qualified, for the most part, to deliver basic and intermediate adventure sports experiences, whilst the claims can be maintained that practitioners are qualified as expert level educators as the incongruity is "veiled by public secrecy" (Fletcher, 2010:6) "as a technique for concealing unpalatable truths" (Montgomery, 2016:245).

These secrets can, somewhat paradoxically, be kept hidden through revelation, as management and practitioners "often hear what they want to hear" (Fletcher, 2010:25) and so can ignore obvious information in favour of the *facts* that they wish to confirm. The more that a secret is exposed, the more it is strengthened and harder to expose or address. This public secret can be seen in the stories when Pat called the previous night's night-line activity "pointless" (*p. 120*) and Katie, the manager, reacted by saying that this "is probably the best reason to do it" (*p. 120*). Another example is when Carol and Pat challenged the purpose of Seán's egg game, and he replied with "that was the whole point!" (*p. 123*). In both instances the incongruity between what public outdoor education should be focused on and what is actually happening in practice are to the fore, yet "this perpetual exposure [of inconsistencies] conversely strengthens this" (Fletcher, 2010:28) appearance of quality in practice. The more practitioners question practice, the more it stays the same.

Along with management and practitioners, teachers and students are also involved in the public secrets that calculate and quantify the quality of practice. For example, the actual levels of qualification of practitioners, or the organisations affiliated with the centre, are in no way hidden or concealed, and is at odds with the questionable means by which quality is calculated. Perhaps the bigger public secret is that the focus of practice is to provide an adventure sports experience, and not a bespoke, curriculum-linked educational experience. This form of practice has more in common with McDonald's (1997) meaning of outdoor education as "the teaching and learning of adventurous sports in scenic places" (p. 7) than with the Irish definitions that talk of appreciating the environment, cross-curricular learning, wellbeing, and personal and social development (see Appendix 1 for a breakdown of these definitions).

Shifting the focus more towards predictability, there is a clear example presented in the morning staff meeting on Day 1, where Carol, Pat, and Seán are assigned to the Glen primary school on the group's first day at the centre (*p. 121*). They are instructed to go through the usual briefings with the group before getting them to

do *the* team games. These games are heavily predictable and are similarly reproduced for each new group of students. Also, calling them *the* team games implies a task orientated focus where completing the game is of most importance, rather than the game being seen as a task with which personal and group goals may be furthered. In fact, the group are identified at the start of the discussion in the morning meeting (on Day 1), but after that the focus is firmly on the tasks practitioners must complete with a nameless group.

These tasks, the morning briefing and the team games, have a predictableness to them, in that they do not change from one day to the next. The student cohort is continuously changing, as one group leaves and another arrives, and this less predictable facet of the practitioner's day appears less important than the goal of completing the more predictable briefing and games. The predictability in programming can make it seem as if the practitioner is simply delivering a programme, rather than working with another unique group. The use of the generic term *group*, with both groups not given their proper titles, make it seem as if another nameless group is coming through the centre. In this sense "programmes need to pay specific attention to the ways in which participants and their local communities are differentially positioned socially, culturally and geographically" (Beames and Atencio, 2008:110) for learning to be effective. The dehumanising effect of such off the shelf, predictable programmes is an example of Ritzer's (2019) "main reason to think of McDonaldization as irrational" (p. 181).

This dehumanising can also be clearly seen in the egg task, where students had to link arms in a circle and bend over forward (in a round table type shape) for eggs to be thrown up in the air above them (*p. 123*). These eggs subsequently landed, and cracked, on the student group, with the practitioner leading the 'game' smashing eggs on student's heads on purpose at one point. It demonstrates irrational behaviour for a professional outdoor educator. This experience is arguably unnecessary, potentially uncomfortable and, in this instance, can be directly apportioned to the irrationality of rationality. It also brings to mind an outdated, militaristic approach to outdoor education, with practitioners and teachers 'hazing'

students. This practitioner appeared to have a genuine belief that this was a normal thing to do, and that it fit well with the ethos of the team-building session.

Staying with the team games played, once the set list of games had been completed, earlier than predicted, the students were engaged in a game of rugby. For over 30 minutes, the two teams of students were busied with this game of football, waiting for lunch time to arrive. This can be seen as another example of the practitioner's disenchantment, with them being happy to "waste time" (*p. 122*) as Carol noted during the team games session. As a result of the way in which this game was facilitated, and the next goal wins approach at the end in particular, the student group went to lunch as a group of individuals, potentially further away from a cohesive group than when they arrived. Apart from the unfairness in the winning of the rugby game, no-one appeared to question why they were playing rugby at an Outdoor Education and Training Centre. Here, students were passive agents in this outdoor education experience, recipients of predictable instruction rather than engaged and challenged to develop their skills.

The predictability (and efficiency) employed in the centre's programming appears irrationally focused on completing the games, as opposed to the students learning or developing through the experience. For example, during the team games experience (*pp. 122-123*) the rules were ignored to allow for completion and once the set time for that game had expired, the group moved on, regardless of completion or success. Indeed, calling the activities *games*, as opposed to *tasks* or *challenges* may irrationally change the focus from being an educational, or developmental, endeavour to more fun to pass the time. As a school group it is arguable that they would already know each other well enough to not need such an icebreaker session to be comfortable to work together. The lack of differentiation within activity delivery, not taking into account the specific place, students, and/or outcomes of the day, may leave little room for unique and impactful learning. For example, drawing on the Adventurous Learning model (Beames and Brown, 2016), little opportunity is available for students to exert agency over their learning, or experience much uncertainty beyond the challenge of making abstract instructions

applicable to the task at hand. Can such experiences really be building mastery in students?

The final comment by Jason in the staff briefing, regarding his opinion of how "into this" (*p. 121*) the teacher is, indicates an amount of irrationality. Labelling a teacher that seemingly understands and sees a possible use for outdoor education, beyond it being a nice day out, as a bit of a bother because she/he gets involved and may have specific expectations for their student's experiences seems, from an educational point of view, irrational. It would be reasonable to assume that a teacher that knows why they have brought their group of students to the centre would be welcomed, not ridiculed. This is irrational from the point of view of management and practitioners, as this teacher shows enough of a level of interest in the outdoor education experience of their students to get more involved than most teachers do. The irrationality is that of seeing the teacher who is getting involved as a nuisance even though this teacher is well placed to create a deeper learning experience for their students as a result of this higher level of involvement. An enthusiastic teacher such as this one, challenges the uniform, calculated, and predictable sessions that the management and staff are used to delivering, highlighting the task-focused nature of practice. The student groups come and go, but the same sessions remain.

In the Day 1 group briefing, the practitioners are going through the motions of what they repeat every time another group arrives. They grab the same briefing notes from the same place they are always kept, and run through the script for welcoming groups to the centre. The only change here occurs depending on whether the group is in for just a few hours that day, or will be staying overnight, the latter requiring another script with more information. Such prescription with regard to the introductory briefing for arriving groups is logical, and ensures a clear and repeatable message is given to all students attending the centre. The efficiency of keeping the briefing notes in the same place is also sensible as practitioners will not be able to use them if they cannot find them.

Such scripting (Bryman, 1999; Ritzer, 2019) can have positive effects, with students receiving all the important messages in their initial briefing, and practitioners being relieved of the pressure to remember everything from memory. Beames and Brown (2014) found that such performative labour was present in outdoor education in both Scotland and New Zealand, and Bryman (1999) and Ritzer (2019) note the deskilling effects of such scripts as practitioners repeat pre-prescribed information without thinking. In essence, practitioners 'rust out', as opposed to burn out, as the standardised repetition does not require them to use their skillset to its fullest. This can be seen in the findings stories when Pat begins his "well-practised routine" (*p. 126*) and simply ignores the fact that some students have surfing experience and gives everyone the same basic how-to surf talk, despite having asked the students have they surfed before. This decision is based on a routine predictability, rather than what may aid the students most in their learning.

Another point where predictability is noticeable is during the briefing of the primary school. Here, the same flipchart sheet with the rules on it is used, for the third week in a row, with the date from that earlier week scribbled out (*pp. 121-122*). This pre-prescribed approach, with the rules already pre-written weeks before the group arrive, is amplified by the way in which the rules are elaborated on. Carol simply states the six specific rules, and then gives some examples in a didactic fashion – "if we say don't run, just don't run, simple, there might be rocks, and you could fall and cut your hands" (*p. 122*). A similar predictability can also be seen in the way Jason insists on waiting the extra four minutes to start the meeting, though everyone is ready and waiting (*p. 124*), or the previously mentioned approach Pat takes to the surf briefing during the day out on Day 2 (*p. 126*).

The reusing of the three-week-old rules sheet, in the primary school briefing, speaks of disenchantment in the workplace. The practitioners are repeating the same routine for at least the third week, and this has clearly made them less inclined (more irrational) to do the best they can, like using a new rules sheet, or at least a reusable one with no date on it – a reusable rules sheet would show some comfort in the predictability of the task. There may also be some magic lost here from the

point of view of the students. They may be expecting a unique experience and seeing the scribbled-out date could result in a disappointment and lessening of the thrill or excitement of what is to come. Staying with the student briefing, there is also an irrationality of efficiency present. Whilst it may speed things up during the briefing to state the rules and accept the answers of students uncritically, the lack of including students in the rule making process, or even checking for understanding, leaves scope that this briefing may have been ineffective in getting across the important information about safety and general expectations of behaviour.

The disenchantment of students may be increased by the generally negative nature of the rules on the flipchart page, as four of the six rules tell the students what not to do. This is a good example of how practitioners are not giving "students the space to think creatively" (Beames and Brown, 2016:79). The ever-increasing pace, and unpredictable nature, of life requires such creative thinking (Robinson, 2011). The overly predictable nature of Irish public outdoor education is, somewhat irrationally, opposed to this idea; it has forgotten that the purpose of outdoor education is to support student "growth primarily by accepting the child's perspective as the legitimate framework for generating ideas" (Duckworth, 1972:217).

The main group was then split into three smaller subgroups and each practitioner takes a group to discuss what they will be doing during their stay. The students deal with this more intimate discussion by giving the answers that they predict the instructors are looking for (*p. 122*). For students that had visited the centre already, there appeared to be an inevitability, from my observations, of the same old routine as previous experiences. The instructors, in turn, seem happy to have received the answers they were expecting and move on to the team games part of the morning. This is an example of what Wichmann (1995) sees as a lack of understanding of the nature of educational experiences and how "blind faith, activity cookbooks, and even process-centred theories are not only inadequate, but can be miseducative" (p. 115). Roberts (2005) develops this further, highlighting how young people,

having experienced such predictable, McDonaldized, programmes "have become programmed in both what to expect and how to respond to placate the teachers" (p. 21). While some level of predictability is useful, it seems too much predictability in a programme can lead to potentially less learning than hoped for occurring.

Once this predictable briefing was completed, practitioners then brought the group through team game after team game in a well-rehearsed, repeatable, fashion. Some points of note here include the surprise by staff that a student group would try to complete a task in a different way to the tried and tested centre's way of doing it, and that this would "waste time" (*p. 122*). Once this group successfully completed the stepping stones game, Pat showed them the *centre way* of doing this task. These briefing sessions, as well as the activities, were somewhat indistinguishable from primary and secondary school groups to summer camps and scout groups during my observations. This level of predictability is also shown during the Day 2 staff meeting, for example. This particular day is day three of a *standard* programme, and everyone knows what to do, as they have done it numerous times before, and little time is spent on discussing the intricacies of the programme. There is also a level of predictability in what the other group's activities are, as Jason casually asks, "what have they [the students] not done yet" (*p. 125*).

This "drive toward predictability leads to the irrational homogenization" (Dorsey and Ritzer, 2016:15) of the medical field, and the same can be said of the Irish public outdoor education field. Rules and scripts guided behaviour to a point of homogenisation (Dumbili, 2013), similar to that seen in our commodified landscape where students are dissociated "from their experience of community and place" (Loynes, 1998:35). This dissociation makes sense if we see places themselves as socially constructed (Roberts, 2012). Healy and McDonagh (2009) presented the "destruction of authenticity" (p. 382) of the Irish landscape through McDonaldization, resulting in a disconnection between society and place. In essence, education in general has "embraced the idea of a globalized placelessness, where everything, everywhere, resonates with a sameness" (Peters, 2011:16). The sameness, or lack of authenticity, has manifested itself in the student's outdoor

education experience where, for the sake of predictability, one size appears to fit all student's needs, regardless of hoped for outcomes or geographic location.

There was, however, a contradictory application of the rules of some of the games, so soon after the briefing telling students to follow the rules set down by staff. The rules for a given game were implemented in an ad hoc fashion. On some occasions a rule, of not touching the ground during a game, for example, was enforced and the group would have to start again. Other times, the instructor would feign not seeing the group member touching the ground and allow the group to proceed (*p. 122*). When one student takes their phone out, staff responded, in line with the rules, and confiscated the phone. As the student stormed off (*p. 122*), staff reacted as if the game - the more predictable part of the session - was the important thing to complete, rather than student learning or engagement being paramount.

No staff member tried to reengage with that particular student to keep them involved in the session, or made any attempt to maintain group cohesiveness or a sense of fun overall. These behaviours and reactions, of practitioners at least, may be actions "with the intent to maximize efficiency" (Beames and Brown, 2014:124) in terms of completing games and maintaining the engagement of students. The message conveyed by such actions may, however, be counter to the meaning practitioners wish students to take away from such learning experiences, as the practitioners basically let the students get away with cheating. This kind of approach can also be misleading for students in terms of their own abilities, as "[a]uthentic experiences with consequences provide a genuine opportunity for failure and self-assessing one's competence" (Schumann, Sibthorp, and Hacker, 2014:104). If students are not accountable for mistakes, how can they develop a true sense of efficacy from their experiences?

This is a good example of what Argyris (1986) called 'skilled incompetence'. What Argyris is referring to with the concept of skilled incompetence is the means by which management, practitioners, and students avoid upsetting each other by not saying what they really mean, or know, and not testing assumptions within practice.

This is achieved through “practiced, routine behaviour (skill)” (Argyris, 1986:74). The skill here is the practitioner’s automatic response to situations that allow for the activity to progress with minimal, if any, difficulties, and the resulting incompetence is in the outcomes of the session or programme being far removed from the claims of practice in developing positive attributes in students. This skill of avoiding conflict usually leads to the covering up, or not dealing with, problems within practice, or indeed, problems practice is supposed to address, such as during problem solving tasks, or in terms of communication or personal and social development.

In summary, the centre utilised the principle of calculability to quantify and promote the claimed expertness, high levels of qualification, experience, and passion of staff (see figure 15, above, for a summary breakdown or section 3 of chapter 5 for further details). A minority of staff (less than 8%) hold relevant academic awards, and the majority of awards and qualification are basic or intermediate. Almost half of staff have substantial experience of working in the sector, while the other half have limited experience. This shows a distinct gap between the centre’s claims and the actual levels of practitioner qualifications and experience. Staff do exhibit passion and enthusiasm for their work, though this is contrasted by the sometimes negative, and potentially damaging, attitudes and practices displayed in, for example, the egg game. Fletcher’s (2010) public secret concept was useful in discussing this paradox of the centre’s calculated claims of expertness in staff, in comparison to the actual levels of practitioner qualification. This theory helped to explain the reason why both the claim and the reality of staff expertness can both be accepted, even if they are very different.

The calculated nature of programme delivery, resulting in a disconnected programme, from both local places and specific learning outcomes, was also discussed. Outdoor education practice, across all participating public OETCs, did not take into account the learning inherent in the local landscape, in favour of an overly calculated and predictable, homogenised, activity session. This demonstrates “a

convergence of values [in outdoor practitioners]. After all, without convergence, McDonaldization is a hollow concept" (Esmer, 2006:201).

This convergence of values, resulting in identical sessions, is also linked to the McDonaldization principle of predictability. A number of instances of predictability, in terms of management expecting routine practice from practitioners, as well as practitioners approaching their job, and students, with a level of predictability were also highlighted in this section. Students also displayed predictability in how they responded to practitioners' questions, by giving the answer they believed the practitioner wanted to hear. Overall, a sense of practitioner disinterest, or impassivity, is in evidence from the inconsistent manner of applying the rules of the games, to a lack of any form of agency or authenticity over the experience for students. It is worth remembering that "[m]eaningfulness [in learning] is contingent upon learners' needs, rather than on the blanket application of a fixed educational script" (Beames and Brown, 2016:63).

Along with the application of such predictable, calculated, and inauthentic processes to practice, a skilled incompetence (Argyris, 1986) in management and practitioners was discussed. A desire to keep the session moving along, and not get caught having to repeat an activity over and over, distracts from the homogenised nature of public outdoor education experiences and allows for sessions to be completed in a predictable fashion. Having discussed calculability and predictability, the next section highlights and discusses the principle of efficiency in relation to the findings stories.

2 Efficiency and Control

This section brings together the examples of efficiency and control from the findings stories. These examples highlight the optimisation of practice and how such processes are imposed on students. Once the terms efficiency and control have been explained, examples of both principles from the findings stories will be outlined as well as being discussed in depth. The examples of efficiency will be described with regard to Ritzer's (2019) three broad categories of efficiency, namely

streamlining (speeding things up), simplifying, and putting students to work. A number of instances of controlling behaviour will be presented of control between management and practitioners, practitioners and students, and practitioners and teachers. Each point will be discussed in conjunction with relevant literature.

Efficient outdoor education systems favour "predesigned, often well-choreographed" (Ritzer, 2019:2) practices as a means for delivering programmes. The advantage of such "effort to find the optimal means to any end" (Dorsey and Ritzer, 2016:15) lies in a fast and simplified process with minimal exertion of effort. Increased efficiency can, however, lead to standardisation (Ferreira and Van Zyl, 2016). Such rational systems, applied in an outdoor education context, create a "predetermined sequence to deliver a uniform outcome of a predictable standard as efficiently as possible" (Loynes, 2002:116).

Control refers to having power which can be exerted over others to govern behaviour (Ritzer, 2019). Such power, exerted in an educational setting can lead to a production model of practice, with little to no benefit to learning (Carroll, 2013). Control manifests in outdoor education practice when "employees are required to abide by certain scripts and perform tasks in a prescribed order" (Weaver, 2005:350). There can be different levels of control with practitioners "given the autonomy to row freely so long as they arrive at the … destination" (Wilkinson, 2006:87) set more centrally, by management. Practitioners may seem to have complete control, and may exert this on their student groups, though there are unwritten and subconscious rules that they follow. Different mechanisms of control are available to management through, for example, explicit centre policies, or initial and ongoing training. Efficiency and control are deeply interwoven in McDonaldization theory (Ritzer, 2019), for without the ability to control various aspects of practice, it would be impossible to enact more efficient systems and policies for practice.

Efficiency can be seen in the student briefing session, during Day 1 (*121-122*), where scripts containing all relevant information are used so as not to miss any important

points and speed up the initial briefing process. This has some logic to it in the sense that there is a lot of information to convey to the student group on arrival, and streamlining such aspects of practice is useful for both student and practitioner. There is an efficiency in another sense, from the point of view of the practitioner at least, in the answers given by students during the small group discussions at the end of this briefing (*p. 122*). Staff were simply waiting to hear the answers they needed to hear so that they could move on to the team games section of the morning as efficiently as possible. Such streamlining could be seen as inefficiency as, although they did get the answers they needed to get, there was an air of disinterest to the task, with everyone just wanting to get outside. Also, completing this briefing session so efficiently allowed more time than was planned for playing the team games, which were also efficiently delivered. This resulted in the extended rugby game with its potential negative consequences for the group in terms of teamwork and bonding (*p. 123*).

This rugby game finished with the team that was winning 6-2 losing as a result of a "next goal would win" (*p. 123*) decision by Carol. The result of this was a "fractured and divided group" (*p. 123*) going for lunch after a morning of apparent team building. Perhaps this decision was simply a means by which to finish the rugby game as it was time to get ready for lunch, showing an obvious task orientation to the morning. Alternatively, this incident could be understood as a misconstrued application of what Luckner and Nadler (1997) call "change conditions" (p. 24) theory. This involves placing students in situations that "accentuate disequilibrium, dissonance, disorder, frustration, or anxiety" (ibid:24) in order to stimulate change. Such an approach has since been questioned with "[t]he current "conventional wisdom" in psychology suggest[ing] that clients often need safety, security and predictability in order to feel free to work on change" (Berman and Davis-Berman, 2005:20). Either way, the practitioners involved did not seem to notice or address the unrest within the group and set about tidying up and getting ready for lunch.

There is an efficiency to the timetable that the "other group" (a secondary school group) are on, of which this day is their last (discussed at the morning staff briefing

on Day 2, *p. 125*). The *Sample Activity Programme* in the Day 2 story is a good example of this efficiency (*p.125*). The secondary school group is split into four smaller groups, and each of these groups rotates through a simplified and streamlined list of activities. Practitioners sometimes rotate with the same group, but this depends on their level of technical skills (qualifications) to deliver each activity. Often, practitioners repeat the same session for the next group. A straightforward system of repetition exists, with each group experiencing the same activity sessions by the end of the three days. This allows for the same equipment, already being used in the morning, to be reused for the same activity with a different group in the afternoon. No time is spent in prepping for sessions once they are all set in the morning.

This streamlining and simplification of the programme seems, on face value, to be an effective method of getting the group through the activities, and it is. For learning to be as effective as possible, however, students and practitioners need to develop an understanding of each other, enabling deeper learning through an understanding of "their own role in relation to" (Winje and Løndal, 2020:27) the rest of the group and the activity. Not only can the environment change twice a day, but the instructor(s) controlling the session also change. The issue that occurs as a result of this form of efficiency is that each session requires staff and students to start again in terms of building relationships for learning (Priest, 1986). This irrationality is a direct result of the (in)efficient systems in place for delivering outdoor experiences.

On Day 2, Pat and Laura's suggestion to change the programme for their secondary school group comes with notes of efficiency from their point of view. Laura's comment of it being "hard to keep them [students] entertained all day at the beach" (*p. 126*) implies that the day may run smoother, for those delivering, and for the students experiencing it, if they are not at the beach for the whole day. This efficiency is somewhat questionable though, as later on Laura confesses to not being sure why she is at the beach as she is not a surfer, and Pat admits to feeling like he is cheating as the morning did not include adventure sports (*p. 126*). Once

the surfing session starts, Pat asks the group if any of them have surfed before, and the majority reply that they have. He then proceeds to run through his efficient land brief, as well as explanations and demonstrations, in full, regardless of the group's answer to his question (*p. 126*). Whilst a lot of the group members may already know some, if not all of this information, it is simpler and more efficient to have a streamlined approach and to go through the entire briefing once, than have to address different, individual issues across sessions and groups.

Whilst the above examples may show a level of efficient practice from the practitioner's point of view, for the student, I have argued that this approach "may be inefficient" (Dorsey and Ritzer, 2016:15) if their learning is the focus. Similar to the lack of differentiation between place, students, and/or outcomes in the previous section as a result of impact of calculability and predictability, efficient practices can lead to a standardisation of practice. One issue here is that "this homogenization of the mode of operation … engenders mass similarities … [which] equally hinders diversity that humans naturally long for" (Dumbili, 2013:3). Drasdo (1973) came to a similar conclusion when discussing the future of outdoor education in the UK. He noted that "an unimaginative pressure of standardisation ("in the interests of consistency" - why?) [sic] has exercised a repressive influence upon the [outdoor education] experiment" (p. 30). It is clear from the examples discussed in this section, as well as the previous one, that this efficient and predictable standardisation is at least as strong in Ireland now, almost half a century after Drasdo's observation.

The uncritical acceptance of such repeatable programmes "misunderstands the human education process as a technical industrial production process in which standardised and economically viable procedures guarantee the production of always identical products" (Becker, 2016:20). Loynes (2018) is also cognisant of the pressure to deliver financially viable programmes, and he questions whether such activities can justly be called educative, as they are missing the "more organic, person-centred, complex, open-ended and longer-term encounter" (p. 34) that allows students to flourish. McDonaldized outdoor education can focus on

balancing budgetary risk more so than learning risk as uncertainty is leached out of practice in the name of efficiency (Varley, 2013).

Over dinner there are more examples of efficiency in public outdoor education practice. Seán's annoyance at not going up the lake on a kayaking trip, again, means that the kayaking experience for the students was kept to a small corner of the lake, where they may not have travelled more than, at most, a few hundred metres (*pp. 126-127*). Such static site sessions are very efficient in that the students are safe and controlled, by practitioners, the whole time. Such control means that the session can still happen even in poor weather or strong wind. Going on a longer journey means more skills are required of the group, which in turns means that the students get less games and fun time as they have to refine their kayaking skills to be able to complete the trip. It is more efficient to run a static site session if the focus is fun and games.

It is also worth considering where Seán's disappointment comes from. He was in complete control of the kayaking session with no one present to overrule his decisions or take the session in a different direction. As he has been wanting to go on a trip for weeks now, the ability of the group, and even the weather, may not be the biggest limiting factors. One possibility is the controlling factor of the "bureaucratic rules, and manuals prescribing accepted procedures and techniques" (Ritzer, 2019:110). Seán may feel compelled to run static site (no journey) kayaking sessions due to the efficiency within the regulations and training of the centre's operating procedures. Staff are easily controlled by management in this manner, as they rely on their jobs to survive and earn a living, to the point where practitioners are swayed in their decisions even when management are not present (Ritzer, 2019).

Sarah's climbing session was deemed successful over dinner as, through good control of her group, almost everyone made it to the top of the climbs (*p. 127*). One question that could be asked here is "[w]hose definition of success is being used?" (Chapman, McPhee, and Proudman, 1995:243). It appears that for a student to be

successful on this climbing session they must reach the top of the climb(s). This is success in the realm of climbing, though this success does not readily transfer to deeper outcomes, and favours the physically strong student. Getting to the top of a climb does not necessarily equate to developing an appreciation for nature, or for curricular learning. These outcomes may be included, though no evidence is available to substantiate their inclusion. Such a focus on sessions may lead to growth in terms of the successful student's personal efficacy and wellbeing. The students who do not succeed in making it to the top - but who may have pushed themselves to develop more than those who did reach the top, through facing their fears or doubts, for example - have failed in reaching the practitioner-favoured outcome of touching the top of the climb. This form of non-inclusive practice does not allow space for otherwise under-achieving students to participate fully, or potentially excel (Dismore and Bailey, 2005). What should have been an empowering developmental moment may be misconstrued as failure due to the specific focus of practice.

The rest of the conversation amongst staff over dinner shows some concern from practitioners as to how the other sessions went, as well as the best way for their sessions to be delivered more efficiently in the future. Such a practitioner/activity focus from practitioners is exemplified by the practitioners leaving their dishes to be washed by the group (*p. 127*). The school group on wash-up duty did not seem impressed, yet staff members appeared not to notice. This behaviour can be described in McDonaldization language as *prosumption*, or "putting customers to work" (Ritzer, 2019:74). Prosumption is an amalgam of the interlinked processes of production and consumption. There is a strong argument to be made for students attending outdoor education experiences to be involved in the preparation and cleaning up of their meals. Expecting them to do the extra work of cleaning up after practitioners, with no acknowledgement whatsoever, may detract from any possible "sense of freedom, even empowerment" (Ritzer, 2019:74) stemming from such work.

Another example of such prosumption can be seen when Pat brings the idea of a different day out than previously planned to the teachers. When asked by Laura how he "sold it to the teacher" (*p. 126*), Pat replies, somewhat confused, with "I just told them" (*p. 126*). Here, Pat is controlling the programme for the group, but also making the teacher work to tell the students about this change in plan. There is no agency or autonomy given to either the teacher or the students in this situation. This is an example of the rationalised nature of public outdoor education, "modelled according to market demand" (Varley, 2013: 41), or by what the practitioner believes will suit the group. This approach to outdoor education has little in common with a "carefully structured, well-thought-out, with a sound educational rationale" (Beames and Brown, 2016:34), outdoor learning experience.

Programming, and in particular staffing, exhibits aspects of irrationality here. The main activity focused on in Day 2 sees the students being brought on a somewhat relevant (they were not asked, nor did they agree to this programming change) and bespoke day of learning and activity situated in the local place that they are in (*p. 126*). The practitioners involved - having convinced the senior instructor and told the teacher of the changes - adapt to the new programme, and even dress up and involve themselves in their facilitative role.

Somewhat paradoxically, considering this was their idea, Pat and Laura appeared to have a hard time moving beyond a hard skills, technical, adventure sports focus. Laura did not understand her role at the beach, as she was not a surfer, and Pat felt that not being engaged in an adventure sport session was cheating. In a day that, on the surface at least, displayed features of place-based, bespoke programming, practitioners were uneasy with, and unconvinced of, their role. It appeared that both practitioners were unsure of what they were to do with the group when adventure sports were not to the fore. This could be a result of the heavy reliance on adventure sports training in the development of practitioners – with no other training to turn to, it is understandable to question your role in the experience if you are no longer doing what you have been trained to.

The absence of control, from the students' perspective, in this example is not conducive to a quality learning experience. Practitioners could be "mistaking the thrill of taking risks with learning" (Wattchow and Brown, 2011:39), as they are firmly focused on what the group is going to do (and how it suits the practitioners) and not what they are going to learn from the experiences. It is possible that students will appear to develop, or change, personal traits during such experiences, though when "participants are placed in situations with little perceived control and high perceived risk, they may change some behaviors [*sic*] in order to cope and better conform, but these changes will probably not be internalized very well" (Berman and Davis-Berman, 2005:20). What can seem like learning, or behaviour change, may be a coping mechanism with which to deal with the lack of control.

A similar finding was posited by Brookes (2003a/b) who, looking at the research into social psychology and personality traits and putting it into an outdoor education context, found that any personality traits, behavioural, or emotional changes visible over a short period of time are most likely adaptations to the novel environment the students find themselves in. Indeed, Brookes (2003b) argues that such programmes can have harmful effects if run on the premise that outdoor education can "do no harm" (p. 129). Beames and Brown (2016) advocate for educators to trust their learners with certan responsibilities, and the consequences of same, and lament the examples in the findings stories that show "outdoor educators fool themselves into thinking they were demonstrating enlightened, best practices, yet were taking away choice and power from students" (p. 61).

There is another obvious display of control during the staff meeting and the primary school briefing on Day 1 (*pp. 120-122*). Management tends to exert control over the practitioners by telling them what they are doing for the day – "Carol, Pat, and Seán, you guys are with the Glen Primary school this morning" (*p. 121*). There is a level of necessity to some of this control. Without some level of organising and regulation within programming, how would anything get done? Practitioners, in turn, exert a similar level of control over students. Some didactic delivery is required when, for example, students must learn the technical skills involved in a

specific sport or activity. There was, however, no consulting with, nor autonomy given to, the students to decide on any aspect of their experience on this morning. Notable examples being during both the briefing where they were told the rules (*pp. 121-122*), and the egg game where the students had to comply with having eggs thrown at them (*p. 123*).

Another example of such irrationality stemming from the morning briefing on Day 2, can be seen in the controlling, and altering of the programme without consultation with, or the agreement of, the students by Pat and Laura (*pp. 125-126*). There is a dehumanising quality to this process with respect to the students, who are simply told of changes and must accept and adapt to any alterations made. Initiatives to control the day and make it more organised, to presumably increase the quality of learning, have forgotten the students and what might best suit them and their learning.

Katie, the manager, also demonstrates control at lunch time, in the Day 1 story, by putting staff on the spot to answer questions for the teachers with no preparation or thinking time (*p. 123*). This P.E. teacher's question, trying to understand "how people do this job" (*p. 123*), was itself somewhat irrational, coming from a P.E. teacher who brings groups to public outdoor education centres every year, as part of the students' education. This teacher seemed genuinely unsure as to how people can work outside doing outdoor activities all the time. If such basic questions are troubling the P.E. teacher, it seems pertinent to wonder to what extent this outdoor education fieldtrip is seen as a genuinely useful part of their students' education.

After Katie encouraged the practitioners present to share their thoughts, staff answered with apt and measured responses to what they felt students get from their public outdoor education experiences (*pp. 123-124*). For Katie to conclude that "outdoor education is essential to the mainstream education system and curriculum" (*p. 124*) is irrational at best, as there was no mention of links to the curriculum in the comments made by staff. There is no evidence in the stories of time spent discussing, planning for, or delivering experiences with any level of focus

on school curricular learning outcomes. Similarly, there is some disenchantment present in the way that management gave up on trying to get information from teachers to design a more bespoke programme for upcoming groups (*p. 120*)[20]. This research inquiry did not focus on the student experience, so it is unknown whether the students happened to learn something, or make connections with their school subjects, as a result of their public outdoor education experiences.

Going back to the Day 1 staff meeting, there is another irrationality in Katie, the manager's, response to the statement by Pat, about the "pointless" (*p. 120*) night-line activity for the group the previous night. Pat had mentioned that the night-line had not worked, and may have had some valid reason for calling the experience pointless. His reasons, whatever they were, were never articulated, as Katie retorted instantly, and somewhat defensively, by stating that the activity not working and being pointless are exactly the reasons why the group should experience the night-line (*p. 120*). This was essentially an irrationality of control where the manager avoided engaging in a potentially challenging conversation with a staff member, in front of all other staff. Such a conversation could highlight the lack of purpose in the centre's programming, or want for reasons for the inclusion of specific activities and challenges.

The first instance of control in the Day 2 story, is when the senior instructor refuses to start the morning briefing, even though everyone is ready and waiting, four minutes before the time that the meeting was set to start (*p. 124*). Sarah was asking for the meeting to start and, perhaps Jason, the senior instructor, saw this as a possible undermining of his power, and so waited the four minutes to start the meeting. An efficient system of practice, once rationalised, may see timing as a key element of maintaining efficiency. This being the case, pausing the meeting, for four minutes, so as to stick to the plan, may seem reasonable, when to everyone else, this may appear rather unreasonable and irrational. This is notable as, a few minutes later, the practitioners, Pat and Laura, take control of their day away from

[20] This is further discussed in section 1 of chapter 7, A Lack of Engagement with Theory.

Jason, their boss, and change the programmed activities, which Jason seems to have no issue with (*pp. 125-126*). This control was then extended by Pat when he simply told the teachers about the change in plan that Laura and he had decided upon. The teacher accepted this and went off to tell the students about this change. This controlling of the teacher could be a result of the credible power Pat holds as an outdoor instructor, whilst the teacher has limited understanding, experience, or skill to question such decisions.

Control is also used to set boundaries and provide structure to session delivery. This can be seen in Pat's comment regarding the centre having a "standard way of doing things" (*p. 127*). This can create an atmosphere of the "same old routine" (*p. 127*). Maintaining a certain amount of control, in terms of controlling which group is doing which activity, the qualifications staff require to run certain activities, or what constitutes good practice (the standards of practice), can lead to improved quality of programming. However, with sessions being so predictable and, more importantly, controlled by practitioners, games such as the egg game can develop. The instructor in control had the opportunity to do what he considers appropriate as there is no evidence of a particular aim for individual groups beyond experiencing the activities. With such a lack of purpose or focus, games and tasks can evolve over time, with games such as the egg task being the culmination of such evolution. Notably, when slightly challenged by fellow practitioners regarding the purpose of this task, the response of "that was the whole point" (*p. 123*) had strong similarities to Katie's (the manager) irrational response in the morning staff briefing, where she hushed Pat and his questioning of the night-line by saying "that is probably the best reason to do it" (*p. 120*).

In this sense, control, or power, can be "productive as well as repressive" (Zink and Burrows, 2006:43). Some structure is needed for any programme or learning experience to be productive, though too much control can lead to mis-educative experiences. Bowbridge and Blenkinsop (2012) show that power "enters all human relationships—particularly those, like education, in which one individual attempts to direct the behavior [*sic*] of another" (p. 151). The examples cited above show

myriad power relations, and hence control, exerted in Irish public outdoor education. Very few of these examples show a balance of control with students having almost no agency over their learning. Students may still gain some mastery during the activity sessions, though the lack of control of their learning experiences may not allow for it to be seen as an authentic learning opportunity (Beames and Brown, 2016). Little may be learned beyond, perhaps, some technical skills of the activity in question.

This section gave a detailed synopsis of the McDonaldization principles of efficiency and control as evidenced from the findings stories. Timetabling and programming have adopted optimum methods for figuring out the best way for visiting students to experience each of the activities available. Practitioners have fine-tuned practice to be as efficient as possible for them, demonstrating a practitioner focus, rather than a student focus in practice. It can also be said that, as in the example of Seán's kayaking session (with no journey), that efficiency and control are both evident at a subconscious level.

For example, during activity sessions, control was exerted in a number of ways. Pat asked the group how many of them had surfed before. Though the majority had, he did not use this information to build on the group's surfing ability, or ask them what areas they would like to improve on. Instead, he proceeded to maintain control and deliver a standard surf brief. There is an efficiency to this comprehensive group briefing in that all students have been told all of the relevant information in terms of safety and instruction. However, if we compare this behaviour to the generally accepted tenets underpinning outdoor education, of being, for example, student-centred (Beames, Higgins, and Nicol, 2012) and building relationships with and between people and the environment (Priest and Gass, 2018), there is little in this briefing that can be said to be in line with such principles. Students are, irrationally, static and expected to listen and watch a didactic lecture addressing the key points that the practitioner believes they need to know. The answer to his question of who has surfed before is all but ignored: how is this involving the group? The practitioner is fully in control and always has a clear picture of what outcome is being worked

towards. There is a limited amount of active learning, with student agency in this surf session non-existent.

Sarah exercised a similar level of control over her group during the climbing session as she saw success as reaching the top of the climb. This is of note, as she did not focus on, for example, the climbing session being a medium for personal or interpersonal development, curricular learning, or environmental awareness. As a result, "students were allowed to take very little responsibility for their own learning" (Beames, Higgins, and Nicol, 2012:58).

Whereas some practitioners did wield control with ease, others appeared to feel controlled more than in control. An example being Seán's frustration at not going on a kayak journey, again. This is noteworthy, as Seán was leading that session and there was no reason for a journey to not be feasible. For some reason he did not feel like he had enough control or support from colleagues to undertake his much-anticipated trip. This resonates with what van Steden and de Waard (2013) found in the global security sector with security guards controlling visitors to shopping centres or airports also being subject to "control and discipline mechanisms" (p. 299).

Overall, there is a mixed sense of control in this story. Jason, the senior instructor, largely has control over programmes and practitioners. While he does exert this control, he also seems happy to relinquish control in certain circumstances. Practitioners use control to their advantage on numerous occasions. Programmes are changed and teachers are willing to relay these changes to the students. Students are controlled as they experience various adventure sports, and there is some evidence of practitioners feeling controlled at times as well. The only group who does not seem to have any control at all is the students.

3 Chapter Summary

The findings stories in chapter 5, based on the data generated and analysed as part of this research inquiry, highlight evidence of the principles of McDonaldization,

namely calculability, predictability, efficiency, and control, while also presenting elements of the irrationality of rationality that occur in the story as a result of this McDonaldization. Calculability revolved around the quantifying of quality through association with external bodies, the length of time the centre has been open, and the qualification levels of staff. Predictability arose at many points in the story, in the prescribed and scripted delivery of experiences to students. The skilled incompetence of management and practitioners, in carefully avoiding conflict and open questioning of practice is another key rationalisation allowing calculated and predictable programmes to become established.

Instances of control and efficiency were also outlined in this chapter, pointing to the interconnected nature of the principles of McDonaldization (Ritzer, 2019). Varying levels of control and efficiency were presented, between management and practitioners, as well as between the practitioners and students. The scripting of briefings and sessions is a prime example of efficient control through McDonaldization. Students were informed of what the day entails but such scripts can lack flexibility or allow the space for questions to be asked by students or staff. This lack of autonomy or choice highlights a controlled approach to the delivery of public outdoor education. This is of interest as many students may not have experienced the activities before, and may well have questions they would like to ask.

The stories indicate that practice has become more efficient and controlled through the use of repeatable programme content and delivery. Through managers and practitioners controlling what should happen, and why, the needs of the students are side-lined. This allows for the programme to be delivered in the efficient ways decided by practitioners and management, without needing to consult the students. Management, for the most part, control the programming, and practitioners deliver these programmes, though there seems to be very little change to programme delivery from group to group. This makes for an efficient delivery model from the perspective of the practitioners and management. Such self-

interest could stem from institutionalisation and apathy from, potentially subconsciously bored, practitioners.

A plethora of evidence can be drawn from the stories showing the depths of irrationality within the McDonaldized practice of public outdoor education in Ireland. This evidence ranges from dehumanising experiences, such as the egg game, to claims of public outdoor education's essential role in mainstream education, and the disenchantment of practitioners and students through predictable, repeated activity sessions. The dehumanising and disenchanting nature of the irrationality of rationality of McDonaldized practice was demonstrated in the lack of magic, or excitement, in practitioners and their attitude to helping groups learn and develop. Further examples of predictability and calculability in the story, include a pre-arranged programme being consulted in a "what have they not done yet" style. Delayed starts, dehumanising programming, practitioners being unsure of their role in programmes beyond technical sports instruction, and a lack of student-focused practice, are the hallmarks of the irrationality of rationality in this story. It appears that the more efficient and controlled outdoor education practice becomes, the more didactic and practitioner (or task) focused practice becomes.

Overall, section one highlighted the overly uniform and prescriptive nature of Irish public outdoor education as a result of the calculated structures underpinning practice. There is a placeless, one size fits all, sense to programmes, with a distinct lack of student autonomy and creativity. This stems from the deskilling, or rusting out, of practitioners through the disenchanted scripting of activity sessions. This is possible as a result of the convergence of values over time towards more homogenised programmes.

Section two further confirmed the homogenisation of practice through the examples of efficient, standardised, repeatable programmes. This has a major impact on the levels of learning achieved through programmes, as students do not always have the opportunity to engage with practitioners long enough to develop a strong learning relationship that will allow a deeper level of learning to occur. Some

of the signs taken as learning are more likely to be adaptations to a new environment as the short-term nature of public outdoor education experiences is not conducive to developing changes in personal characteristics and behaviours. These signs of adapting to life in an outdoor centre can sometimes be mistaken for signs of learning, furthering the false belief, in practitioners, of the educational value of practice. As a result, practitioners continue to overly control the learning experiences, with student learning at a minimum due to the decreased agency and responsibility given to them. The McDonaldized structure of Irish public outdoor education may, in actuality, be delivering some potentially negative, mis-educative learning experiences.

As a result of utilising the theory of McDonaldization in analysing and interpreting the data, this analysis shows clear evidence that public outdoor education in Ireland has been McDonaldized. This is one of the key findings of this research inquiry. The next chapter details the three other key findings stemming from this analysis.

Chapter 7: Theory, Logistics, and Ideology

The previous chapter presented evidence, from the stories in Chapter 5, of the principles of McDonaldization, highlighting the key finding that Irish public outdoor education practice has been McDonaldized. As discussed in the *Data Analysis* part of the *Methods* section (Chapter 3, section 3), there are four key findings stemming from this research inquiry, the first of which being the McDonaldization of Irish public outdoor education. As the evidence of the principles of McDonaldization, from an *etic* (or theory driven) perspective, became more ordered within the data. As the theory brought order to the data, three, more *emic* (data driven) key findings became more and more obvious. In this chapter, I turn to highlighting signs of the three emerging key finding stemming from this research inquiry, namely *A lack of Engagement with Theory*, *Programming by Logistics*, and *Ideological Dissonance*. In doing so, a picture of what public outdoor education is, and how practice has been influenced by social and historical factors, begins to develop.

As in the previous chapter, the findings stories are cited in italics to differentiate them from citations from the body of literature. It is also worth reminding the reader of the representative sample size of four Outdoor Education and Training Centres (OETCs) that were used to generate data for this research inquiry. See the Methods section on page 64 for more details.

The first section describes the key finding of *A Lack of Engagement with Theory* in public outdoor educational practices. The basic premise here being that Irish public outdoor education is not underpinned, or informed, by any critical engagement with theory. There is a gap between theory and practice that is not aided by the limited research body specific to Ireland. As a result, there is no rationale for Irish public outdoor education practice available that can be justified in line with the educational and sociological theory that has been developed by the sector globally. Examples of this lack of engagement, or the consequences of this lack of engagement, with relevant theory are presented. Following this comes a section detailing the evidence base uncovering programming by logistics from the dataset.

Somewhat interlinked with the finding of a lack of engagement with theory, the second section, focused on *Programming by Logistics* refers to the allocation of students and practitioners alike to activity sessions based more on what is usually available, rather than as a consequence of the desired aims that this particular group has. *Ideological Dissonance*, or the lack of congruence between the claims of what practice achieves and actual practice, is considered next. In this third section a claimed ideology for practice is outlined, before examples from the stories demonstrate how well matched, or not, the principles of the claimed ideology are to actual practice. To finish this chapter, a concluding section summarises all four key findings.

1 A Lack of Engagement with Theory

This section describes the key finding of a lack of engagement with theory. Evidence will be presented from the findings stories to show how this lack of engagement relates to the literature. Examples will be drawn from the stories, in terms of specific practices observed, as well as aspects of public outdoor education practice that are missing or omitted are discussed. This key finding supports the argument by Beames, Higgins, and Nicol (2012) that traditional outdoor education "provision has developed in the absence of a substantial and convincing body of evidence to support it" (p. 3). It is my contention here that Irish public outdoor education has developed ignoring the existing, and growing, global body of knowledge available to inform practice.

One major example of this lack of engagement with theory can be seen in the placelessness of Irish public outdoor education. Place-based education has become an integral aspect of outdoor education theory (Beames, Higgins, and Nicol, 2012; O'Malley, 2014; Beames and Brown, 2016, Waite and Pratt, 2017; Hannon, 2018). It has been shown, for example, that local school and community projects can "link with most curriculum areas" (Rickinson, et al., 2004:6), thus allowing for cross-curricular learning combined with learning more about local places. Very little of

such place-based learning was evident in Irish public outdoor education in the findings stories, which corroborates Hannon's (2018) earlier study.

Hannon (2018), after interviewing a number of key protagonists in the development of Irish outdoor education, found a distinct lack of a focus on place or the environment in the protagonist's descriptions of practice. The findings of this study also show little evidence of a place-based approach to Irish public outdoor education. There was no indication of any pre-course work beyond developing a basic activity programme, or of programmes being run on school grounds or of local community-based programmes. All programmes happen in locations familiar to the centre staff, with little focus on learning about the place. Technical adventure sports, such as a journey in kayaks or getting to the top of a climb, for example, were the main purpose when groups were in outdoor places (*pp. 126-127*). One way in which this blanket focus on adventure sports experiences manifested itself was in the ease with which I could combine aspects of observations from all four centres into one cogent story. Some of the occurrences in the stories, the activities, characters, and behaviours, are an amalgam of practice from three or four of the centres. Indeed, in some cases it was possible to describe one such activity or behaviour, for example, in full from one of the centres and still accurately represent the very similar actions of the other centres. If each centre had a distinct place-based approach, the fictionalising of the data into a seamless storyline, may have been much more difficult.

Another example of a lack of theoretical underpinning in practice is not only the egg task, but how some practitioners tried to challenge this game, and yet the lead practitioner of this game defends it (*p. 123*). Neither side of this discussion articulated any cogent points either for or against the game. It seems reasonable to accept that if these practitioners had engaged in any critical way with contemporary outdoor education research, that this game would never have been used in a programme at the centre. It could be challenging to justify how such a task benefits the curricular, environmental, personal, or social development of the students.

Practice appears very dogmatic in the sense that once a game, task, or activity is part of a session, it may be difficult to remove it.

The 'next try wins' rule in the extended rugby match, though one team was clearly winning by 6 points to 2 (*p. 123*), further builds the case as to the lack of knowledge and application of theory in practice. This move resulted in fracturing, at best, the team spirit that had been building all morning throughout the games and tasks, with the group finishing the morning less of a team than when they started. Karl's excitement, having learned so much while "assisting" (*p. 121*) with the externally staffed school biology fieldtrip (*p. 123*) shows a practitioner who is willing and interested in learning, though potentially not knowledgeable enough to be an independent practitioner during this curricular focused programme. Engaging with the knowledge and information associated with the biology curriculum seemed to be an experience outside of the routine where Karl was as much a student as a practitioner.

The thoughts of practitioners, over lunch, as to what they think students get from public outdoor education experiences are revealing. For the most part, their thoughts revolved around the somewhat basic outcomes of putting on a wetsuit, being away from home, being outside exercising, achieving something like jumping into the water or being on time, or a short-term boost in confidence. These are worthy focuses in a sense, though there was little mention of the theorised outcomes of outdoor education such as developing traits like resilience, or building student capacities to develop a deeper connection with the landscape (O'Malley, 2004). Without a firm grounding in the theoretical aspects of outdoor education, or guidance and direction from management, the respective ETB, or the Department of Education and Skills, perhaps simply engaging, or busying, people in the outdoors is all that can be expected.

There is little evidence of a strategic approach to the development of public outdoor education in Ireland, or of any such strategy being underpinned or informed by relevant theory. The outdoor education project, run by the City of

Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETB) and the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) in the 1970s and 1980s, set out clear aims and objectives, as well as publishing evaluation reports (O'Flaherty, 1976; 1983). The Rice report (1997), an analysis of the operation of the OETCs, offered 37 recommendations across 10 areas which were deemed of strategic importance by the working group. Outdoor Education Ireland (OEI), the association of the OETC managers at the time, published a five-year strategic plan in 2005, which included 76 aims and objectives over five strategic areas, namely programmes, resources, awareness, safety, and organisational structures. Whilst a number of these recommendations, aims, and objectives may have been met, no evaluation reports or other relevant information have been made public to assess their progress in achieving these numerous goals.

Even with the availability of these aims and objectives, most of the OETCs have developed independent of each other and in line with the values of those involved in each individual centre. Also, while the OETCs are owned and operated by their respective ETBs, and thus are linked to the education system, the ETB, or for that matter the Department of Education and Skills, have not published any guidance materials, for either teachers or practitioners, as to how the OETCs may be integrated into the education of Irish students. This is a key point, which, when combined with the other examples of a lack of engagement with theory evident from the findings stories, makes the reasons for the focus on adventure sports in practice become clearer. Practitioners and management have mainly been trained as adventure sports instructors. With little or no knowledge of the ever-increasing tome of outdoor education specific research globally, and no guidance or direction from the education system, it seems reasonable that practice should be focused on areas in which the practitioners are comfortable and knowledgeable, notably adventure sports training.

There are a number of reasons evident for adventure sports experiences to be the focus of Irish public outdoor education practice. First, the vast majority of practitioners are trained as adventure sports instructors (see section 3 of chapter 5 for more detail), and have had little opportunity to engage with the theoretical or

practical concepts underpinning outdoor, or place-based, education. There is also a level of what I call *eco-unfamiliarity* amongst practitioners, in that they may not be very familiar with the places that they work in, beyond the level of technical access, for example, knowing how to utilise the places for adventure sports as sites for learning particular motor skills, and how to manage student safety. This eco-unfamiliarity has effected how Irish people, in general, interact with the environment and engage with places[21]. This issue stems from much larger societal issues dating back beyond the founding of the state.

As a newly independent state, in 1922, the Irish government made changes to the education curriculum in its schools in an effort to establish itself as a sovereign nation, distinct from the rest of the UK. As the Protestant Ascendency had recreated in the Irish countryside, enjoying hunting and fishing, engaging with the landscape was side-lined with other aspects of Irish culture, such as the Irish language, Gaelic games, and Irish music and dancing coming to the fore (Hannon, 2018). Environmental education, or other forms of learning outside the classroom, were notable in their absence from the school curriculum, which magnified the growing disconnect in the relationship the Irish people had with the landscape. The Irish student received no formal education regarding place or the environment for generations after independence, resulting in future teachers having less of a *grá* (the Irish for love or passion) for the landscape. There is a knock-on effect here of less and less knowledge of, and appreciation for, place and environment in Irish society as a result of students, and by extension the nation's future teachers, having a poor relationship with Irish places. Whilst these changes in the curriculum are understandable, the ignoring of landscape, an integral aspect of cultural heritage (Aalen, Whelan, and Stout, 2011), may have inadvertently led to the Irish people, as a society, becoming less familiar with their heritage.

With all of this in mind, it is reasonable to expect little in terms of connection to or relationship with place in Irish public outdoor education. This is not to say that

[21] See Chapter 2, section 1 for more detail.

individual practitioners have not forged a personal relationship with some places. Indeed, this is most likely, as Hannon's (2018) study did show evidence of a connection with place from a practitioner's personal point of view, though this did not seem to cross over into their practice. The evidence from this research inquiry shows a superficial relationship with the landscape, with practitioners mainly using different locations for a variety of adventure sports experiences. One clear example of this is reflected in the Day 1 story, where Karl is excited about his learning as he was assisting on the biology school fieldtrip (*p. 123*). He appears to have been an engaged student, more so than a useful assistant in terms of the educational focus of the experience. One conclusion I can draw from this instance is that practitioners have an interest in learning more about the environment and the places in which they work and that a more place-based approach may be possible in the future.

This superficial relationship with place has not been helped by the commodification of the Irish landscape. Such "selling of Ireland's culture as a commodity" (Markwick, 2001:37) has manifested itself by ignoring unpleasant aspects of Irish history, like the potato famine, and the resulting mass emigration, to sell holiday makers tickets to tourist attractions. The famine is a good example, as the ensuing emigration left the land open to the romantic leanings of the British colonisers of the time, contributing to the subsequent lack of identity of the Irish people with the landscape. The consequences of the lack of connection to the land, combined with the rationalisation processes stemming from the commodification of the cultural landscape of Ireland created a homogenised, one size fits all, marketable Ireland.

This absence of nuance in the portrayal of this marketable Ireland through the media adds to the confused and complex relationship of the Irish with their island. Coming back to Irish public outdoor education, the reasons for a lack of place-based education in practice becomes more obvious when an understanding of these historical and societal influences are brought to the fore. Practitioners are trained as adventure sports instructors first and foremost. Management gives little to no attention to training practitioners in understanding and applying any education principles beyond the basic instruction needed for sessions to run. In such a

situation, a lack of engagement with theory is inevitable as, with practice firmly focused on adventure sports training, practitioners may not see a need for an engagement with educational theory. Student groups can then become receptacles for developing basic skills in the adventure sport in question, with no links back to their learning or lives in general.

There were also a number of examples in the stories of a questionable understanding of how teachers can use outdoor education as part of their student's learning. First, the teacher's satisfaction with simply doing the same thing the centre did last year (*p. 120*) indicates that, beyond whatever benefit may arise from being outside taking part in physical activity, they do not see the worth, or possibility, of integrating this experience into the broader education of their students (Higgins, 2020). This is further confirmed by the teacher's confusion at lunchtime, in the Day 1 story, of not understanding how anyone could work in outdoor education (*p. 123*). Part of this may be a result of a lack of engagement with the theory or application of outdoor education to curricular learning in the teacher education programmes in Ireland, with no module focused on outdoor learning in any of the five recognised primary teacher education programmes in Ireland (Marino Institute of Education, 2016; Hibernia College, 2020; Mary Immaculate College, n.d.; Maynooth University, n.d.; Dublin City University, n.d.). It appears that teachers do not receive any substantial training to be in a position to use outdoor education as part of their teaching, beyond personal belief or desire to do so.

Management, having tried to convince teachers to develop a bespoke programme for their students for a while, "are now resigned to delivering what they delivered to each group the year before as it seems to be what satisfies the teacher" (*p. 120*). This could be as a result of management and teachers not being up to date with current academic thinking in outdoor education, and, hence, not being in a position to use this theory as an underpinning principle of practice in the centre's programmes. Evidence of this can be seen by the way that Katie, the manager,

moves away from the conversation with Pat who tried to talk about how he could not see a point to the night-line experience for that group (*p. 120*).

Staying with the teachers, the idea of a "teacher's revenge" (*pp. 120-121*), where the teachers hid along the night-line route to throw water at students, before forcing them to play football and basketball until 2am on their first night at the centre, demonstrates no grasp of the ethos and philosophy behind contemporary, student-focused outdoor education. The same can be said of the reaction from staff upon hearing of this teacher's revenge. Some were fine with this idea, and others seemed a little unsure, though no opinion was voiced about it. There is a hint here that some practitioners are not fully happy with this sort of behaviour, though no one is sure enough to voice an opinion. Perhaps a greater understanding of the ethos and principles of outdoor education, as detailed in the multiple books and academic papers available, would allow for a critical conversation about such activities and their place in contemporary outdoor education in Ireland.

There is an acceptance of outdoor education being useful, without any critical, or otherwise, justification for what is happening and how it is of benefit to student learning. Substantial evidence exists showing that "regular compulsory school- and curriculum-based OEPs [outdoor education programmes] can promote students in respect of social, academic, physical and psychological dimensions" (Becker, et al., 2017:1; see also Barrett and Greenaway, 1995; Rickinson, et al., 2004; Fiennes, et al., 2015). Dismore and Bailey's (2005) paper also shows the positive benefits accrued in terms of students' academic success through outdoor and adventurous activities. Engagement with the body of relevant theory could enhance public outdoor education programmes, beyond a basic acceptance that they are worthwhile, for some unspecified reason, and lead to outdoor education experiences that are "carefully structured, well-thought-out, with a sound educational rationale" (Beames and Brown, 2016:34).

There was also a number of examples of evidence of a lack of grounding in the theory of outdoor education in the practice of staff. The primary school briefing (*pp.*

121-122) seemed to have echoes of a Full Value Contract[22], though the positive focus, student interaction, and honesty vital to a successful agreement being made were absent. Such a deficit could be attributed to a technical "methodising" (Mahon and Smith, 2019:2) of theory. Here, Mahon and Smith (2019) are referring to the formulaic application of theory, mostly due to a lack of understanding of the theory and its relationship to practice, and/or a perceived irrelevance of the theory to teaching. Evidence supporting the methodising of practice can be seen in the primary school briefing, when Carol simply lists the rules on the flipchart page, and moves on to include a few more that are stated one after the other with no interaction from the student group (*pp. 121-122*).

The idea that games were the focus, and that completing them a specific way, or in a certain time limit, rather than being focused on the development of an aspect of the group, for example communication or decision-making, leads to a very task orientated, methodising (Mahon and Smith, 2019) approach to practice. This approach can be essential at times, especially if there is a safety issue. However, this does not fully adhere to a student-centred, task-based approach where success is measured by student learning, not games played. Such an instrumental view of theory application (formulaic reusable programmes) can be seen as a result of the training, as opposed to an educational[23], approach to the training of outdoor education practitioners (Deng, 2004).

Education can be "best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes" (Kolb, 2015:37). There was a distinct lack of such a process focus in the nature of practice at the centre, with Seán being surprised at students trying something different (*p. 122*), and Pat insisting on showing his group *the way* of completing the game, as they had completed it in a different way to how it is normally completed at the centre (*p. 122*). By not allowing for a process of learning, and instead seeking

[22] A means of forming an agreement, in conjunction with principles such as challenge by choice, on ground rules and operating principles for an adventure or education experience. For more information see Priest and Gass, 2018:244-246.

[23] For more on the distinction between education and training, see the *What's in a Name?* section of chapter 2, section 2.

symmetry across sessions, Seán and Pat show a lack of understanding of the application of such education principles in their outdoor education sessions.

Some aspects of practice are notable due to their absence from these stories. Reflective practice, both in terms of reflective practitioners (Schon, 1991) and allotting time for students to process and reflect on their experiences (Luckner and Nadler, 1992; Kolb, 2015), is missing from the stories. Povilaitis, et al. (2019), in their recent systematic review, found that reflection was a key programme trait that practitioners can used to positively impact the outcomes of outdoor education experiences for their students. Such reflection time embraces the notion that "all learning is relearning" (Kolb, 2015:39), as it allows important time to integrate new, or refined, ideas into our value system. Such reflection time can "result in many benefits, whereas leaving potentially significant experiences alone can be wasteful and insensitive" (Greenaway and Knapp, 2016:262). There were no structured or coherent processes in place at the centres, for in-depth reflection on experiences to take place.

Another issue is the lack of consultation with students and teachers over the content of public outdoor education programmes and experiences. The stories show students and teachers being told what is going to happen and when it will start (*see pp. 125-127 for an example*). Outdoor experiences also appear disconnected from students' day-to-day schooling, with no explicit connections being made to curricular content. There was no mention of pre-course visits to schools, or follow-up work once back in the classroom. Student autonomy is integral to increased learning in outdoor education (Beames and Brown, 2016) and such a didactic approach, as evidenced by the stories, may not be conducive to supporting the emergence of agency and responsibility in student cohorts. From the teacher's perspective, it has been shown that engagement with outdoor education programmes is beneficial to the development of teachers in training (Harun and Salamuddin, 2013; Sutherland and Legge, 2016), and that outdoor education practitioners can have a surprising skillset in comparison to mainstream teachers (Blenkinsop, Telford, and Morse, 2016). Well-run continual professional

development (CPD) is useful in "igniting changes within their [teachers] knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Braga, et al., 2017:294) leading to teacher empowerment. No evidence of practitioner, or teacher, CPD appeared in the data.

The finding of a lack of engagement with theory, from teachers, management, and practitioners, was presented in this section. The behaviour and approach to public outdoor education in the story reflects an educational process void of theoretical justification. Teachers suit themselves, management avoid debate, and practitioners repeat tried and tested sessions that focus on getting the task done, all with little, if any, consideration of student learning. Also, the limited amount of place-based education in Irish public outdoor education, as evidenced by the similar programmes across the research sites, has been greatly impacted by societal factors, such as Irish society's conflicted relationship with the landscape. There are also a number of significant and impactful practices missing from the student experience, such as dedicated time for reflection. The focus now turns to a related finding, that of programming by logistics.

2 Programming by Logistics

Programming by logistics refers to the prevalence of logistical issues, such as the activities available, weather conditions, and the skills of practitioners working that day, in replacing the specific aims and objectives of a given group as predominant programme drivers. In essence, factors other than the goals of a particular student group take precedence in terms of what the students actually experience. Evidence supporting this finding from the two stories in chapter 5 is presented here and will be discussed in detail subsequently.

Significant evidence of programming by logistics can be seen in the morning briefing on Day 2 when Jason, the senior instructor, is assigning staff to the two groups and the associated sessions (*pp. 124-125*). Both groups have been at the centre for a few days now, and there is no talk of how the student groups are getting on in terms of meeting their learning objectives. Instead, Jason consults the list of activities to see "what have they not done yet?" (*p. 125*). One group has not done

the beach/surf day, and the other group (no actual group names are used throughout) are to complete the final session on the table of activities set for them (*p. 125*). In this instance, the activities available dictate what is going to happen, with no real cognisance taken for the desired needs, or objectives, of the student groups (Estes, 2004).

Similarly, when Pat and Laura proposed changing the beach day, Jason was fine with the idea as long as the teachers signed off on it (*p. 125*). With no need to consult the students, or teachers, Pat simply told the teachers that this was what was going to happen. They then went off to get the students ready. More evidence of this disconnect can be seen in that, although the day out has a relevance to the student's background, and has been situated in the local place, students are no more or less engaged during the day out than they were during archery or canoeing the previous day; both days had been designed for the students, not with them. To the students, the arguably more focused and bespoke day was just another experience, the same as the previous few days, as they had no agency for their own learning. Programming by logistics can lead to experiences lacking in a structure and/or justification (Beames and Brown, 2016). The examples cited here show some thought has gone into the programmes, though the last-minute changes do not imply careful structure, and any educational rationale appears to be replaced with adventure sports experiences.

Equally, Laura's reaction to what she was to be doing at the beach, as she was not a surfer, and hence uncertain what she was teaching, adds more credence to the logistical control over programming (*p. 126*). This is in line with Sarah's concept of success on the climbing session (*p. 127*) mentioned over dinner that night. In both examples, completing the activity is the main purpose of the session. If the main driver in programmes is the activity, then doing well at these activities must be the main reason to do them, as opposed to the potentially more complex objectives possible by moving beyond an activity, or practitioner, focus.

The extra pressure felt by Jason, the senior instructor, as a result of the teacher opting to go on activities with the group (*p. 121*), also points to programming by logistics. Jason asks the practitioners to extend the session somewhat, and reminds them that everyone should be included as well as given the option to be involved as much as they felt they wanted to. There is an inference here that points to outdoor experiences being shorter than they possibly could be, as well as to questions about why the senior instructor felt it necessary, as the teacher was joining the group, to remind his staff to include everyone and, at the same time, not push them too hard to take part.

This links back to the theme of a lack of engagement with theory, where teachers are normally far removed from the practical sessions on a public outdoor education trip, and how unusual it is for a teacher to have a genuine interest to take part. Without the teacher's input, in terms of goals and objectives, and in guiding the learning to be as useful as possible for the student cohort, practitioners have free reign to focus more on what they know best, how to deliver adventure sports experiences. Such a logistics-based approach, during a one-off visit to an OETC, holds minimal learning opportunities for students, as outdoor education is "most successful when it [is] an integral element of long-term curriculum planning and closely linked to classroom activities" (Ofsted, 2008:5). Indeed, Beames, Higgins, and Nicol (2012), writing for teachers about Learning Outside the Classroom (LOTC), note the "rarely progressive" (p. 4) nature of such logistics based, and adventure sports focused, experiences.

Further evidence of this can be seen in Pat's comment that the centre has a "standard way of doing things" (*p. 127*) that makes things "comfortable and easy" (*p. 127*) for practitioners. If programmes for individual groups were focused on their specific aims or objectives, they would not be as repetitive or routine, even if the same activities were being utilised. From the group or individual's point of view, such standardised experiences have a "defective and wrong character" (Quay and Seaman, 2016:48) in terms of seeing the usefulness of this learning to their future development. This disconnection of the public outdoor education experience from

the broader learning of student groups creates an educational confusion of intangible and irrelevant goals (ibid). This confusion is further reinforced in how staff unload their dirty dishes on the student group washing their own dishes (*p. 127*). Though not seen as an activity per se, this highlights a lack of engagement with the group outside of the programmed sessions. The activity focus, through the prioritising of the logistics of practice over the educational goals of groups, reinforces this disconnection.

This section highlighted an approach to practice I have labelled as programming by logistics. A number of examples have been put forward from the findings stories that show students experiencing sessions focused on delivering set activities, with little regard for any specific learning aims and objectives the students may have. Alterations to programmes happen with respect to the weather, or the availability of practitioners and their qualifications, and not particular group needs. In closing, without a robust and informed application of theory in practice, to guide practitioners in an agreed ethos of delivery, and management in designing programmes, the underpinning tenets of practice can move away from a didactic, technical, activity-focused approach (Mahon and Smith, 2019).

3 Ideological Dissonance

The final finding of this research inquiry is that of ideological dissonance. Ideological dissonance, in the sense it is being used here, refers to the divide, or contradiction, between symbolic principles and operational principles of practice (Jost, et al., 2003; Dusso, 2017). It is the inconsistency between your beliefs and your actions or practices. Such ideological dissonance can also occur if a person, or group, are obliged "to hold two conflicting cognitions or to do what is against their beliefs" (Zhou, 2000:604). Using evidence from the findings stories, as well as drawing from the relevant literature, this section will first detail a symbolic, or claimed, ideology, before moving on to display the divide, or contradiction, between this and the observed operational practice of Irish public outdoor education.

The OETCs are portrayed, in the findings stories, as having a strong educational remit, being "approved by the (Irish) Department of Education and Skills, as well as the relevant National Governing Bodies for adventure sports" (*p. 120*). The outdoor practitioners are represented as professional, highly qualified, experts (*p. 120*). At one point the manager, Katie, in the story makes the claim that "outdoor education is essential to the mainstream education system and curriculum" (*p. 124*). Combining this information with the definitions available of Irish outdoor education (see Appendix 1) gives an apt overview of the value claims made by the outdoor education sector in Ireland. From this it can be said that outdoor education, in Ireland, claims to focus on the use of adventure activities, in natural environments, to promote curricular learning, environmental awareness, and personal and social development (Chief Executive Officers Association, 1990; Rice, 1997; Outdoor Education Ireland, 2005, Education and Training Boards Ireland, 2015b; City of Dublin Education and Training Board, 2015).

At the end of Day 1 in the story, the outdoor practitioners at the lunch table give their thoughts on what students get from outdoor education experiences at this centre (*pp. 123-124*). A number of outcomes are mentioned, ranging from fun, happiness, teamwork and exercise, to being able to open up and communicate more effectively. Mini accomplishments, such as completing a jump into the water, being on time, overcoming fears, and managing anxiety were also mentioned. The idea of students remembering their outdoor education experiences with you in the decades to come was one point that the whole group agreed on. There is a clear sense of wanting to assist students in their learning demonstrated in these answers.

This (*pp. 123-124*) tells us that the public outdoor education practitioners depict themselves as facilitating the personal, social, curricular, and environmental education of students, through adventure sports-based programmes. Also, these outdoor educational experiences are not only approved by the Department of Education and Skills, as well as adventure sport's National Governing Bodies, they are also seen as an essential aspect of mainstream schooling. It appears that practitioners see a diverse range of outcomes stemming from public outdoor

education experiences, from simply being ready on time and taking part, to dealing with issues such as phobias and anxiety. One point of note here is that the practitioners appear to have a different viewpoint concerning outcomes and purpose to the one painted by management and the available documentation. Practitioner thoughts centred on personal development, with a hint of social development, whilst, in contrast to the claims of management, curricular and environmental aims are absent. This highlights an inconsistency between the claimed ideology of the centre management and the practitioners working on the centre's programmes.

The actual practice at the centre shows a different perspective again. First, there is no explicit reference to any broader educational goal, beyond the technical skills required to partake in the various activity sessions, curricular or otherwise. Staff meetings did not address educational goals (*pp. 120-121; 124-125*), nor did practitioners mention any such type of outcomes to students. The experience that had some potential links to the student cohort's learning beyond the outdoor day, that of the day out learning about the local saint and going surfing (*p. 126*), was considered cheating by practitioners. Such place and group responsive practice is notable by its absence in the "discussions of outdoor education in Ireland" (Hannon, 2018:203).

Environmental education, or awareness, is mentioned in the rhetoric of the sector, though similarly missing, like place based and curricular learning, in practice. This is in line with the comments by practitioners, in that they do not mention environmental awareness or appreciation as outcomes for students. However, seven of the 10 definitions of Irish outdoor education mention environmental awareness, or simply time in nature (O'Flaherty, 1983; Trant, 1984; OEAI, 1989; CEOA, 1990; Rice, 1997; OEI, 2005, ETBI, 2015b). This indicates differing levels of ideological dissonance between management and practitioners.

There are links here, in explaining this dissonance, to the lack of engagement with theory already discussed in this chapter. There is little evidence of a critical

engagement with the espoused ideology of outdoor education by practitioners. Such criticality is preludial to the development of a coherent ideology of practice for Irish public outdoor education. For example, Wattchow and Brown (2011) wondered how much the "romanticism, transcendentalism and wilderness ideology of the nature writing" (p. 11) he (Wattchow) had studied was influential in how he was teaching and interpreting the landscape. Conversely, the lack of theoretical understanding from practitioners may have led to an absence of wonder regarding the processes in which they are engaged. "Pedagogically, the kind of attention that we cultivate has significant consequences" (Gruenewald, 2003:645), and the lack of attention being paid to the claims of practice and how well they cohere with the actual outcomes of public outdoor education in Ireland is no different.

Brookes (2003a/b) argues that this lack of critical exploration of practice by management and practitioners can be associated with a "fundamental attribution error" (ibid, 2003b:119). Any claims made of practice, in Irish public provision outdoor education, are unsupported by research and are just that: claims. As I demonstrated previously (see p. 139), biased perceptions allow such unsubstantiated claims to be accepted by the larger outdoor education sector, and society in general, without evidence, thus legitimising the activity-focused practice of the sector. Brookes (2002; 2003a/b), and others (Baker, 2005; Mikaels, 2018) see a solution in a more place-based practice that provides a more authentic, contextualised learning experience.

While student enjoyment was obvious during the sessions, there are numerous examples of occasions when practice may have conflicted with goals such as enjoyment. The primary school briefing (*pp. 121-122*) was limited in its interactions between staff and students and reflected more of a standard didactic teaching method, similar to those used in mainstream schooling, rather than the embodied learning claimed of outdoor education (Hovenlynck, 2001; Wattchow and Brown, 2011). Other examples here include the surf session briefing where Pat asked the student group their experience level, and then ignored this information by delivering the same tried and tested briefing (*p. 126*), and the rugby game where

the team that were winning 6-2 lost in the 'next goal wins' finish (*p. 123*). Practitioners and management alike did not seem too upset at the "teacher's revenge" (*pp. 120-121*) activities - which were presumably not fun for the students - of throwing water on students and keeping them up half the night.

Aside from the "teacher's revenge" (*pp. 120-121*), there are other indications of an amount of ideological dissonance from the point of view of the teacher. Over lunch, on Day 1, the teacher, who brings his students to experience an outdoor education residential every year, seems confused about why someone would work as an outdoor education practitioner (*p. 123*). Similar to Higgins' (2020) observation, there was "no shared understanding between funder, provider, and the participant/'client' [in this case the teacher] of what outcomes are intended" (p. 331).

Evidence of student-focused methods are also lacking in practice, with tight control being shown at times such as the primary school briefing where students were simply told the rules, to Pat showing the group that came up with their own way to complete a task *the way* to do it properly, according to the centre. It appears that fun and enjoyment, whilst important in the claims of the practitioners, is not always experienced by students. Pat's idea to dress up as the saint, whom the student group had been learning about in the morning, did add a more interactive component to that part of the day, and this did seem unplanned and creative.

The student-centred approach extolled in the espoused goals and outcomes of public outdoor education in Ireland, is similarly limited in practice. Practitioners alter programmes to suit themselves, in not having to be at the beach for a full rainy day (*pp. 125-126*), or taking personal offence ("feck her!" *p. 122*) to student behaviours. The chat between practitioners over dinner, at the end of Day 2, also shows examples of personal and sport focused approaches, rather than student-centred practices (*p. 126*). Seán had wanted to bring a group on a trip to practise his own skills, Sarah's climbers were successful as they all completed the climbs, and Pat's questioning of the success of his day seemed more to do with being

uncomfortable with not doing what he always does, as opposed to evaluating his students' learning.

Such didactic teaching methods, with a distinct instructor focus (Hovenlynck, 2001; Wattchow and Brown, 2011), are signs of the sector accepting the "Western educational tradition" (Estes, 2004:143) that values the authority of the teacher. Estes (2004) argues that such a position is in conflict with the espoused values of student-centred educational activities. Add to this the customary use of adventure activities as an integral part of practice in the OETCs, and the practitioner-centred nature of practice is even more distinct. The instructor needs to be in control to teach the basic skills of the sport or activity in question. Such an assumption of power over student learning is generally unintentional, and critical reflection is needed to develop an awareness of this form of practice to "empower students to take control of their own learning" (Estes, 2004:143).

Argyris and Schon's (1992) work has been used in research into the gap between espoused values and theory in action in many areas of education. Jones (2009) found that the generic attributes, "such as critical thinking, problem solving and communication" (p. 175) assumed in higher education teaching practice were not always enacted, or obviously present, in practice. This challenged the widely held belief that such attributes were universally taught across disciplines in colleges and universities. Such incongruities were also found in an earlier study of career guidance counsellors (O'Hare, 1987), where it was found that "what decision makers espouse and what they actually do is often incongruent" (p. 303). Raffan (1986) showed how "cross purposes could exist in outdoor teaching" (p. 7), thus pointing "to an underlying dilemma at the heart of Outdoor Education" (ibid, p. 10).

Raffan's (1986) dilemma revolves around the conflicting views of how to justify the inclusion of outdoor education in mainstream education. One position is that outdoor education should justify itself in terms of the content focused methods and strategies commensurate with an "indoor view" (Raffan, 1986:11) of education, where "affective, emotional and social outcomes of learning [can] not be the main

goals" (ibid, p. 11). The opposing view sees outdoor education as an integral part of schooling, though, as it offers experiences appreciatively different from classroom teaching, it should not have to be limited by teaching and learning structures designed for other aspects of education. Breaking free of this traditional epistemology of education would provide an opportunity for the public outdoor education sector to focus more on student-centred programmes that contribute in a meaningful way to student learning.

In essence, without an awareness of theories in use, and having these closely linked to our espoused theories of action, it is difficult to justify educational practices (Argyris and Schon, 1992). I have noticed a number of such inconsistencies in practice over the course of my career; these include contradictions such as practitioners espousing to be *real* educators, while at the same time being isolated from educational theory, sometimes to the point of indifference.

Lastly, in the two examples of questioning practice in the story (Pat deeming the night-line "pointless" (*p. 120*), and Carol and Pat not sure of the purpose of the egg game (*p. 123*)), the response from Katie, the manager, and Seán the instructor, were quite similar. Katie's response was that the night-line being pointless "is probably the best reason for them to do it" (*p. 120*), with Seán's retort about the challenge to his egg game being "that was the whole point!" (*p. 123*). Whilst this does not prove an ideological dissonance is present, the lack of a capacity to articulate a concrete rationale for including the activity suggests that little consideration has been given to how closely matched the espoused claims and actual outcomes are in practice.

This section outlined the ideological dissonance in Irish public outdoor education practice. Espoused values of practice clash with the evidence as seen in practice. The symbolic principles of practice, stemming from the findings stories of this thesis and the local definitions of Irish outdoor education, point to a student-centred practice that is focused on personal and social development, curricular learning, and environmental awareness. There is also some evidence that differing levels of

ideological dissonance are present across the operational practice of management, practitioners, and teachers in how they described the benefits and outcomes of practice compared with observed actions. Practitioner's symbolic principles clash with their operational principles to a lesser extent than those of the teachers and managers do, yet all exhibit beliefs, and practices, which are dissonant.

Such practices are embedded in a traditional view of education in which the teacher is seen as an authority figure, somewhat akin to the outdoor practitioner in terms of teaching adventure sports. "Awareness is a first step towards meaningful change" (Estes, 2004:143), and a critical questioning of practice is required to become more aware of this approach to practice, before delivery can be changed to address this ideological dissonance.

4 Chapter Summary

This chapter described the second, third, and fourth key findings of this research inquiry. The first key finding, the McDonaldization of practice, stemmed from the interpretation of the creative non-fiction stories through the theoretical lens of McDonaldization (Ritzer, 2019). The three key findings detailed in this chapter evolved in a more emic manner, from the data themselves. As the analysis and interpretation developed, these three key findings emerged. These findings are that there has been a lack of engagement with theory in Irish public outdoor education, and that as a result of this lack of theoretical underpinning, programming by logistics and an ideological dissonance have grown and become part of standard practice.

A number of examples of a lack of engagement with theory were highlighted from the findings stories. Practice did not have a place-based focus and was standardised and repetitive in nature. Local areas were used to host activity sessions, though there was no explicit use of place beyond this hosting. The social and historical context of Ireland, and society's poor relationship with the landscape has a major bearing here. Specific instances of practice in the OETCs also demonstrate the lack of application of a contemporary approach to outdoor education. Throwing eggs at

students as a team building task, filling time with a game of rugby which ends up fracturing any team spirit that has arisen from the previous session, and the lack of environmental knowledge to aid in the delivery of the school-based biology programme, all speak to a lack of engagement with theory. Key aspects of practice, such as reflection time, detailed feedback or debriefing were notable in their absence from practice. Students were not allowed much, if any, freedom to be creative and hold some agency over their learning, and were shepherded through adventure sports session after adventure sport session.

On a broader scale, the teacher training colleges across Ireland do not train the country's teachers in how to utilise the outdoors, either local or far flung, as part of the education of the students in their care. There is also no local or national strategic approach, from the ETBs or the Department of Education and Skills, in how best to integrate the experiences available at the OETCs into the education of Ireland's student body. The result of this is teachers who have limited knowledge of what educational potential public outdoor education has to offer them, and they are swayed into adventure sports experiences by management and practitioners predominantly trained in same.

The most influential factors effecting programmes were logistical in nature. Weather, group numbers, and practitioner qualifications, for example, determined what would happen on any given day more so than teacher or student aims and objectives for the visit. Teachers going out on activity sessions disrupted practice, with staff being told to lengthen sessions and to include everyone. Practitioners changed programmes to suit themselves and/or the weather, and teachers were simply told of these changes, before having to go and tell their students of the changes. As public outdoor education experiences are not closely linked to the longer-term schooling of students, this logistics based, and adventure sports focused approach to practice goes unquestioned.

The espoused values of Irish public outdoor education are at odds with the actual practices observed. Claims of the essential nature of outdoor education to the

education system and curriculum were made, yet most students do not experience any outdoor education for most of their 14 years of schooling across primary and secondary levels. Practitioners have a much less problematical take on what outcomes students achieve during public outdoor education experiences, though these are still not aligned with the available Irish definitions. Add to this the lack of understanding from teachers as to the usefulness of outdoor education, and a representation of the dissonance between claims and practice become clearer.

Another strong belief in Irish public outdoor education is that practice is student-centred. Very few instances in the finding stories depict experiences where students have any agency over decisions or allowance for creativity. Most examples are ones where practitioners or teachers suit themselves, rather than taking a student-centred approach. Critical engagement with relevant theory and reflection on practice could develop an awareness of such conflicts and allow for positive change over time.

Now that the findings of this research inquiry have been detailed and discussed, I turn to the conclusions and implications of these findings in the final chapter.

Chapter 8: Conclusions and Implications

This chapter draws all of the previous chapters together in consolidating what has been learned, as well as discussing how this knowledge may be applied in both Irish and global outdoor education practice and research. First, I revisit the two research aims, outlined in chapter one, to show how they have been met. Second, I provide a summary of the four key, interconnected, findings of this research inquiry. Third, the contributions to knowledge stemming from this research inquiry are detailed, before the implications of this research are addressed, both in terms of future practice and research in outdoor education. This final chapter is then closed with some concluding comments.

1 Revisiting the Research Aims

This research inquiry stemmed from an interest in understanding the practice of Irish outdoor education in more depth. To this end, I formulated two research aims to focus on. The first aim was to critically examine the practice of public outdoor education in Ireland, with the second aim locating this examination within the context of the influence of contemporary Irish society. This section addresses how these two research aims have been met and discusses the four key findings in relation to the research aims.

Public Outdoor Education in Ireland

This is the first time Irish public outdoor education has been subjected to such a rigorous research study. Being a member of the outdoor education community in Ireland, I had some idea of what practice resembled in the OETCs. This study, however, developed a much deeper understanding of practice than could be gained from working in the sector alone. In this section I will detail how this research inquiry has met its first aim, to critically examine the practice of public outdoor education in Ireland.

As Brookes (2016) notes, “the purpose of critique is to improve the field, even if it means reconsidering cherished narratives” (p. 17). This point resonates with me in relation to this research, as my overriding goal was to complete this research in the hope of improving the field of Irish public outdoor education. I am also conscious, as Brookes (2016) points out, of not making too much of generalised narratives of practice, or, at the same time, of critiques. My point here is that, as Irish outdoor education is a newcomer to the research table, it is best for the sector to be open to inquiry from all points of view, as opposed to closing off lines of discussion without adequate debate. Challenges to cherished narratives within the sector can lead to improvements that can move Irish public outdoor education more in line with its claims, or indeed, align claims more precisely with practice.

This research inquiry shows that Irish public outdoor education is, at best, fragmented and aimless in terms of purpose, policy, research, and practice. Whilst outdoor education has been associated with students and their learning in Ireland for a number of decades, there is little evidence to show that it works, or how it works. Herein lies the issue. Rather than being misunderstood, it seems that public outdoor education, as a pedagogical endeavour, is simply not understood. By this I mean that the lack of theoretical underpinning, or philosophical debate, about how and why practice is the way it is in public outdoor education in Ireland results in a sector eminently susceptible to providing what each individual practitioner or centre *feels* is what should be provided. Developing a coherent approach based on the best available evidence of practice globally, as well as aligning public outdoor education in Ireland with the educational objectives contained in Irish education policies, mixed with an amount of practitioner instinct and spontaneity, might begin to redress the ideological dissonance apparent in practice.

Notably, practice is very similar across the sector, with individual style or flair secondary. Such uniformity across the sector is not a result of purposeful planning and development in line with current best practice, but rather a reflection of the training of practitioners. Almost everyone has been, or is being, trained as an adventure sports instructor. This standardised training is reflected in practice, in

that all sessions aim to provide an adventure sports experience as the main focus and follow a regimented approach of telling and showing students what they need to do, before allowing them to do anything. This makes sense if the goal is education for leisure – to paddle a kayak in a (somewhat) straight line, or not get (too) lost in the woods looking for orienteering controls – though the sector sees itself as essential to mainstream curricular learning (see the Day 1 findings story, *p. 120)*. This may not, however, be the best method of engaging students in deliberate learning experiences that link directly to their curricular, environmental, personal, or social learning. This is not to say that adventure experiences cannot be useful. For example, Dismore and Bailey (2005) highlight the benefits to academic development associated with outdoor adventure activities. This project differed remarkably to the practices observed in Irish OETCs, as it involved a deliberate programme, designed in conjunction with schools, that included post-project follow-up visits to schools.

This reliance on standardised practices opens the door to the McDonaldization of practice, as practitioners "tend to rely on previously discovered and institutionalised means" (Ritzer, 2019:57) to direct their systems of practice. Relying on pre-existing processes to inform practice is almost the definition of a lack of engagement with theory. If the sector already has decided that the current delivery methodology is efficient, and no one is challenging or debating this, then there is no reason to engage with the body of knowledge beyond snippets that reinforce or reiterate the status quo. In such a system, progress and development can quite easily focus on improving practice for the practitioner, by making things more efficient, calculable, predictable, and controlled.

Public outdoor education practice in Ireland has gone unchecked for decades. It has been noted that the "fundamentally important distinction between these OECs and the other Outdoor Pursuits Centres is that the programmes, courses and methodology of the OECs are structured and delivered from a predominantly educational perspective, rather than as a leisure or recreational experience" (Rice, 1997:16). This does not appear to be the case. No critical engagement with relevant

theory, to inform practice, has allowed rationalisation to expand, in favour of easing the role of the practitioner. This lack of theoretical underpinning may also explain why the espoused values of the sector are at odds with those observed in practice, as critical reflection can be hard to develop in a vacuum of false confirmation. At OETCs, students receive a standardised session focused on adventure sports two or three times per day, with little evidence of agency or authenticity. Changes are made to sessions for logistical reasons, rather than educational ones. The evidence suggests that Irish public outdoor education practice, as it is set up presently, is in need of major revisions to practice to align with contemporary (outdoor) educational theory. The reasons for the state of Irish public outdoor education are outlined in the following section.

Contemporary Society and the Practice of Outdoor Education in Ireland

The second aim of this research inquiry, focused on the influence of contemporary society on Irish public outdoor education, developed through an awareness of the inextricable links between outdoor education, adventure, sports, and social issues (Humberstone, 2016; Beames, Mackie, and Atencio, 2019). This section details the major social factors impacting practice in the Irish public outdoor education sector. These include political, historical, and conceptual influences. The previous section, of this chapter, provides a critical examination of the field of public outdoor education in Ireland, as the first aim of this initial investigation into the sector. To me, focusing on the connections and contradictions of practice as seen through societal impacts was so clearly associated with the first aim that it would be impossible to address one without the other.

Public outdoor education in Ireland can be described as politically *ad hoc*. There has been no strategic planning at a national level, and political will for development is firmly in the hands of individuals who believe in the potential of the sector and, hopefully, remain interested in supporting it. The outdoor education project of the 1970s and 1980s, with its roots in the comprehensive education initiative of the then City of Dublin VEC (CDVEC, now CDETB) in the 1960s, is a good example of how

the vision of outdoor education for Irish society has been shaped by a dedicated few. Trant (2007) highlights many examples of his passion for such educational initiatives, and how his political savviness developed over the course of his career. Funds were acquired, and VEC CEOs and Department of Education officials were convinced to allow the experiment to take place and develop. The Department of Education "chose to ignore the very existence of the experiment" (Trant, 2007:43) as the CDVEC moved it forward.

Whilst the OETCs do receive an annual grant from the Department of Education and Skills now, little else has changed in the intervening decades since the inception of public outdoor education in Ireland. OETCs are administered by their respective ETBs, and the Department of Education and Skills is no more involved in public outdoor education delivery or structure than it was in the 1960s. If public outdoor education in Ireland is to evolve beyond its current form of practice, into a more integral aspect of the education system, a greater national political will would be a necessity.

This marginalisation of public outdoor education can also be seen in other ways. In 1967, free secondary education was being enacted nationally (Coolahan, 1981). This was the same time that the outdoor education experiment was being undertaken by Trant and the CDVEC (started in 1966). This experiment served two of the more disadvantaged areas of Dublin (Crumlin and Ballyfermot[24]). This created an optic of outdoor education only being available for, or useful to, the poorest students/ schools in society.

Later, the OETCs were established under the auspices of their respective VECs. Whilst the VECs, now ETBs, are an essential part of the education system in Ireland, their establishment under the Vocational Educational Act 1930 created a "binary education system at second level [secondary]" (Clarke, 2016:299). This binary system had traditional academic secondary education on one side, and the more

[24] Both places are still disadvantaged today, with areas of both regions of the city ranging from marginally to very disadvantaged. See Appendix 9 for more.

vocational technical training for work in trades, manufacturing, and industry on the other. The latter was "under valued [sic]" (ibid:297), both educationally and economically. A further layer of marginalisation was added when P.E. teachers were appointed to manage the newly established OETCs in the 1980s. This was a rational move, as most had completed the Diploma in Outdoor Education (Trant, 2007) and were deemed suitable candidates. However, P.E. was a marginalised subject within the mainstream curriculum[25] and Mikaels (2018) has shown that P.E. teachers (in Sweden) see friluftsliv, or outdoor education, as leisure and recreation more so than education. Under such social conditions - a uninterested Department of Education, being seen as only for socially disadvantaged groups, as well as being under the aegis of the ETB and being managed by P.E. teachers with an activity-focused pedagogy (Coulter, 2012) - public outdoor education would struggle for recognition and acceptance as a viable mainstream pedagogical approach.

One of the aims of the early outdoor education project, was to "provide an introduction into the cultural heritage" (Trant, 2007:44) of previous generations. This cultural heritage would become a major historical burden on the development of public outdoor education in Ireland. Through colonisation and famine, Irish society has become placeless; our relationship with the landscape has deteriorated over a number of generations (Hannon, 2018). This is not to say that practitioners do not have an affinity with the environment, or cannot be knowledgeable about the environments in which they work, but practice as a whole does not seem to take into account this lack of a place-based or environmental aspect in society, and focuses on the technical skills of the adventure sport in question instead. I can only attribute this to the poor relationship society has developed with the landscape over the past 175 years. Our connection to the environment has changed over the generations (O'Malley, 2014) and, similar to the issues addressed in the previous

[25] *Physical Training* was an optional subject from 1926-1971, when it became a compulsory primary school subject, though this was not delivered upon until the 1999 redraft of the curriculum. For more, see Walsh, T. (2016). P.E. is an examination subject in secondary school senior cycle from 2020 (curriculumonline.ie, n.d.).

section, if we want to evolve the sector to include more environmental awareness, some "cherished narratives" (Brookes, 2016:17) may need to be reconsidered.

Hannon (2018) found that "[d]iscussions of 'place' or making outdoor education responsive to the sociocultural context in which it is located didn't feature strongly" (p. 203) in the minds of the pioneers of Irish outdoor education. These pioneers had an adventure sports background, both in terms of their own personal adventure, and their professional training (ibid) and this may have been a major influence on the focus of their outdoor education practice. Over time, outdoor education came to mean adventure sports. I feel that this is reflective of the attitude of the majority of Irish society today. The term *outdoor education* conjures up images of kayaking, sailing and rock climbing, and Irish people would be confused by the idea of bringing it into mainstream education, or as a means of developing a greater awareness of, or appreciation for, the environment. Such an attitude is the culmination of both the marginalisation of the sector educationally, and the focus of practitioners on adventure sports.

In this section, I have shown how this research inquiry addressed the research aims set out in the first chapter. A clear description of the McDonaldized nature of public outdoor education practice was presented, along with an overview of the marginalisation of the sector and how this field of practice has been influenced over time by larger societal factors. Next, I provide an overall summary of the four key findings of this research inquiry.

2 Overall Summary of Key Findings

The preceding three chapters detailed the findings of this research inquiry. These findings were presented as creative non-fiction stories and information on the qualifications and experience of practitioners in chapter five, and interpreted using the principles of Ritzer's (2019) McDonaldization theory in chapter six. The content of the stories was categorised under the four principles of efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control. On top of this, evidence of the irrationality of rationality, as a result of McDonaldization, was presented. Through this interpretation, the

further three key findings of A Lack of Engagement with Theory, Programming by Logistics, and Ideological Dissonance emerged (see table 4, below, for a brief summary of the key findings). The evidence for these three key findings was presented and discussed in chapter seven. This section offers an overall summary of the findings from both chapters six and seven, as a precursor to the discussion of the implications of these findings for Irish public outdoor education. Initially, the principles of McDonaldization will be summarised, before addressing the other three findings in order.

The calculability, or quantification, of practice was highlighted by the structured, repeatable programming seen in the findings stories, as well as through the implied quantification of quality through association with external organisations and the inflated levels of experience of practitioners. The organisations, mainly National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of adventure sports, that the centre aligned with, with the exception of the Department of Education and Skills, do not have a holistic educational remit, and are generally focused on the training of technical skills in their sporting discipline. The claims as to the calculated level of qualification and experience of staff were also explored, and elements of irrationality were found here, with only a small minority (<8%) of practitioners holding relevant academic awards, with even less holding high level technical sports coaching awards. This challenges the claims made as to the high levels of qualification of staff. Activity sessions were quantified, with set structures and timings observed throughout. Such a calculated approach to practice seems reasonable, though can lead to the focus shifting to ensuring that all activities are completed in the fixed time allotted, rather than being focused on student learning.

Predictability was most obvious in the scripted nature of interactions and the prescribed processes during sessions. Set briefings that have lost any magic or excitement for the student, such as standing watching another basic introductory brief when you have taken part in this activity numerous times before, can lead to repetition and dullness from practitioners, and apathy from students. As with calculability, moves to increase predictability, can be seen as positive developments

at first, though can evolve, if unchecked, into inefficient practices. The insistence on waiting the four minutes to start the staff meeting, or the altering of programmes to suit staff and the weather, are prime examples.

Table 4: Summary of Key Findings

Summary of Key Findings

McDonaldization of Practice

Public outdoor education practice has been rationalised to be more efficient, predictable, calculable, and controlled. This leads to the irrationality of rationality.

A Lack of Engagement with Theory

Very little evidence of theory being applied in practice, both in terms of developing an underpinning philosophy of practice, and with respect to the teaching and learning during public outdoor education programmes.

Programming by Logistics

The prevalence of, for example, logistical issues, activities available, weather conditions, and the skills of practitioners working that day, in replacing the specific aims and objectives of a given group as dominant programme drivers.

Ideological Dissonance

There are contradictions and inconsistencies between symbolic principles and operational principles of practice. The outcomes that the sector claims to achieve are not the same as what is actually achieved.

Being able to control what is going on, in terms of both programmes and practitioners, is essential to the efficient running of the centre. Allowing this control to go too far, however, can lead to struggles for control, and, somewhat irrationally, to experiences that do not allow for independent thinking or creativity in students.

The stories portrayed examples of the senior instructor, instructors, and teachers being in control, and times when students got to control, or even have a say in proceedings, were rare.

The efficient nature of practice was visible in the simplified, process-based, nature of activity sessions. All sessions, for all types of groups, were either a morning, an afternoon, or an evening, with no obvious connections between sessions. The focus was put on the learning of adventure sports skills, and this efficient system grew out of the rationalisation of practice to become as efficient as possible. This efficiency process led to practice becoming so efficient that it, somewhat irrationally, now does not take into account the students' aims, or the place in which it is located (weather conditions excepted).

In short, controlled starts, dehumanising programming, practitioners being unclear as to their role beyond technical sports instruction, and a lack of student-focused teaching, are hallmarks of the irrationality of rationality seen in the findings stories. The more efficient and controlled public outdoor education practice becomes, the more didactic and practitioner, or task, orientated practice has become.

All of this evidence of McDonaldization within public outdoor education practice led to the emergence of the three further key findings, namely a lack of engagement with theory, programming by logistics, and ideological dissonance. In terms of a lack of engagement with theory, very little evidence was unearthed of practice being underpinned or informed by educational, or other relevant, theory. The teachers seemed more than satisfied with a programme that was essentially a repeat of the previous year, with no adjustment for the different group this year. Add to this the elements that the teachers termed "teacher's revenge", where they hid and threw water at their students during evening activities, and forced the students to stay up until 2am playing football and basketball, and there is a strong sense of the theoretical aspects of outdoor education being side-lined. From the practitioner's point of view, the didactic nature of practice, of always being in control and allowing very little student autonomy, as seen in the primary school briefing in story

1 (*pp. 121-122*), for example, shows a lack of application, if not understanding, of principles such as developing authentic learning experiences that foster student agency, and utilising the uncertainty inherent in well considered, purposeful outdoor education programmes (Beames and Brown, 2016). Further evidence of the key finding of a lack of engagement with theory can be seen in the moments where staff attempted to question practices, though could not articulate their problem or issue, and those being questioned had little to add in support of what was happening (*pp. 120 and 123*).

Programming by logistics refers to the prevalence of, for example, logistical issues, activities available, weather conditions, and practitioners working that day, in replacing the specific aims and objectives of a given group as predominant programme drivers. The greatest evidence for this finding came from the morning briefings in the stories (*pp. 121-122; 124-126*). The closest that either briefing came to including an aim relevant to the students - as in, not to do with logistics, staffing, or weather - was in story 1, when the senior instructor mentioned that the theme for The Glen primary school was "friendship" (*p. 121*). This was not articulated further, or evaluated in any way. Briefings seemed more concerned with assigning the right number of students to staff and having the equipment available, as well as choosing appropriate locations for the prevailing weather conditions. These concerns are necessary, though they appear to have taken precedence over what the learning focus of the programme is or should be. The irrationalities apparent in public outdoor education practice, stemming from the McDonaldization of practice, display a strong leaning towards programming by logistics. Sessions and programmes could not be based on logistics, unless management and practitioners had exerted control over practice and created an efficient and predictable system in which to operate.

Ideological dissonance refers to the divide, or contradiction, between symbolic principles and operational principles of practice (Jost, et al., 2003; Dusso, 2017). Management, practitioners, and teachers all believe, to some degree, that public outdoor educational experiences are worthwhile for the learning and development

of students. The evidence in the stories shows, however, that there is a dissonance, or gap, between the belief that such experiences are beneficial, and how management, practitioners, and teachers create learning and development in the outdoors. The findings stories do not show much evidence of practice being student-centred, and combined with the "teacher's revenge" (*pp. 120-121*), the dissonance is obvious between the espoused values of practice, and what happens in actual practice.

In summary, four key findings stem from this research inquiry. The practice of public outdoor education in Ireland has been McDonaldized. There is a lack of engagement with theory, both in terms of developing an underpinning philosophy of practice, and also with respect to the teaching and learning during public outdoor education programmes. Programming by logistics is clear, with any hoped for aims and/or objectives, from the teacher and students' point of view, being side-lined by issues around the weather, or the amount of equipment available, or number of staff, for example. There is also evidence of an ideological dissonance between the symbolic principles and beliefs of teachers, management, and practitioners and the operational actions during programme delivery.

Whilst these findings have been presented as distinct and separate from each other, they are best seen as interconnected. If any one of the findings is addressed, the other ones are also affected. For example, if the sector had had more of an engagement with theory, it is likely that programming would not be as logistics focused, as practitioners may have developed a focus beyond technical adventure sports training. A more in-depth understanding of the philosophical underpinnings of outdoor education may have also led to a more critical stance being taken on what was happening in public practice and how this was useful and important in terms of the values of the staff and students involved. Practice may still have shown elements of McDonaldization, though they would arguably have been reduced and not as impactful as a direct result of the more focused, theory-led nature of outdoor education programming.

This section provided a summary of the four interconnected key findings of this research inquiry. The next section draws conclusions from these findings in relation to the research aims.

3 Contributions to Knowledge

This section highlights the contributions to knowledge made by this research inquiry. This contribution is split into two areas, namely the contribution stemming from the findings, and that stemming from the methodological approach taken in this research inquiry.

Novel Findings

Very little was known about the practice of public outdoor education in Ireland prior to this research inquiry. Apart from the studies undertaken by Hannon (2000; 2015) and Carroll (2017), any claims made concerning the practices inherent in public outdoor education, or the outcomes achieved, are largely unreliable due to the anecdotal source of the claims. This research clearly addresses a gap in knowledge in terms of what public outdoor education is and does in Ireland.

The four key findings establish the conditions in which the field of public outdoor education in Ireland is practicing at present. Public outdoor education in Ireland has been McDonaldized. With no clear purpose, the principles of McDonaldization have infiltrated public outdoor education in Ireland to squeeze out most of the engaging nature of what it can be educationally, leaving in its wake a standardised, efficient, and predictable form of outdoor education that is somewhat unrecognisable compared to the original focus of the Irish outdoor education project in the 1960s.

There is a clear focus on adventure sports in public outdoor education in Ireland, with an extremely limited ability to articulate a rationale for such a focus in relation to relevant pedagogical theory. Adventure sports are so dominant in practice that they appear to have become the *raison d'etre* of practice and are not seen as one tool that is useful sometimes, but not always, in public outdoor education programmes. This lack of engagement with theory can be seen in the logistical focus

of programming. Educational, or developmental, aims and objectives are secondary to the activities that can be provided in the current weather conditions, and by the practitioners available. The lack of interest or direction from the mainstream education sector has allowed the public outdoor education field to develop in this ad hoc manner, where they have designed an operational model that places them as the experts in control, fuelling the ideological dissonance of the sector. There is a belief held by practitioners and management that their daily practice is of educational benefit to the students in their care. The findings of this research inquiry do not concur with such a stance.

The findings of this thesis form an important contribution to what we know about Irish public outdoor education. As an initial exploration of the sector, the knowledge gained here provides a foundation from which to further refine our understanding of practice in public outdoor education in Ireland. Hannon's (2015; 2018) earlier finding, of the disconnected relationship with the landscape of both outdoor practitioners, and Irish society more generally, is further confirmed by these findings. This is another important piece of knowledge that can help to understand current public outdoor education practice in Ireland, as well as for the future development of Irish public outdoor education.

The knowledge gained through this research inquiry challenges the accepted beliefs and values of what Irish public outdoor education presently achieves. I have established a base of empirical research that was not available prior to this thesis, and which explains the practices of public outdoor education in Ireland, using valid and trustworthy methods. Having described this contribution, I now turn to the methodological contributions stemming from this thesis.

Novel Methods

The second contribution to knowledge concerns methodological approaches to research. Here, I developed a highly appropriate and innovative methodology to address my research aims. The use of an ethno-case study (Parker-Jenkins, 2018) allowed for a case study methodology that embraced ethnographic methods. This

decision meant that I could gather data over a relatively short period of time, using methods that traditionally are applied to much longer studies. Turning the analysed and interpreted data into creative non-fiction vignettes addressed the critical ethical issue of keeping the identities of the research sample, both individuals and the centres that participated, anonymous. After extensive reading and searching, I could find no other means by which to keep the small and close-knit community of public outdoor education practitioners from knowing who did what and where it happened.

A third contribution methodologically, is the way in which I applied Ritzer's (2019) theory of the McDonaldization of society in an outdoor education context. McDonaldization has been a useful tool in outdoor education research (Loynes, 1998; Beames and Brown, 2014), yet, to the best of my knowledge, this theory has not been applied to interpreting empirical data in the outdoor education field to this depth previous to this research inquiry. This seemingly simple, yet inherently complex, theoretical lens has proven to be an extremely worthy one with which to deepen our understanding of outdoor education practices.

The overall contribution to knowledge, methodologically, includes the development of a bespoke process to collect and analyse the data in the most meaningful way. This turned out to include combining an ethno-case study with creative non-fiction vignettes and using McDonaldization theory as the lens of interpretation. This combination of methods shows an amount of originality and innovation in terms of data collection and analysis, as well as in the presentation of findings, for research in outdoor education.

Now that the contributions to knowledge stemming from this thesis have been detailed, I move on to describe the implications of the findings and contributions to future practice and research in outdoor education.

4 Implications for Outdoor Education

Having addressed the research aims and how they have been met, as well as the contribution this thesis has made to knowledge, this section looks to the implications stemming from this thesis and how this may impact on both practice and research in outdoor education. It is important to think critically about what impact research can have and how it may be applied in the future in the hope of being useful.

Implications for Outdoor Education Practice

Public outdoor education in Ireland is at a crossroads. This section will discuss some of the roads it may take in the future. Which road is the most favourable can only be decided later, once the sector agrees on a specific mission and vision for the future. Presently, Irish public outdoor education is very much focused on one-off adventure activity experiences, with minimal links to any deeper learning, such as curricular links, environmental awareness, or personal and social development. It has been shown in this thesis that the espoused Irish definitions of outdoor education do not match well with observed practice. In this sense, educational achievement is quite limited within public outdoor education practices currently. Some students may gain significant knowledge and learning beyond the adventure sport experience in question, though this does not seem to be the focus of programmes. Indeed, for the majority of groups attending the centres, it is not known if they acquire any skills that last beyond their stay at the centre. Some of the centres do run longer-term programmes in adventure sports training, or similar, though it is plausible that the skills acquired in a one-off two-hour session of a given sport or activity, in the general programming within the centres, may not be commensurate with long term skill retention or learning.

If such adventure sports experiences were to remain the focus of practice in the OETCs, it would seem disingenuous to continue to operate under the umbrella term of *Outdoor Education and Training Centres.* One possible solution here would be a

change of name to reflect the actual, as opposed to claimed, practice of the centres. *Outdoor Adventure Training Centres* is one option. Rebranding to this name, or similar, would recognise the skillset of the practitioners and what they do in practice, while also distinguishing between their practice and the educational and developmental potential of more focused outdoor education initiatives, such as Learning Outside the Classroom (LOTC) (Waite, 2017). This would also address the conceptual confusion in Irish society around the difference between adventure sports and outdoor education. *Adventure Education Centres* is another option, though some thought would have to go into defining what is meant by *adventure* and *education* prior to deciding on such a change.

Mikaels' (2018) research on the potential of Swedish P.E. teachers adopting a more place-responsive pedagogy in their teaching can be instructive. He found that this approach led to innovative cross-curricular pedagogical moments. Engaging Irish schoolteachers in a similar project could lead to comparable results and increase the reach and potential of public outdoor education in Ireland as a means for cross-curricular learning. Such mainstream engagement with outdoor education could also temper the claims made of practice by the public outdoor sector and highlight curricular areas where outdoor education is most useful rather than it being a universal panacea.

It may be that Irish public outdoor education, similar to Australian outdoor education, has failed "to comprehend the nature of the curriculum problem" (Brookes, 2004:31) of what to leave out. All learning has an inherent value, the difficult curricular question is what learning has most value for these students in specific social and cultural contexts, and geographic locations. Every subject and activity cannot be included. There is no evidence of educational indispensability within public outdoor education programmes, as the aims and purposes of practice tend to be focused on adventure sports experiences. There is arguably a case here to close the OETCs and start a new public outdoor education initiative with a school-led focus. Becker et al. (2017), in their systematic review of school-based outdoor education programmes (OEPs), found that "regular compulsory school- and

curriculum-based OEPs can promote students in respect of social, academic, physical and psychological dimensions" (p. 1). Outdoor education in the form studied by Becker et al. (2017) may be of more curricular value to students, teachers, and schools than a one-off adventure sports experience.

Simply closing the centres and developing a policy for school based OEPs would not be sufficient, as teachers have little to no training in teaching/learning outdoors[26] (Blenkinsop, Telford, and Morse, 2016). A possible solution could be to redeploy the OETC practitioners to a select number of schools in a trial initiative that positions the existing public outdoor education practitioners as technical assistants to teachers in relation to planning and delivering curriculum-focused outdoor education programmes. The existing technical adventure sports equipment would be available if required, though would need to be seen as tools that may only be useful to reach specific, and not all, educational ends.

Another possibility could be to differentiate between programmes to a greater extent. This would require some critical reflection and engagement with relevant theory to develop criteria for what constitutes an introductory, recreational, or educational experience. This could also be applied to the qualifications and experience of practitioners in terms of specifying the appropriate qualifications or experience for the various types of programming available. Teachers, leaders, and students themselves would then be given a more focused and purposeful choice of programming, with more specific goals. For example, in such a circumstance, an educational programme may be differentiated from an introductory or recreational one by the inclusion of more specific briefing and feedback sessions, relevant to the particular aims of the programme, along with having dedicated reflection time for students to stop and think about the relevance of this learning to them. Pre and post course work back in the classroom would also distinguish such programmes from recreational or introductory ones.

[26] See also the discussion starting on page 176.

One option that could be worth exploring here is a partnership approach, where schools combine their knowledge and resources in a deliberate effort to address "the challenges and themes relevant to their particular context" (Kendall and Roger, 2015:i). Kendall and Roger showed the benefits of a partnership approach to outdoor education in their report evaluating 13 such partnerships between primary, secondary, and special schools in the UK. In this *Learning Away* initiative, these partnerships designed and implemented overnight experiences that were student and teacher-led, and demonstrated increased learning and achievement as well as personal and interpersonal skills development.

Another distinguishing feature between an educationally focused programme and one with only recreational aims, would be that more time would be spent with students actively engaged in curricular learning, with potentially less time involved in adventure sports. A more focused educational remit would also require an overhaul of the philosophy and practice of public outdoor education in Ireland. For example, at present, all sessions include, indeed require, adventure sports. To be more useful to the mainstream education sector, the centres and practitioners would have to begin to see adventure sports as one useful tool that can aid in addressing some educational aims, but not all of them.

At least some, presumably senior, staff would have to develop a deeper understanding of the primary and secondary curriculum so as to be in a position to develop effective programmes to meet the aims of the various subjects for each year group. To achieve this, it may be necessary for management and practitioners to pursue higher levels of academic training in relevant areas to degree stage at a minimum. Such retraining of practitioners could take years before programmes with a more curricular focus could be offered. It is worth noting at this point that any changes to practice within the public OETCs would be dependent on the support of the larger educational sector to appropriately fund any such change(s). Any such increased funding would need to be based on the viability of the changes to practices and the associated curricular benefits.

Alternatively, with the layered marginalisation of the sector in mainstream education in mind, a change in focus from education to something else may be worth considering. Not only is there a clear lack of interest from the Department of Education and Skills to embrace outdoor education, the level of education and training of practitioners is not commensurate with that required in other areas of the education system. The idea of moving away from education may seem like a controversial and counter-intuitive proposal, though, in line with the findings of this thesis, it could suit the skillset of the sector and the needs of society.

Williams' (2017) book extolls the mental and physical benefits of time spent outdoors. She shows the multiple uses of outdoor time in addressing issues such as PTSD and ADHD, as well as how time spent in nature can improve health and cognition, while also enhancing both creativity and mood. This approach to engaging society in going outdoors for health and wellbeing could also develop a deeper connection with their places and landscapes (Gruenewald, 2003; Wattchow and Brown, 2011). This could begin to address the lack of connection with place, or eco-unfamiliarity, inherent in Irish society, and potentially lead to a nation more aware of the fragility of the environment, thus furthering the environmental sustainability goals of contemporary outdoor education (Hill and Brown, 2014).

A key point here is to do with the timeframe for such programming to become a reality. The management and practitioners already have the skillset to bring people safely into the outdoors and it would not be too challenging, nor time consuming, to extend practice to focus on being physically active in natural environments for health and well-being purposes. Achieving full integration into the education system could involve years of retraining for practitioners, as well as lobbying and campaigning for change. Another factor here is that the critical capacity of the sector is inadequate for more than a one-off experience for some school students every year. Even with a successful lobby and a programme of upskilling for all practitioners, the sector would still not have the capability to deliver bespoke, long-term educational experiences to the majority of Irish students every year.

Overall, the findings indicate that the public outdoor education sector in Ireland needs to take on a critically reflective stance with regard to what constitutes current, and future, practice. Reflection on how the available research and theory can support the sector is also required for any form of evolution of the sector to come to fruition. Bearing in mind funding limitations, local partnerships (Kendall and Roger, 2015) may be one avenue worth exploring that could lead to more curricular-focused practices in public outdoor education in Ireland. Teachers, and students, in schools local to the OETCs could engage in developing programmes to complement the existing learning in the schools, that would be contextualised to the social and cultural norms inherent to those places. Remaining the same may result in further marginalisation and even less of an impact on society, as a sector with no rationale or theoretical justification could find it more and more difficult to convince teachers, and society in general, of its usefulness.

Implications for Outdoor Education Research

This research inquiry has brought with it a number of implications for future research in outdoor education. This inquiry was somewhat unique in that it was the first study of Irish public outdoor education at doctorate level. As a result, almost any form of empirical research was going to yield interesting results. While this may seem to reduce the complexity of the thesis, the wide range of potential studies that could be the focus of an initial investigation are distracting at best. To avoid such distractions, I decided early on to focus on the practice of public outdoor education; to look at what happens day to day from the point of view of the practitioners. With no Irish specific research to base any decisions from, I felt that this was a more than appropriate remit, both for me personally, and for an initial study into the sector.

One of the major hurdles in completing this thesis was how to generate a substantial amount of useful data to address the emerging aims of developing a deeper understanding of what happens in the public OETCs in Ireland. To this end I developed, over time, a unique and innovative methodological approach that was

not only capable of generating rich data, but also of maintaining the anonymity of the research participants at the same time. This was of upmost importance as the public outdoor education community in Ireland is small and close-knit, so much so that traditional anonymising techniques would not be overly useful as "anybody who mattered would know" (Malone, 2003:809). The use of creative non-fiction vignettes as a means of presenting the findings from the thematic analysis provided a suitable solution. This has worked well in maintaining the anonymous status of practitioners, with only one of the four participants that member checked the stories identifying themselves to any great extent in the vignettes. If the practitioners that were involved cannot see themselves with ease, then it will be difficult for the rest of the outdoor community to do so.

Another point of note from the methodology is the use of McDonaldization in interpreting the data. Ritzer's (2019) McDonaldization has been a feature of academic writing in outdoor education previously (Loynes, 1998; Roberts, 2005; 2012; Beames and Brown, 2014; 2016), but has not been utilised in interpreting empirical data in this depth before. This methodological approach contributes a useful research process that can be applied in many research situations where anonymity is a major issue, and the broader scope of what happens in practice is being investigated. This focus on practice and practitioners can be very informative with regard to the processes and outcomes of outdoor education programmes. As a specific example, if another study was to be undertaken focusing on the outcomes of programmes in Irish public outdoor education, the knowledge gained from this current study would be extremely useful in understanding how or why such outcomes may or may not be met in practice.

As per the previous example, at the end of the last paragraph, this study provides future research into Irish public outdoor education with a solid foundation from which to develop. There has been some momentum building in Irish outdoor education research in recent years, with some postgraduate research, at masters level (Hannon, 2015; Carroll, 2017), and book chapters (Hannon, 2018). Being such a small community, it may be possible to develop a strategic and co-ordinated

approach to the growing research across the country. This would avoid a fragmented and unconnected pattern of research emerging and allow for a coherent and more applicable body of knowledge to begin to develop.

There are endless possibilities in terms of further research. A similar study across all 13 of the public OETCs would provide even more detailed data on the practices of public outdoor education in Ireland. It would also be beneficial to include some of the private centres as a cross comparison. Another useful area of further study would be to concentrate on the impact of public outdoor education programmes from the students' point of view, ideally over a longer period of time. Teacher's perspectives on the usefulness of outdoor education, and why they do or do not engage their students in this type of learning would also be illuminating.

Finally, the question that needs to be constantly asked is what are we trying to achieve with this research? This thesis makes a substantial contribution to the field of research in Irish public outdoor education, but a lot more research is needed before we can say with any confidence what the benefits of public outdoor education are. As Higgins (2020) says, it is imperative that we support the "development of research-informed policy" (p. 339). Before this happens, a decision must be taken as to who will do this work, as well as on what the focus of any policy would be – sport and recreation, education, place, health and wellbeing, or something else? If education was to be the goal, is a focus on the limited capacity of the existing centres enough, or should a shift occur to support teachers in the schools local to the centres in delivering curricular focused outdoor learning (see Kendall and Roger, 2015)? Such a shift would need to be thought through and include CPD and in-service training for both teachers and outdoor practitioners.

One consideration here may be the professional identity of practitioners in a move towards such partnerships in practice. This move, to an educational support role in mainstream schooling, would take outdoor education from the margins of education in Ireland and propel it into the more established teaching domains. The agency afforded to outdoor education practices on the curricular fringes to control

the teaching style and content may not be maintained as part of this change, leading to a potential struggle for status – new habits and practices may need to be formed (Philpott and Oates, 2017). However, once this initial struggle was complete, it is possible that a stronger sense of professional identity could emerge as a result of the stronger links to the education system. Unlike in the case of librarians, where they found their skillsets being diluted with the increased general workload, in terms of budgeting and other for managerial roles (Wilson and Halpin, 2006), Irish outdoor education practitioners could develop a stronger claim to professional status through the more specific skillset and focus of the new role.

Caution is also required here, as the putting in place of a rigid policy may not be very conducive to centres or teachers helping students learn through the less than conventional pedagogic approach of outdoor education (Higgins, 2020). If research into public outdoor education in Ireland was to grow and show promise as a worthwhile educational opportunity for students, policy could, as Quay and Seaman (2013) have shown, stifle the engaging nature of learning outside as the curriculum becomes the focus of policy, not the student and their learning. This is something that needs further thought and consideration. I wonder how outdoor education, if it really is a "radical alternative to conventional education" (Higgins, 2020:339), can fit in the conventional policy framework of mainstream education. Such a policy, unless carefully thought out and informed by good quality research - both qualitative and quantitative - may squeeze whatever unconventionality that is left in the sector out altogether. In this sense, it would be years, if not decades, before a policy could be drawn up that was informed in such a way.

Summary of the Implications to Outdoor Education Practice and Research

There are many implications and opportunities arising from this thesis. A number of these were presented in this section in relation to the practical application of this new knowledge to everyday learning in outdoor centres and school grounds, as well as to prospective research studies. As a sector, public outdoor education in Ireland has been adrift in Irish education for too long, and it is time to anchor practice to a

coherent and useful tack to show the value inherent in (at the risk of repeating myself) “carefully structured, well-thought-out, [outdoor education] with a sound educational rationale” (Beames and Brown, 2016:34). This re-restructuring cannot be done overnight and will take a concerted effort from a sector united under an agreed mission and vision to realise its potential.

5 Concluding Comments

This thesis began years before the proposal and registration for this study were ever dreamt of. Over the years of working in the outdoors, critical questions popped into my head more and more regarding the mismatch of practice with the theory it was supposed to be implementing. My first memory of this questioning is from a week of teaching sailing at an OETC, where I noticed a glaring similarity across all of the student experiences on the kayaking sessions run alongside my sailing sessions. Getting to the end of this journey has not always been plain sailing, however. Somewhat ironically, this Ph.D. in outdoor education deprived me of time outdoors, and some much-needed vitamin D. Looking back now, the struggles involved have paid dividends in the form of a refined skillset and deep understanding of research processes. Now, having developed both a research competence and a critical understanding of Irish public outdoor education, it feels like the journey is just beginning, both for myself personally, and the field of public outdoor education in Ireland.

Public outdoor education in Ireland has been standardised and lacks in critically reflective practice. This has resulted in a belief structure within the sector that is at odds with the actual outcomes that are achieved. Logistics, while important, need to be balanced against the educational aims individual to each group. Indeed, OETCs need to seek ways of developing an awareness in both students and teachers (as well as society as a whole, in the longer term) of the educational benefit of public outdoor education experiences. Also, these experiences will need to be more than a clichéd character-building exercise. Political, historical, and social factors have had a major impact on Irish public outdoor education. From layers of marginalisation

within the education system, to the landscape being marginalised in practice, to the view of public outdoor education as being no more than taking part in adventure sports, the sector faces a lot of obstacles in aspiring to evolve into a field considered of value to the nation.

Along with the current issues inherent in public outdoor education practice in Ireland, as outlined in this section, there is great potential for the sector to grow and become a valuable asset to society. As with any potential improvement, the first requirement, before any progress can be made, is to admit that there is a problem before "reconsidering cherished narratives" (Brookes, 2016:17). Public outdoor education in Ireland, whilst enjoyable for most students, is aimlessly adrift in terms of definitive purpose or focus. Open and honest debate around where the sector is, and what it is actually achieving, and the directions in which the sector can evolve in the future will be a start in addressing the concerns raised in this thesis. This would bring the sector beyond the current "naïve" (Pike and Beames, 2013:4) focus on activity to consider their potential influence on broader social and educational factors.

My findings show that public outdoor education is not fulfilling its potential in terms of the educational value that it could have for the nation of Ireland. I have high hopes that the sector will embrace this new knowledge and focus on a better and brighter future, where public outdoor education is effective at delivering on its full potential. The simple, short-term, solution is to accept that public outdoor education is not delivering programmes that are of educational value and change the name accordingly. This would work and everyone would be able to keep going as they have been for decades now. However, to really achieve something worthwhile and beneficial will take more than a name change. Real change can be difficult. Change is more likely to be embraced by the sector if they can believe in the potential benefits to student learning that will come with the implementation of change (Chikasa, Ntuli, and Sundarjee, 2014). To paraphrase Plutarch (1927:259), rather than telling the sector what to do, a fire must be lit that spreads the idea of change for the benefit of both the practitioners *and* the students. Here, Plutarch

was advising a young student, Nicander, on how to study and develop to his full potential as he moved on to further studies. I can only hope that this thesis may be the spark that ignites such a flame of change in public outdoor education in Ireland.

Appendix 1: Irish Definitions of Outdoor Education

Table 5: Irish Definitions of Outdoor Education

Year	Definition	Key Aspects
O'Flaherty 1976	As can readily be seen, the last category [behavioural/social] contains the greatest number of items [objectives]. It is important to point this out since a great number of people regard outdoor programmes as being directed primarily towards the development of purely physical skills.	Education vs. training Technical skills focus PSD
O'Flaherty 1983	Outdoor Education aims to: (a) develop in students an active and creative awareness of the amenities of the Irish countryside by initiating and engaging them in various adventure sports; (b) train a sufficient number of teachers as leaders so that schools can develop their own programmes; and (c) develop an outdoor dimension to other areas of the school curriculum by helping schools to plan and carry out structured fieldwork.	Appreciation for nature Teacher led programmes Cross-curricular teaching
Trant 1984	Outdoor Education has been defined as a means of approaching educational objectives through guided, and direct experience (from: NAOE/Hunt, 1989; Parker and Meldrum, 1973:10/26) of the outdoors using as learning material the resources of rural and coastal environments. This is a wide definition and allows for many interpretations. Outdoor Education is not seen as a subject in its own right, nor indeed exclusively identified with any other subject or group of subjects. It is simply a learning climate, a distinctive approach to education. Outdoor Education contains within itself a number of traditions and these can be identified as the naturalist tradition, the adventure tradition and the conservation tradition.	Approach to learning Direct experience outdoors Naturalist Adventure Conservation
OEAI 1989	Outdoor Education can be defined in a broad context as including aspects of adventure sports, ecology and environmental studies with the general aim of contributing to an individual's physical, social and personal	Adventure Ecology Environmental studies Physical

	development while endeavouring to ensure that these individuals become more aware of the environment and the importance of conserving it for future generations.	PSD Environmental awareness and conservation
CEOA 1990	The term Outdoor Education embraces the full spectrum of outdoor sports-related activities together with field studies in a wide range of disciplines. It promotes cross-curriculum development and integration; it helps to break down social barriers and prejudices; it encourages positive personal development and enhances essential life skills such as planning, decision-making and problem-solving.	Sport/activity Field studies Cross curricular PSD Life skills
Conference 1998	After 1987 Tiglin ran its own Adventure Training Certificate for several years. This was very skills orientated.	Education vs. training Technical skills focus
Rice Report 1997 (CEOA?)	The term Outdoor Education embraces the full spectrum of outdoor adventure activities that use the natural/physical environment as their medium together with the use of the outdoors in a wide range of disciplines. Its purpose is to promote cross curriculum development and integration; to help break down social barriers and prejudices; to encourage positive personal development and enhance essential life skills.	Sport/activity Natural environment Cross curricular PSD Life skills
OEI 2005	Outdoor education is the use of adventure activities and the outdoors as a catalyst and medium for learning, personal and interpersonal development and fostering an awareness and respect for the environment.	Adventure Learning PSD Environmental awareness
ETBI 2015	Outdoor Education programmes use adventure sports and the outdoor environment to challenge students to realise their potential, develop new skills and enhance their wellbeing through time in nature.	Adventure Outdoors Challenge Potential Wellbeing In nature
CDETB 2015	Outdoor education is often defined as experiential learning in, for, or about the outdoors. In the CDETB this is delivered through a range of adventurous activities achieved by providing a mixture of day trips, multi day programmes and overnight expeditions.	Experiential In For About Timeframe Adventure

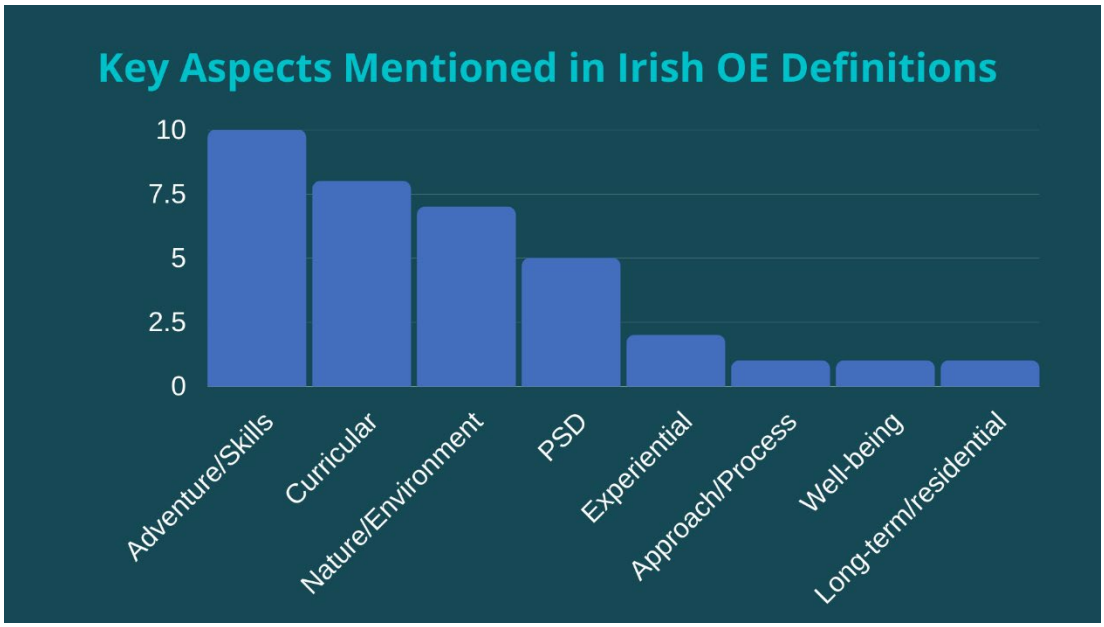


Figure 16: Key Aspects Mentioned in Irish Outdoor Education Definitions

Appendix 2: Supplementary Information about OETCs

Location of Outdoor Education and Training Centres/Services

Figure 17: Location of Outdoor Education and Training Centres/Services in Ireland (ETBI, 2015b)

Table 6: Additional Information on OETCs – Building Type, ETB, and Year Established

Centre Name	**Building Type**	**ETB**	**Year Established**
Achill OETC	Old School Building	Mayo Sligo Leitrim ETB	1971
Baltinglass OETC	Old School Building	Kildare and Wicklow ETB	1994, funded: 2002
Birr OETC	Old School Building	Laois and Offaly ETB	1981
Burren OETC	Purpose-built Centre	Limerick and Clare ETB	1981
Cappanalea OETC	Purpose-built Centre	Kerry ETB	1981
CDETB OE Service	Peripatetic	City of Dublin ETB	1973
Fastnet OETC	On School Grounds	Cork ETB	2006, recognised 2012
Gartan OETC	Landed Estate	Donegal ETB	1988
Kilfinane OETC	Landed Estate	Limerick and Clare ETB	1985
Kinsale OETC	Old School Building	Cork ETB	1981
Petersburg OETC	Landed Estate	Galway and Roscommon ETB	1989
Shielbaggan OETC	Old School Building	Waterford and Wexford ETB	1979
Tanagh OETC	Landed Estate	Cavan and Monaghan ETB	1992, funded: 2002

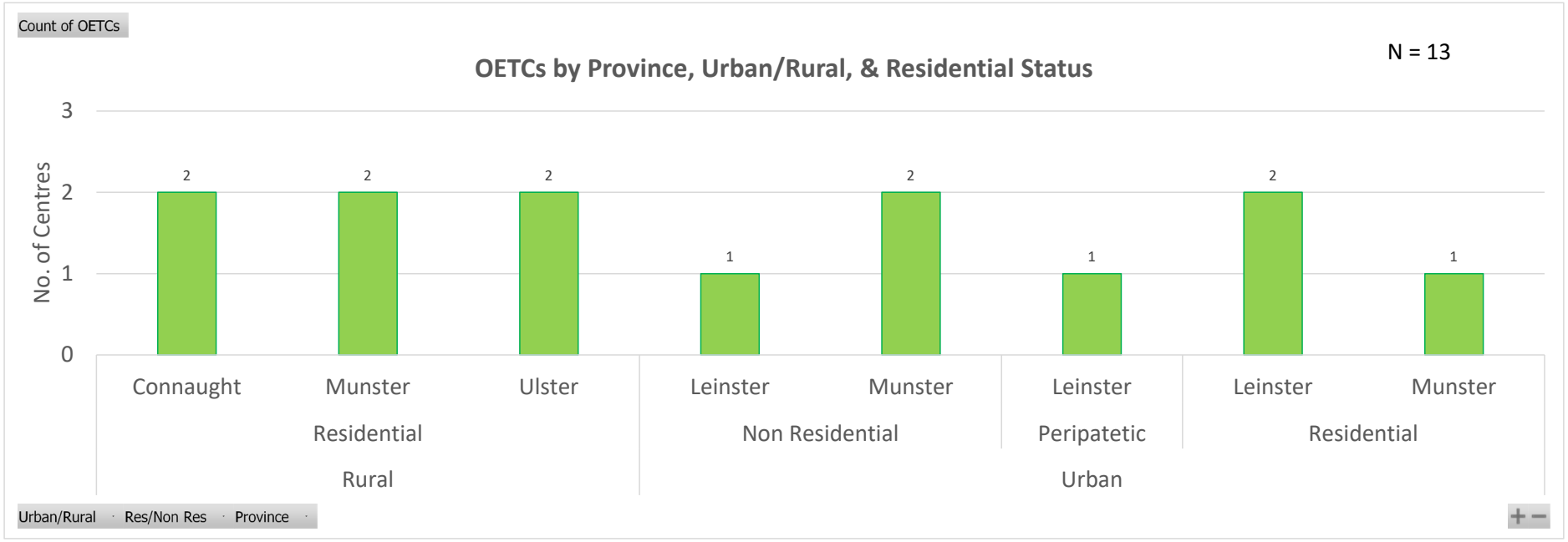


Figure 18: OETCs by Province, Location, and Residential Status

Appendix 3: Documents Distributed to the Centres

Initial Email Correspondence

Dear _____,

I am doing a PhD in outdoor education through the University of Edinburgh entitled: "The Nature of Public Provision Outdoor Education in Ireland". I am hoping to observe practice in a number of different OETCs across the country and would be interested in you and your centre being involved. All 12[27] OETCs will be invited to participate, however, four centres will be chosen initially to achieve a representative sample from across the country of outdoor education practice.

Attached to the email are two documents containing more detailed information regarding this research; the first is an information sheet about the research, while the second is a letter of introduction to the research.

There is a link embedded in the letter for you to confirm, or otherwise, your willingness to participate. Alternatively, you can click here to go directly to the form. It will take thirty seconds to fill in

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like to discuss this study in more detail.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to working with you over the course of this research.

Regards,

John Pierce

[27] As noted in footnote 13 (page 66), the thirteenth OETC, the CDETB Outdoor Education Service was not included in this research as I did not know that it was a recognised centre due to the fact that it was not listed on the official website of Outdoor Education Ireland (OEI), the then official website of the national network of ETB Outdoor Education Centres.

The Nature of Public Provision Outdoor Education in Ireland

Participant Information Sheet

The focus of this study is to examine the aims of Outdoor Education and Training Centres (OETCs) and compare these aims to the daily delivery within the centres. A number of different methods will be used to generate data throughout this research including website and document analysis along with observation of practice.

The centre observations may last for approximately one week per centre visit and would involve the researcher observing and possibly assisting on activity sessions, attending staff meetings and talking to staff about their practice.

This research will create a deeper understanding and awareness of practice within the OETCs and contribute to the future development of outdoor education in Ireland.

If you have any queries or concerns, please get in touch with John Pierce at:

[redacted]

Contact address: John Pierce, Institute of Technology Tralee, Health and Leisure Department, South Campus, Tralee, Co. Kerry.

Letter to OETCs

John Pierce,
Institute of Technology, Tralee,
Health and Leisure Department,
Tralee,
Co. Kerry.

RE: Research in outdoor education in Ireland.

Dear _____,

I hope all is well and busy in _____.

I am undertaking a PhD in Outdoor Education through the University of Edinburgh. The focus of this study is to examine the aims of outdoor education and compare these aims to the daily delivery within the Outdoor Education and Training Centres (OETCs).

The research questions[28] are: 1) What do OETCs aim to achieve? 2) What methods are utilised to achieve these aims? 3) Do the methods match the aims? The results of this project will enhance our understanding of outdoor education as practiced in Ireland, and allow for more strategic development in the future.

The research will be split into a number of distinct sections. The next phase will use centre visits and observation of daily operation and delivery in a number of Outdoor Education and Training Centres. During centre visits, a request may also be made to review a copy of your operating procedures and staff handbook.

Your agreement to participate will enhance the study and help to impact the future of outdoor education provision in Ireland. The main request of you and your centre staff is to allow me to observe and take part in the daily activity programme for a number of days. This visit may last for up to one week for most centres, but it may be necessary to split the observation period into a number of shorter visits.

Please follow this link to access a short survey (literally three mouse clicks) to confirm your agreement to participate in this research.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to working with you over the course of this research.

Kind regards,

John Pierce

[redacted]

[redacted]

[28] See Chapter 3, section 1 for details on how these questions became aims.

Appendix 4: Breakdown of Data Sources

Table 7: Breakdown of Data Sources

Centre	Documentation	Websites	Observations	Group Types	Observation Dates*
C	Operations Manual Specific Educational Goals: • Canoe • Kayak • Orienteering • Riverwalk • Abseiling Staff Training Orienteering	33 Assorted Pages National School Brochure Junior Brochure General Brochure	7 Days 52 hours 2 visits	Summer camp, 1 language group, and 1 secondary school.	25/07/2016; 26/07/2016; 27/07/2016; 28/07/2016; 29/07/2016; 17/10/2016; 18/10/2016.
D	Operations Manual Mission Statement Code of Good Practice Team Building	33 Assorted Pages (including one from their ETB website)	7 Days 63 hours 3 visits	Summer camp, school bible group, 2 primary and 3 secondary schools.	15/08/2016; 16/08/2016; 17/08/2016; 26/09/2016; 27/09/2016; 15/05/2017; 16/05/2017.
E	Operations Manual OE Information Transition Year** Details	33 Assorted Pages Info Page for Groups Info Page for Parents	5 Days 38 hours 2 visits	Scouts, 1 secondary school.	02/08/2016; 03/08/2016; 04/08/2016; 18/05/2017; 19/05/2017.
G	Operations Manual Sample Programme	41 Assorted Pages	6 Days 48 hours 3 visits	Scouts, adventure (summer) camp, 1 secondary school.	13/07/2016; 14/07/2016; 08/08/2016; 09/08/2016; 29/05/2017; 30/05/2017.
OEI		7 Assorted Pages 1 Pull-Up Poster			
Totals	4 SOP manuals 8 other assorted manuals and guides	147 webpages 3 brochures 2 info pages 1 pull up poster	25 days 201 hours (approx.) 10 visits	15 different groups	

13/07/16 – 30/05/17, or a time span of 10.5 months.

*Centre B observations (sailing centre) on 10/08/2016 and 11/08/2016

**4th year of secondary school

Appendix 5: Data Analysis Audit Trail

Codebook for Phase 2

This table shows the coding information from phase 2 (phase 1 involved reading, becoming more familiar, with the data and, as such, has no codebook).

Table 8: Phase 2 Coding

Name	Sources	References
Phase 2 Coding by Data Source	**173**	**2819**
Data from Centre Documentation	**18**	**926**
About - history	0	0
Activities	2	2
Adults	0	0
Amount of activity	0	0
Artificial	0	0
Bespoke programmes	3	5
Booking information	1	2
Centre guidelines	9	29
Challenge	5	10
Commercial reality	3	7
Community initiatives	0	0
Competition	3	3
Contact us	0	0
Corporate	0	0
Courses	2	2
Court cases	0	0
Customer care	1	1
Daily structure	2	9
Day to day responsibilities	3	39
Definitions	2	25
Downloads available	0	0
Emergencies	1	4
Engagement	0	0

Name	Sources	References
Environment and sustainability	12	43
Equipment	4	58
Ethics - Children	4	9
Expedition	0	0
Experience	2	2
Facilitation	1	2
Facilities	2	4
Fancy skills	2	4
Fitness	2	3
Focus or orientation	2	7
Free provision	0	0
Fun	13	23
Going through the motions	0	0
Hazards	6	52
Image over substance	0	0
Indoors	2	2
Instructor autonomy	1	4
Interactions	6	6
Interest in the OE sector	0	0
Interesting	5	21
Learning English as a foreign language	0	0
Links	0	0
Location	6	50
Methodology	0	0
Mismatch of practice	2	4
Mission statement	4	4
NGB good practice	1	1
OEI	1	1
One off experiences	0	0
Organisation	2	2

Name	Sources	References
Out of place	1	1
Outcomes	13	31
Outdated	3	8
Pathways - lifelong participation	2	2
Pay	2	2
Personal development	7	8
Philosophy	6	10
Place based	3	3
Programming by logistics	3	4
Progression and development	7	7
Purpose	4	5
Ratios	5	46
Reactions	0	0
Regulations	2	5
Relationships	0	0
Review	9	10
Safety	14	113
Sample Programmes	3	3
Schools	1	1
Sport for all	5	6
Staff development	4	10
Staff perceptions	0	0
Staff profiles	0	0
Staff qualities	5	11
Staff remit	4	36
Staff retention-turnover	3	3
Student autonomy	4	9
Support	8	16
Teacher involvement	2	7
Teaching and learning	7	23
Team theme	7	9

Name	Sources	References
Technical instruction	6	14
Testimonials	0	0
Tools	0	0
Typos	10	35
Unrest	0	0
Variety	0	0
Warm-up	2	9
Weather	4	36
Webpage background	0	0
Wellbeing	2	3
Data from Observations and Discussions	**5**	**935**
About - history	1	1
Activities	1	1
Adults	1	1
Amount of activity	5	18
Artificial	0	0
Bespoke programmes	2	2
Booking information	0	0
Centre guidelines	0	0
Challenge	2	3
Commercial reality	4	10
Community initiatives	1	1
Competition	4	19
Contact us	0	0
Corporate	0	0
Courses	2	2
Court cases	2	2
Customer care	0	0
Daily structure	0	0
Day to day responsibilities	0	0

Name	Sources	References
Definitions	1	1
Downloads available	0	0
Emergencies	0	0
Engagement	3	18
Environment and sustainability	5	24
Equipment	0	0
Ethics - Children	1	1
Expedition	0	0
Experience	0	0
Facilitation	2	4
Facilities	1	2
Fancy skills	0	0
Fitness	3	5
Focus or orientation	4	22
Free provision	2	2
Fun	5	25
Going through the motions	5	83
Hazards	0	0
Image over substance	1	2
Indoors	2	3
Instructor autonomy	4	7
Interactions	1	1
Interest in the OE sector	4	13
Interesting	4	6
Learning English as a foreign language	0	0
Links	0	0
Location	1	1
Methodology	5	17
Mismatch of practice	5	23
Mission statement	0	0

Name	Sources	References
NGB good practice	0	0
OEI	0	0
One off experiences	4	7
Organisation	5	82
Out of place	0	0
Outcomes	2	6
Outdated	0	0
Pathways - lifelong participation	2	2
Pay	1	1
Personal development	1	1
Philosophy	2	2
Place based	4	10
Programming by logistics	2	9
Progression and development	5	22
Purpose	5	132
Ratios	5	37
Reactions	3	5
Regulations	0	0
Relationships	4	22
Review	3	6
Safety	5	31
Sample Programmes	0	0
Schools	0	0
Sport for all	1	1
Staff development	2	3
Staff perceptions	5	45
Staff profiles	0	0
Staff qualities	1	6
Staff remit	0	0
Staff retention-turnover	1	3
Student autonomy	5	56

Name	Sources	References
Support	3	8
Teacher involvement	4	15
Teaching and learning	4	17
Team theme	4	13
Technical instruction	5	43
Testimonials	0	0
Tools	2	3
Typos	0	0
Unrest	4	22
Variety	1	1
Warm-up	2	2
Weather	2	2
Webpage background	0	0
Wellbeing	0	0
Data from Websites	**150**	**958**
About - history	11	14
Activities	78	95
Adults	5	5
Amount of activity	0	0
Artificial	3	5
Bespoke programmes	28	36
Booking information	7	8
Centre guidelines	2	4
Challenge	26	37
Commercial reality	32	34
Community initiatives	3	6
Competition	5	8
Contact us	6	7
Corporate	4	4
Courses	18	23
Court cases	0	0

Name	Sources	References
Customer care	0	0
Daily structure	1	1
Day to day responsibilities	0	0
Definitions	2	2
Downloads available	2	2
Emergencies	0	0
Engagement	0	0
Environment and sustainability	19	32
Equipment	2	2
Ethics - Children	1	1
Expedition	4	4
Experience	5	7
Facilitation	0	0
Facilities	15	20
Fancy skills	0	0
Fitness	7	8
Focus or orientation	5	5
Free provision	0	0
Fun	32	40
Going through the motions	0	0
Hazards	0	0
Image over substance	0	0
Indoors	6	6
Instructor autonomy	0	0
Interactions	0	0
Interest in the OE sector	1	1
Interesting	3	3
Learning English as a foreign language	3	3
Links	2	2
Location	43	46

Name	Sources	References
Methodology	0	0
Mismatch of practice	3	3
Mission statement	3	3
NGB good practice	0	0
OEI	6	6
One off experiences	3	3
Organisation	3	5
Out of place	0	0
Outcomes	22	31
Outdated	11	19
Pathways - lifelong participation	7	8
Pay	0	0
Personal development	6	8
Philosophy	7	10
Place based	4	4
Programming by logistics	0	0
Progression and development	16	19
Purpose	3	4
Ratios	3	4
Reactions	0	0
Regulations	0	0
Relationships	0	0
Review	1	1
Safety	30	39
Sample Programmes	14	18
Schools	17	24
Sport for all	13	13
Staff development	0	0
Staff perceptions	0	0
Staff profiles	2	3
Staff qualities	50	64

Name	Sources	References
Staff remit	0	0
Staff retention-turnover	4	6
Student autonomy	9	9
Support	2	2
Teacher involvement	0	0
Teaching and learning	19	30
Team theme	25	32
Technical instruction	12	15
Testimonials	7	12
Tools	0	0
Typos	50	69
Unrest	0	0
Variety	3	3
Warm-up	0	0
Weather	7	8
Webpage background	5	12
Wellbeing	0	0

Codebook for Phase 3

This table shows the coding information from phase 3.

Table 9: Phase 3 Coding

Name	Sources	References
Documentation	**18**	**979**
Background	**10**	**191**
Activities	2	2
Customer care	1	1
Daily structure	2	9
Day to day responsibilities	3	39
Definitions	2	25
Equipment	4	58
Facilities	2	4
Location	6	50

Name	Sources	References
OEI	1	1
Organisation	2	2
Environment	**13**	**96**
Environment and sustainability	12	43
Location	6	50
Place based	3	3
Miscellaneous	**10**	**45**
Indoors	2	2
Outdated	3	8
Typos	10	35
Outcomes	**15**	**118**
Challenge	5	10
Competition	3	3
Experience	2	2
Fitness	2	3
Fun	13	23
Outcomes	13	31
Personal development	7	8
Review	9	10
Student autonomy	4	9
Support	8	16
Wellbeing	2	3
Philosophy	**7**	**20**
Mission statement	4	4
Philosophy	6	10
Sport for all	5	6
Programmes	**7**	**24**
Bespoke programmes	3	5
Booking information	1	2
Commercial reality	3	7
Courses	2	2

Name	Sources	References
Programming by logistics	3	4
Sample Programmes	3	3
Schools	1	1
Purpose	**16**	**108**
Facilitation	1	2
Focus or orientation	2	7
Interactions	6	6
Interesting	5	21
Mismatch of practice	2	4
Out of place	1	1
Pathways - lifelong participation	2	2
Progression and development	7	7
Purpose	4	5
Teacher involvement	2	7
Teaching and learning	7	23
Team theme	7	9
Technical instruction	6	14
Safety	**15**	**343**
Centre guidelines	9	29
Emergencies	1	4
Ethics - Children	4	9
Fitness	2	3
Hazards	6	52
NGB good practice	1	1
Ratios	5	46
Regulations	2	5
Safety	14	113
Staff remit	4	36
Warm-up	2	9
Weather	4	36
Staff	**8**	**29**

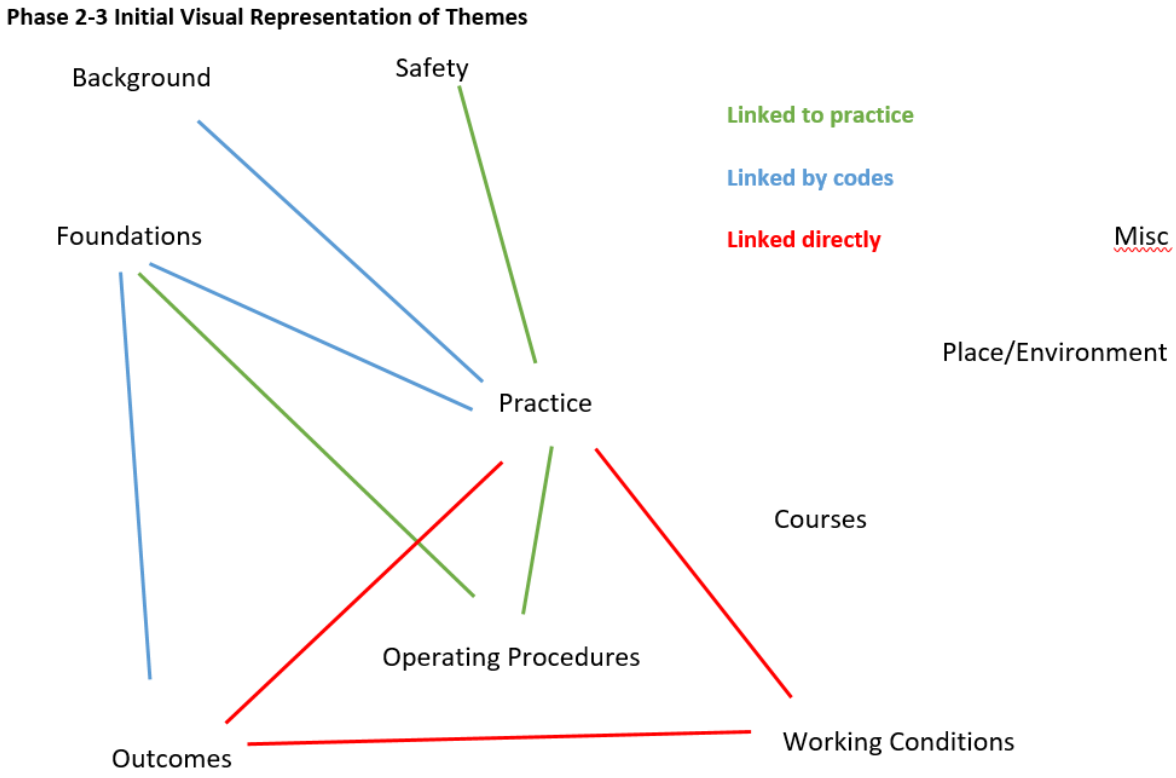
Name	Sources	References
Fancy skills	2	4
Instructor autonomy	1	4
Staff development	4	10
Staff qualities	5	11
Work conditions	**3**	**5**
Pay	2	2
Staff retention-turnover	3	3
Observations and Discussions	**5**	**920**
Background	**3**	**5**
About - history	1	1
Community initiatives	1	1
Facilities	1	2
Location	1	1
Environment	**5**	**34**
Environment and sustainability	5	24
Place based	4	10
Miscellaneous	**5**	**18**
Activities	1	1
Methodology	5	17
Outcomes	**5**	**228**
Amount of activity	5	18
Challenge	2	3
Competition	4	19
Engagement	3	18
Fitness	3	5
Fun	5	25
Indoors	2	3
Interactions	1	1
One off experiences	4	7
Outcomes	2	6
Personal development	1	1

Name	Sources	References
Progression and development	5	22
Relationships	4	22
Student autonomy	5	56
Support	3	8
Team theme	4	13
Variety	1	1
Philosophy	**4**	**8**
Definitions	1	1
Free provision	2	2
Pathways - lifelong participation	2	2
Philosophy	2	2
Sport for all	1	1
Programmes	**5**	**103**
Bespoke programmes	2	2
Commercial reality	4	10
Organisation	5	82
Programming by logistics	2	9
Purpose	**5**	**269**
Adults	1	1
Focus or orientation	4	22
Going through the motions	5	83
Image over substance	1	2
Interesting	4	6
Mismatch of practice	5	23
Purpose	5	132
Safety	**5**	**75**
Court cases	2	2
Ethics - Children	1	1
Ratios	5	37
Safety	5	31
Warm-up	2	2

Name	Sources	References
Weather	2	2
Staff	**5**	**105**
Instructor autonomy	4	7
Interest in the OE sector	4	13
Pay	1	1
Reactions	3	5
Staff development	2	3
Staff perceptions	5	45
Staff qualities	1	6
Staff retention-turnover	1	3
Unrest	4	22
Teaching	**5**	**75**
Teacher involvement	4	15
Teaching and learning	4	17
Technical instruction	5	43
Websites	**150**	**965**
Background	**105**	**233**
About - history	11	14
Booking information	7	8
Commercial reality	32	34
Community initiatives	3	6
Contact us	6	7
Downloads available	2	2
Equipment	2	2
Ethics - Children	1	1
Links	2	2
Location	43	46
OEI	6	6
Organisation	3	5
Outdated	11	19
Typos	50	69

Name	Sources	References
Webpage background	5	12
Environment	**23**	**36**
Environment and sustainability	19	32
Place based	4	4
Miscellaneous	**4**	**4**
Interesting	3	3
Review	1	1
Outcomes	**71**	**224**
Challenge	26	37
Competition	5	8
Fun	32	40
Outcomes	22	31
Pathways - lifelong participation	7	8
Personal development	6	8
Progression and development	16	19
Student autonomy	9	9
Support	2	2
Team theme	25	32
Technical instruction	12	15
Testimonials	7	12
Variety	3	3
Philosophy	**16**	**20**
Definitions	2	2
Focus or orientation	5	5
Mission statement	3	3
Philosophy	7	10
Programmes	**122**	**281**
Activities	78	95
Adults	5	5
Artificial	3	5
Bespoke programmes	28	36

Name	Sources	References
Centre guidelines	2	4
Corporate	4	4
Courses	18	23
Daily structure	1	1
Definitions	2	2
Expedition	4	4
Experience	5	7
Facilities	15	20
Fitness	7	8
Indoors	6	6
Learning English as a foreign language	3	3
One off experiences	3	3
Sample Programmes	14	18
Schools	17	24
Sport for all	13	13
Purpose	**27**	**42**
Focus or orientation	5	5
Mismatch of practice	3	3
Purpose	3	4
Teaching and learning	19	30
Safety	**34**	**51**
Ratios	3	4
Safety	30	39
Weather	7	8
Staff	**53**	**74**
Interest in the OE sector	1	1
Staff profiles	2	3
Staff qualities	50	64
Staff retention-turnover	4	6



Codebook for Phase 4

This table shows the coding information from phase 4.

Table 10: Phase 4 Coding

Name	Sources	References
Background	**101**	**262**
Documentation	**8**	**91**
Daily structure	2	9
Definitions	2	25
Facilities	2	4
Location	6	50
OEI	1	1
Organisation	2	2
Observations and Discussions	**3**	**5**
About - history	1	1
Community initiatives	1	1
Facilities	1	2
Location	1	1

Name	Sources	References
Websites	**90**	**166**
About - history	11	14
Booking information	7	8
Commercial reality	32	34
Community initiatives	3	6
Contact us	6	7
Equipment	3	3
Ethics - Children	1	1
Facilities	15	20
Links	4	4
Location	43	46
OEI	6	6
Organisation	3	5
Webpage background	5	12
Environment	**40**	**119**
Documentation	**12**	**48**
Environment and sustainability	12	45
Place based	3	3
Observations and Discussions	**5**	**35**
Environment and sustainability	5	25
Place based	4	10
Websites	**23**	**36**
Environment and sustainability	19	32
Place based	4	4
Miscellaneous	**75**	**193**
Documentation	**13**	**76**
Indoors	2	2
Interesting	6	26
Outdated	3	9
Typos	11	39
Observations and Discussions	**5**	**23**

Name	Sources	References
Interesting	4	6
Methodology	5	17
Websites	**57**	**94**
Interesting	5	5
Outdated	11	19
Typos	51	70
Outcomes	**93**	**585**
Documentation	**17**	**129**
Amount of activity	1	1
Experience	3	3
Fitness	2	3
Outcomes	15	71
Challenge	5	12
Competition	3	3
Fun	13	23
Personal development	7	8
Student autonomy	4	9
Support	8	16
Technical instruction	7	15
Wellbeing	2	3
Observations and Discussions	**5**	**231**
Amount of activity	5	18
Engagement	3	18
Fitness	3	5
Indoors	3	5
One off experiences	4	7
Outcomes	5	68
Challenge	2	3
Competition	4	19
Fun	5	26
Team theme	4	13

Name	Sources	References
Variety	1	1
Progression and development	5	23
Personal development	1	1
Relationships	4	23
Interactions	1	1
Student autonomy	5	56
Support	3	8
Websites	**71**	**225**
Outcomes	57	152
Challenge	26	38
Competition	5	8
Fun	32	40
Team theme	25	32
Variety	3	3
Pathways - lifelong participation	7	8
Progression and development	21	27
Personal development	6	8
Student autonomy	9	9
Support	2	2
Technical instruction	12	15
Testimonials	7	12
Philosophy	**21**	**42**
Documentation	**7**	**20**
Mission statement	4	4
Philosophy	6	10
Sport for all	5	6
Observations and Discussions	**4**	**8**
Definitions	1	1
Free provision	2	2
Pathways - lifelong participation	2	2
Philosophy	2	2

Name	Sources	References
Sport for all	1	1
Websites	**10**	**14**
Definitions	1	1
Mission statement	3	3
Philosophy	7	10
Practice	**29**	**347**
Documentation	**14**	**72**
Facilitation	1	2
Focus or orientation	2	8
Interactions	6	6
Mismatch of practice	2	4
Out of place	1	1
Pathways - lifelong participation	2	2
Progression and development	7	7
Purpose	4	5
Teacher involvement	2	7
Teaching and learning	6	21
Team theme	7	9
Observations and Discussions	**5**	**263**
Activities	1	1
Focus or orientation	4	22
Going through the motions	5	83
Image over substance	1	2
Mismatch of practice	5	23
Purpose	5	132
Websites	**10**	**12**
Focus or orientation	5	5
Mismatch of practice	3	3
Purpose	3	4
Programmes	**131**	**389**
Documentation	**7**	**24**

Name	Sources	References
Bespoke programmes	3	5
Booking information	1	2
Commercial reality	3	7
Courses	2	2
Programming by logistics	3	4
Sample Programmes	3	3
Schools	1	1
Observations and Discussions	**5**	**104**
Bespoke programmes	2	2
Commercial reality	4	10
Organisation	5	82
Programming by logistics	3	10
Websites	**119**	**261**
Activities	78	95
Artificial	3	5
Bespoke programmes	28	36
Centre guidelines	2	4
Daily structure	1	1
Definitions	2	2
Expedition	4	4
Experience	5	7
Fitness	7	8
Indoors	6	6
One off experiences	3	3
Sport for all	13	13
Types	48	77
Adults	5	5
Corporate	4	4
Courses	18	23
Learning English as a foreign language	3	3

Name	Sources	References
Sample Programmes	14	18
Schools	17	24
Safety	**54**	**527**
Documentation	**15**	**401**
Centre guidelines	9	29
Emergencies	1	4
Equipment	4	58
Ethics - Children	4	9
Fitness	2	3
Hazards	6	52
NGB good practice	1	1
Ratios	5	46
Regulations	2	5
Safety	14	113
Staff remit	4	36
Warm-up	2	9
Weather	4	36
Observations and Discussions	**5**	**75**
Court cases	2	2
Ethics - Children	1	1
Ratios	5	37
Safety	5	31
Warm-up	2	2
Weather	2	2
Websites	**34**	**51**
Ratios	3	4
Safety	30	39
Weather	7	8
Staff	**68**	**254**
Documentation	**10**	**74**
Day to day responsibilities	3	40

Name	Sources	References
Customer care	1	1
Fancy skills	2	4
Instructor autonomy	1	4
Staff development	4	10
Staff qualities	5	11
Work conditions	3	5
Pay	2	2
Staff retention-turnover	3	3
Observations and Discussions	**5**	**106**
Instructor autonomy	4	7
Interest in the OE sector	4	13
Misuse of staff	1	6
Pay	1	1
Reactions	3	5
Staff development	2	3
Staff perceptions	5	46
Staff retention-turnover	1	3
Unrest	4	22
Websites	**53**	**74**
Interest in the OE sector	1	1
Staff profiles	2	3
Staff qualities	50	64
Staff retention-turnover	4	6
Teaching	**33**	**118**
Documentation	**9**	**10**
Review	9	10
Observations and Discussions	**5**	**76**
Adults	1	1
Teacher involvement	4	15
Teaching and learning	4	17
Technical instruction	5	43

Name	Sources	References
Websites	**19**	**32**
Review	1	1
Teaching and learning	19	31

Codebook for Phase 5a

This table shows the coding information from phase 5a.

Table 11: Phase 5a Coding

Name	Description	Files	References
Definitions	This node contains evidence relating to definitions of practice.	14	42
Definitions	This node contains evidence relating to definitions of practice.	7	31
Engagement with Theory	This node contains evidence relating to a lack of engagement with theory.	3	3
Indoors	This node contains evidence of outdoor practice indoors.	6	8
Development	This node contains evidence of data relating to any mention of development, programmes, students, etc.	5	24
Free provision	This node contains evidence of a vision of free at the point of provision OE for schools.	2	2
Interest in the OE sector	This node contains evidence of practitioner interest in the wider OE field beyond their place of work.	4	13
Pathways - lifelong participation	This node contains evidence of lifelong participation opportunities, or pathways to same.	2	2
Staff development	This node contains evidence of staff development practices.	2	3
Image	This node contains evidence of data that relates to the image of a centre and how it should look.	4	8
About - history	This node contains evidence of general information relating to the history of centres.	1	1

Name	Description	Files	References
Facilities	This node contains evidence of descriptions of facilities.	1	2
Reactions	This node contains evidence of interesting or surprising reactions.	3	5
Obstacles	This node contains evidence of data relating to obstacles to delivery or booking OE programmes.	4	12
Commercial reality	This node contains evidence of the commercial realities of OE provision in modern Ireland.	4	10
Outdated	This node contains evidence of data that refers to outdated organisation names, centre phone numbers, etc.	14	28
Practice	This node contains evidence relating to practice within the centres.	95	815
Adults	This node contains evidence of staff perspectives on adult sessions.	1	1
Amount of activity	This node contains evidence of how much activity students experienced within various sessions.	5	18
Bespoke programmes	This node contains evidence of bespoke programming.	33	44
Booking information	This node contains evidence of centre booking procedures relevant to the research questions.	1	2
Commercial reality	This node contains evidence of the commercial realities of operating an OETC in modern times.	3	7
Engagement	This node contains evidence of how engaged students were in activities/sessions.	3	18
Facilitation	This node contains evidence of facilitation within centre programmes.	1	2
Fitness	This node contains evidence of the concept of fitness within the dataset	3	5

Name	Description	Files	References
Indoors-Artificial	This node contains evidence from the dataset referring to indoor or artificial activities.	12	16
Instructor autonomy	This node contains evidence of the autonomy levels of instructors.	4	7
Mismatches between practice and policy	This node contains evidence of a contradictory nature - policy says one thing and practice shows another.	86	365
Misuse of staff	This node contains evidence of instances where staff lacked qualifications or experience to deliver their assigned task optimally.	1	6
One off experiences	This node contains evidence of the short term nature of student experiences.	4	7
Organisation	This node contains evidence relating to the organisation within centres.	2	2
Pay	This node contains evidence of pay and conditions within the centres.	1	1
Place based	This node contains evidence of place based pedagogical approaches.	3	3
Purpose	This node contains evidence relating to the purpose of centre practices - this is why this is done, or why is this done that way?	7	136
Relationships	This node contains evidence of relationship building.	4	23
Staff perceptions	This node contains evidence of thoughts, comments, and practices by staff on what they think of practice and/or what they would change etc.	6	49
Student autonomy	This node contains evidence of student autonomy, or lack thereof.	10	66
Support	This node contains evidence of support and encouragement provided to students by staff.	3	8

Name	Description	Files	References
Teacher involvement	This node contains evidence of the level of involvement of teachers and/or leaders in activity programmes.	2	7
Safety	This node contains evidence of data relating to safety within OE at the centres.	21	338
Court cases	This node contains evidence of ongoing court cases.	2	2
Emergencies	This node contains evidence of centre emergency procedures.	1	4
Equipment	This node contains evidence of references to equipment.	4	58
Ethics - Children	This node contains references to the code of ethics for children in sport and centre specific related content.	5	10
Hazards	This node contains evidence of hazards identified.	7	53
NGB good practice	This node contains evidence of the adoption of NGB good practice guidelines.	1	1
Ratios	This node contains evidence of stated ratios and those used in practice.	5	47
Regulations	This node contains evidence of references to EU equipment safety standards/regulations.	2	5
Safety	This node contains evidence of safety issues in practice.	5	31
Safety Guidelines	This node contains evidence of safety guidelines.	15	118
Weather	This node contains evidence of the weather influencing sessions - restricting locations, etc.	2	2
Wellbeing	This node contains evidence of references to wellbeing.	2	3
Teaching Strategy	This node contains evidence of data relating to the teaching strategies employed in the centres.	53	309

Name	Description	Files	References
Centre guidelines	This node contains references to centre guidelines.	12	35
Day to day responsibilities	This node contains evidence of the day to day responsibilities of practitioners.	4	43
Customer care		1	1
Fancy skills	This node contains evidence of centres having noticed staff showing off and personally taking part in sports during sessions with groups.	3	6
Instructor autonomy	This node contains evidence of the level of autonomy given to, or taken by, instructors in their practice.	1	4
Interactions	This node contains evidence of positive interactions with groups and individuals from SOPs.	6	6
Organisation	This node contains evidence of how programmes are organised (day to day).	5	82
Programming by Logistics	This node contains evidence of data relating to how programmes are shaped and rolled out on a daily basis.	12	27
Review	This node contains evidence of reviewing as part of teaching practice.	10	11
Schools	This node contains evidence relating to school based programmes in terms of teaching and learning.	2	2
Sport for all	This node contains evidence of inclusion and sport for all.	13	13
Staff development	This node contains evidence of staff development.	4	10
Staff qualities	This node contains evidence of staff qualities and attributes.	6	12
Teaching and learning	This node contains evidence of documentation and practice relating to teaching and learning.	9	24

Name	Description	Files	References
Team theme	This node contains evidence of team work and tasks.	11	13
Warm-up	This node contains evidence of warm-ups and cool-downs.	2	2
Work conditions	This node contains evidence of pay, recruitment, and work conditions.	7	10
Technical Skills Focus	Contains data that points to a technical skills focus within practice.	130	462
About - history	This node contains evidence of general information, historical or not, relating to the centres.	11	14
Courses	This node contains evidence of the types of courses organised and by OETCs.	103	153
Environment and sustainability	This node contains evidence of environmental education or sustainability.	5	25
Focus or orientation	This node contains evidence of the focus or orientation of practice - student, staff, or activity focused.	11	37
Going through the motions	This node contains evidence of practitioners delivering similar content, programmes, and sessions repeatedly.	6	87
Interesting	This node contains evidence of things I found interesting.	4	6
Pathways - lifelong participation	This node contains evidence of lifelong participation, or pathways to same.	2	2
Place based	This node contains evidence of relating practice to place.	4	10
Progression and development	This node contains evidence of progression and/or development.	29	35
Review	This node contains evidence of reviewing.	9	10
Support	This node contains evidence of support and/or encouragement.	8	16

Name	Description	Files	References
Technical instruction	This node contains evidence of technical skills instruction.	9	17
Uncategorised	This node contains evidence of data not relevant to addressing the research questions, or uncategorised for other reasons.	130	375
Unrest	This node contains evidence of data relating to moments of unrest within the centres.	4	23
Vague or Generic Statements	This node contains evidence of data that relates to vague or generic statements of practice.	105	453
Environment and sustainability	This node contains evidence of environmental education or sustainability.	19	32
Experience	This node contains evidence of times when experience was cited or experiential education came to the fore.	9	11
Fitness	This node contains evidence of fitness from the dataset.	7	8
Interest in the OE sector	This node contains evidence of interest in other centres or the sector in general, beyond the immediate centre.	1	1
Interesting	This node contains evidence of things I found interesting.	5	5
Mission statement	This node contains evidence from the mission statements of OETCs.	8	10
One off experiences	This node contains evidence of the short term nature of student experiences.	3	3
Outcomes	This node contains evidence of outcomes of and from practice.	79	291
Philosophy	This node contains evidence of the underlying philosophy underpinning practice.	7	12

Name	Description	Files	References
Progression and development	This node contains evidence of progression and/or development.	5	23
Purpose	This node contains evidence relating to the purpose of centre practices - this is why this is done, or why is this done that way?	3	4
Sample Programmes	This node contains evidence of provided sample programmes.	4	4
Support	This node contains evidence of support and/or encouragement.	2	2
Teaching and learning	This node contains evidence of teaching and learning activities.	19	31
Technical instruction	This node contains evidence of technical skills instruction.	12	15

Codebook for Phase 5b

This table shows the coding information from phase 5b.

Table 12: Phase 5b Coding

Name	Description	Files	References
Daily Practice	This node contains any data relating to day to day practices within the dataset.	94	1106
Adults	This node contains evidence of practitioner perceptions of adult programmes.	1	1
Amount of activity	This node contains evidence of the level of activity within practice for students.	5	18
Engagement	This node contains evidence of the level of engagement of students within programmes.	3	18
Facilitation	This node contains evidence of facilitation within OETC programmes.	1	2
Fitness	This node contains evidence of times when fitness was mentioned.	3	5

Name	Description	Files	References
Indoors-Artificial	This node contains evidence from the dataset referring to indoor or artificial activities.	14	18
Instructor autonomy	This node contains evidence of the level of autonomy of practitioners within programmes.	4	7
Mismatches between practice and policy	This node contains evidence of a contradictory nature - policy says one thing and practice shows another.	86	367
Misuse of staff	This node contains evidence of instances where staff lacked qualifications or experience to deliver their assigned task optimally.	1	6
One off experiences	This node contains evidence of the short term nature of experiences in OETCs.	4	7
Organisation	This node contains evidence of the daily organisation of programmes and practitioners.	3	3
Pay	This node contains evidence relating to pay and conditions.	1	1
Place based	This node contains evidence of place based pedagogies.	3	3
Purpose	This node contains evidence relating to the purpose of practices.	7	136
Relationships	This node contains evidence of relationship building.	4	23
Safety	This node contains evidence of data relating to safety within OE at the centres.	21	338
Staff perceptions	This node contains evidence of thoughts, comments, and practices by staff on what they think of practice and/or what they would change etc.	6	50
Student autonomy	This node contains evidence of autonomy of choice for students within programmes.	10	66

Name	Description	Files	References
Support	This node contains evidence of support and encouragement for students.	3	8
Teacher involvement	This node contains evidence of the level of teacher/leader involvement in programmes.	2	7
Learning	This node contains evidence of stated outcomes and obstacles to practice, as well as noted vague or generic statements.	105	475
Obstacles	This node contains evidence relating to obstacles to delivery or booking OE programmes.	7	17
Outcomes	This node contains evidence of data relating to outcomes of practice within the dataset.	85	350
Vague or Generic Statements	This node contains evidence that relates to vague or generic statements of practice.	59	108
Teaching Strategy	This node contains evidence relating to teaching strategies, or a lack thereof, within the dataset.	68	365
Centre guidelines	This node contains evidence of centre guidelines for practitioners and students.	12	35
Day to day responsibilities	This node contains evidence of daily responsibilities of staff and students.	4	43
Engagement with Theory	This node contains evidence relating to a lack of engagement with theory.	4	4
Fancy skills	This node contains evidence of centres having noticed staff showing off and personally taking part in sports during sessions with groups.	3	6
Instructor autonomy	This node contains evidence of the level of autonomy given to, or taken by, instructors in their practice.	1	4
Interactions	This node contains evidence of positive interactions with groups and individuals from SOPs.	6	6

Name	Description	Files	References
Organisation	This node contains evidence of daily organisation within centres.	5	82
Programming by Logistics	This node contains evidence relating to how daily programmes are shaped and rolled out.	12	27
Sample Programmes	Contains evidence of sample programmes from the dataset.	4	5
Progression and development	This node contains evidence of progression and development beyond the basic technical skills of the adventure sport session in question.	5	23
Review	This node contains evidence of reviewing.	10	11
Schools	This node contains evidence relating to school based programmes in terms of teaching and learning.	2	2
Sport for all	This node contains evidence of inclusion and sport for all.	13	13
Staff development	This node contains evidence of staff development.	4	10
Staff qualities	This node contains evidence of staff qualities and attributes.	6	12
Teaching and learning	This node contains evidence of daily teaching and learning practices within OETCs.	26	53
Team theme	This node contains evidence of team work and tasks.	11	13
Warm-up	This node contains evidence of warm-ups and cool-downs.	2	2
Work conditions	This node contains evidence of pay, recruitment, and work conditions.	7	10
Technical Skills Focus	This node contains evidence of data relating to a technical skills focus within the dataset.	107	385
About - history	This node contains evidence of general information and history of the centres.	11	14

Name	Description	Files	References
Courses	This node contains evidence of sample programmes and various courses available.	69	76
Environment and sustainability	This node contains evidence of practice relating to the environment and sustainability.	5	25
Focus or orientation	This node contains evidence of the focus or orientation of practice.	11	37
Going through the motions	This node contains evidence of repeatable, generic, practices.	6	87
Interesting	This node contains evidence of things that stood out to me.	4	6
Pathways - lifelong participation	This node contains evidence of lifelong participation, or pathways to same.	2	2
Place based	This node contains evidence of place based pedagogies.	4	10
Progression and development	This node contains evidence of progression and development beyond the basic technical skills of the adventure sport session in question.	29	35
Review	This node contains evidence of reviewing within programmes.	9	10
Support	This node contains evidence of support and encouragement for students.	8	16
Technical instruction	This node contains evidence of the amount of technical instruction present in programmes.	9	17
Unthemed	This node contains evidence of any other data within the dataset that is unrelated to the designated themes of phase 5.	130	481
Definitions	This node contains evidence relating to definitions of practice.	7	31

Name	Description	Files	References
Development	This node contains evidence relating to any mention of development, programmes, students, etc.	5	24
Image	This node contains evidence that relates to the image of a centre and how it should look.	4	8
Outdated	This node contains evidence that refers to outdated organisation names etc.	14	28
Uncategorised	This node contains evidence relevant to addressing the research questions, or uncategorised for other reasons.	128	367
Unrest	Contains data relating to moments of unrest within the centres.	4	23

Codebook for Phase 6

This folder contains data coded to the findings from the final themes of the project.

Table 13: Phase 6 Coding

Name	Description	Files	References
Ideological Dissonance	Contains content from all four final themes related to ideological dissonance.	10	47
Lack of Engagement with Theory	Contains content from all four final themes related to a lack of engagement with relevant theory. Also includes any mentions or observations of theory.	88	390
Daily Practice	Content from the theme Daily Practice relating to a lack of theory.	20	63
Learning	Content from the theme Learning relating to a lack of theory.	23	41
Quantification of Practice	Contains content from all four final themes that relates to the quantification of practice in terms of staff/centre attributes and ratios for activities.	73	223
Daily Practice	Content from the theme Daily Practice relating to Quantification of Practice.	58	149

Name	Description	Files	References
Learning	Content from the theme Learning relating to Quantification of Practice.	30	43
Teaching Strategy	Content from the theme Teaching Strategy relating to Quantification of Practice.	9	9
Technical Skills Focus	Content from the theme Technical Skill Focus relating to Quantification of Practice.	18	22
Teaching Strategy	Content from the theme Teaching Strategy relating to a lack of theory.	11	33
Technical Skills Focus	Content from the theme Technical Skills Focus relating to a lack of theory.	14	25
McDonaldization of Practice	Contains content from all four final themes that relates to the McDonaldization of practice.	140	1527
Calculability	Contains content from all four final themes that relates to the Calculability component of McDonaldization of practice.	73	223
Daily Practice	Content from the theme Daily Practice relating to McDonaldization of Practice.	58	149
Learning	Content from the theme Learning relating to McDonaldization of Practice.	30	43
Teaching Strategy	Content from the theme Teaching Strategy relating to McDonaldization of Practice.	9	9
Technical Skills Focus	Content from the theme Technical Skill Focus relating to McDonaldization of Practice.	18	22
Control	Contains content from all four final themes that relates to the Control component of McDonaldization of practice.	35	176
Daily Practice	Content from the theme Daily Practice relating to McDonaldization of Practice.	23	131

Name	Description	Files	References
Learning	Content from the theme Learning relating to McDonaldization of Practice.	10	14
Teaching Strategy	Content from the theme Teaching Strategy relating to McDonaldization of Practice.	14	28
Technical Skills Focus	Content from the theme Technical Skills Focus relating to McDonaldization of Practice.	1	1
Efficiency	Contains content from all four final themes that relates to the Efficiency component of McDonaldization of practice.	30	366
Daily Practice	Content from the theme Daily Practice relating to McDonaldization of Practice.	20	60
Learning	Content from the theme Learning relating to McDonaldization of Practice.	17	39
Teaching Strategy	Content from the theme Teaching Strategy relating to McDonaldization of Practice.	19	126
Technical Skills Focus	Content from the theme Technical Skills Focus relating to McDonaldization of Practice.	6	141
Predictability	Contains content from all four final themes that relates to the Predictability component of McDonaldization of practice.	124	762
Daily Practice	Content from the theme Daily Practice relating to McDonaldization of Practice.	27	394
Learning	Content from the theme Learning relating to McDonaldization of Practice.	81	157
Teaching Strategy	Content from the theme Teaching Strategy relating to McDonaldization of Practice.	46	84

Name	Description	Files	References
Technical Skills Focus	Content from the theme Technical Skills Focus relating to McDonaldization of Practice.	79	127
Programming by Logistics	Contains content from all four final themes that relates to programming by logistics.	131	1573
Control	Contains content from all four final themes that relates to the control of staff.	35	176
Daily Practice	Content from the theme Daily Practice relating to the control of staff.	23	131
Learning	Content from the theme Learning relating to the control of staff.	10	14
Teaching Strategy	Content from the theme Teaching Strategy relating to the control of staff.	14	28
Technical Skills Focus	Content from the theme Technical Skills Focus relating to the control of staff.	1	1
Daily Practice	Content from the theme Daily Practice relating to Programming by Logistics.	22	118
Learning	Content from the theme Learning relating to Programming by Logistics.	28	70
Standardisation of Practice	Contains content from all four final themes that relates to the standardisation of practice.	125	1103
Daily Practice	Content from the theme Daily Practice relating to Standardisation of Practice.	35	444
Learning	Content from the theme Learning relating to Standardisation of Practice.	89	192
Teaching Strategy	Content from the theme Teaching Strategy relating to Standardisation of Practice.	50	199
Technical Skills Focus	Content from the theme Technical Skills Focus relating to the Standardisation of Practice.	82	268
Teaching Strategy	Content from the theme Teaching Strategy relating to Programming by Logistics.	9	49

Name	Description	Files	References
Technical Skills Focus	Content from the theme Technical Skills Focus relating to Programming by Logistics.	17	57

Appendix 6: Informed Consent Documentation

The Nature of Public Provision Outdoor Education in Ireland

Participant Information and Consent Form

The focus of this study is to examine the aims of outdoor education and compare these aims to the daily delivery within the Outdoor Education and Training Centres (OETCs). Ethical approval has been granted for this research from Moray House School of Education within the University of Edinburgh. A number of different methods have been combined to generate data throughout this research, including website and document analysis, observation of practice and interviews. The centre observations may last for approximately one week per centre visit. The observation visits will involve the researcher taking part in the daily operations of the centre and assisting if required. Notes may be taken along with some photo image. Some clarification may be sought on observations through informal conversation.

Your participation is voluntary. Your participation in this research will provide valuable information on practice within Outdoor Education and Training Centres and have an impact on improving practice into the future. If, at any stage, you no longer wish to be included in the project you can ask for your responses to be withdrawn. There will be no penalty or consequence as a result of deciding to withdraw from the study.

All information gathered will be kept strictly confidential at all times and stored on a password protected computer. Steps will also be taken to anonymise the findings in any publications including the final dissertation.

The following aims to ensure that you are aware of my role as researcher, and how the information you share with me will be used in the research project. Please tick the boxes beside the statements you agree with, and sign and date the bottom of the page. I will leave you with your own copy of this information and consent form.

☐ I understand the purpose of this research, and that I am able to ask questions about it at any time.

☐ I understand that my participation is completely voluntary, and that I am free to withdraw my consent for involvement with this research project at any time.

☐ I understand that anonymised extracts from this research may appear in publications relevant to this area of research.

Additionally, please answer the questions below:

How long have you worked in outdoor education? _____

How long have you worked at this centre? _____

How many other centres have you worked at? _____

Please give a brief outline of your qualifications.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Are you male or female? Please circle.

Interviewee: _____ Date:

_____

Researcher: John Pierce Date:

_____

Contact address: John Pierce, Institute of Technology Tralee, Health and Leisure Department, South Campus, Tralee, Co. Kerry.

If you have any queries or concerns, please get in touch with John Pierce at:

[redacted]

Appendix 7: Child Protection and Garda Vetting

Certificate of Attendance

This is to certify that

has participated in a

Child Protection in Sport
Awareness Workshop

on 21-03-09

THE IRISH SPORTS COUNCIL

AN CHOMHAIRLE SPÓIRT

Code of Ethics Tutor(s)

code of ethics

18678

Irish Sport HQ
National Sports Campus
Blanchardstown
Dublin 15, Ireland

Tel +353 (0)1 625 1115
Email info@mountaineering.ie

[redacted]

10 July 2015

Dear John

GARDA VETTING ACCEPTANCE LETTER

I refer to your Garda Vetting application to Mountaineering Ireland and I am pleased to inform you that following our processing of your application with the Garda Central Vetting Unit your application has been accepted.

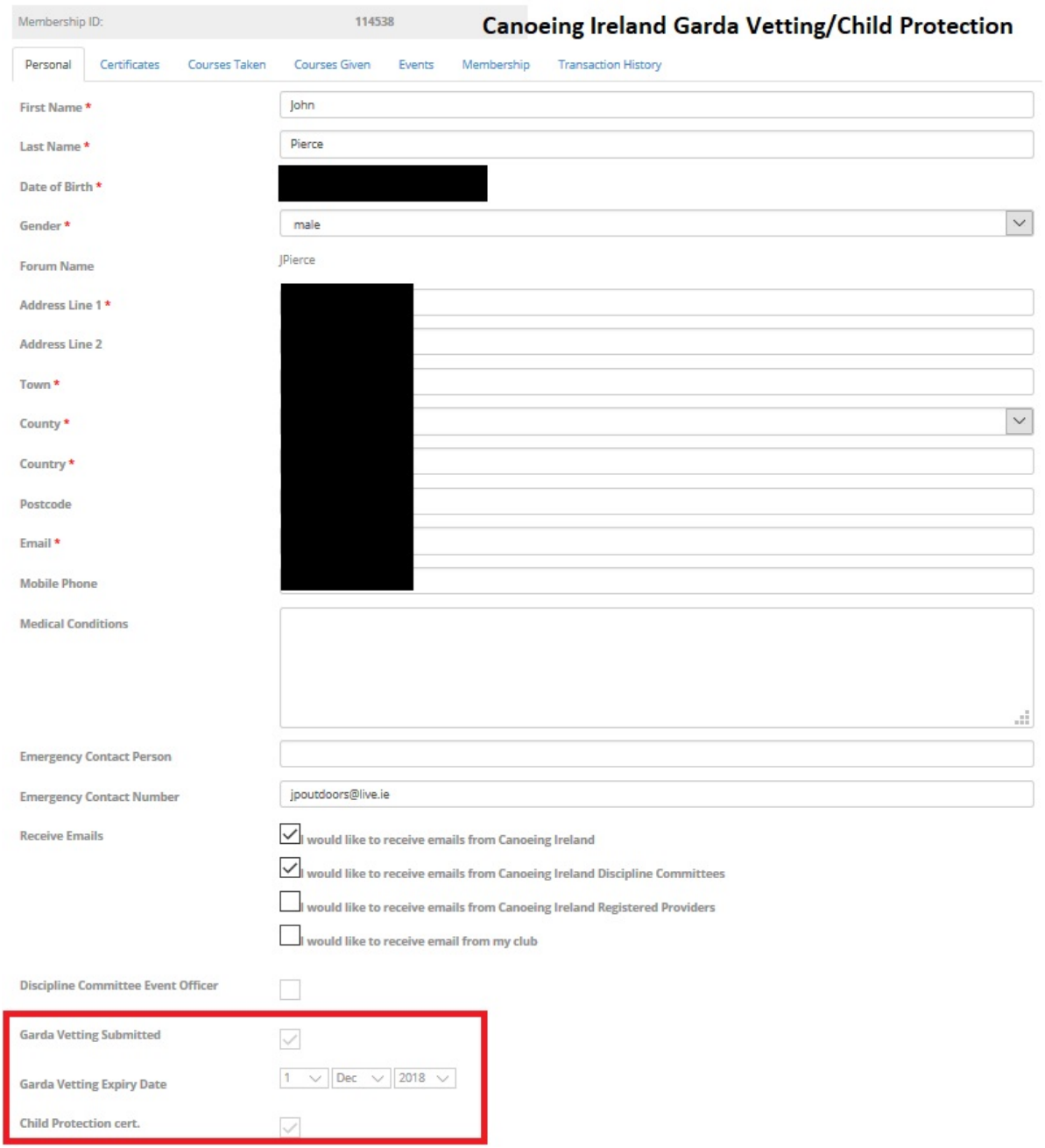
As part of our Recruitment and Selection procedures I would request that you present this letter to the relevant person in your club e.g. the Children's Officer in your Club, or your manager or employer, as may be deemed appropriate. Re-vetting may take place on a randomly and, in the case of Course Providers, on the renewal of a Providership Agreement.

Mountaineering Ireland is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for young people and children and your role is central to us achieving this. Child protection awareness programme training opportunities are provided through Local Sports Partnerships and Mountaineering Ireland can assist in finding a course for you. Mountaineering Ireland will continue to support volunteers' participation in Safeguarding in Sport conferences, training and workshops and I would urge you to avail of such training and support opportunities as they arise.

I thank you again for your valued contribution and wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Rozanne Bell
Garda Vetting Authorised Signatory


Membership ID: 114538
Canoeing Ireland Garda Vetting/Child Protection
Personal
Certificates
Courses Taken
Courses Given
Events
Membership
Transaction History
First Name *
John
Last Name *
Pierce
Date of Birth *
Gender *
male
Forum Name
JPierce
Address Line 1 *
Address Line 2
Town *
County *
Country *
Postcode
Email *
Mobile Phone
Medical Conditions
Emergency Contact Person
Emergency Contact Number
jpoutdoors@live.ie
Receive Emails
I would like to receive emails from Canoeing Ireland
I would like to receive emails from Canoeing Ireland Discipline Committees
I would like to receive emails from Canoeing Ireland Registered Providers
I would like to receive email from my club
Discipline Committee Event Officer
Garda Vetting Submitted
Garda Vetting Expiry Date
1
Dec
2018
Child Protection cert.

Appendix 8: Breakdown of Practitioner Qualifications

Table 14: Technical Qualifications Held by Practitioners

Technical Qualifications	No. of Practitioners	% of Practitioners
Rock Climbing Instructor	17	44%
Level 2 Kayak Instructor	12	31%
Level 3 River Kayak Instructor	11	28%
Mountain Leader (Summer)	10	26%
Level 1 Kayak Instructor	6	15%
Level 2 Canoe Instructor	5	13%
Dinghy Instructor	5	13%
Sailing Senior Instructor	5	13%
Windsurf Instructor	5	13%
Mountain Bike Leader	4	10%
Instructor Developer	4	10%
Basic Cave Leader	4	10%
Trail Cycle Leader	4	10%
Archery Leader	3	8%
Level 3 Canoe Instructor	3	8%
Orienteering Instructor	2	5%
Safety Boat Instructor	2	5%
Level 1 Canoe Instructor	2	5%
Level 3 Sea Kayak Instructor	2	5%
SUP Instructor	2	5%
L5 Dinghy Instructor	2	5%
Swimming Coach	2	5%
Powerboat Instructor	1	3%
Leave No Trace Advanced Trainer	1	3%
Level 4 River Kayak Instructor	1	3%
Mountain Bike Coach	1	3%
Powerboat Senior Instructor	1	3%
Windsurf Senior Instructor	1	3%
Level 3 Paddlesurf Instructor	1	3%
Level 5 River Instructor	1	3%
Level 5 Sea Kayak Instructor	1	3%
Level 5 Paddlesurf Instructor	1	3%
Cave Leader	1	3%
International Mountain Leader	1	3%
REC Trainer (First Aid)	1	3%
Coasteering Leader	1	3%
Indoor Climbing Coach	1	3%
Level 1 Surf Coach	1	3%
Running Coach	1	3%
Total Awards	129	

Table 15: Academic Awards Held by Practitioners

All Academic Awards	No. of Practitioners Holding Award	% of Practitioners Holding Award
BA (hons) OE	2	5%
BA (hons) Business and Computing	2	5%
H-Dip Ed	2	5%
Therapeutic Crisis intervention Course	1	3%
QQI Level 5 Outdoor Sports	1	3%
Post Grad Performance Coaching	1	3%
Cert in Youth Work	1	3%
BA Sociology Politics Philosophy	1	3%
H-Dip Community/youth work	1	3%
MA Adult Learning and Development	1	3%
PGCE Outdoor Activities	1	3%
BSc Outdoor Education	1	3%
Ort Teacher	1	3%
Degree*	1	3%
Total Awards	17	12%
Total People	11	28%
Relevant Awards	9	23%

*unspecified degree by a manager

Table 16: Directly Relevant (to outdoor education) Academic Awards

Directly Relevant Academic Awards	No. of Practitioners Holding Award	% of Practitioners Holding Award
BA (hons) Outdoor Education	2	5%
H-Dip Education	2	5%
QQI Level 5 Outdoor Sports	1	3%
PGCE Outdoor Activities	1	3%
BSc Outdoor Education	1	3%
MA Adult Learning and Development	1	3%
Certificate in Youth Work	1	3%
BA Sociology Politics Philosophy	1	3%
H-Dip Community/Youth Work	1	3%
Total Award Holders	8	21%

Table 17 Summary Breakdown of Qualifications and Awards

Summary Breakdown of Qualifications and Awards	
Total (different) Technical Awards	39
Total (different) Academic Awards	14
Average Technical Awards per practitioner	3.3
Average Total Awards per practitioner	3.7
Average Academic Awards per practitioner	0.44
Average Relevant Academic Awards per practitioner	0.28
Median Technical Awards	2
Mode Technical Awards	1
Most Awards Held	12
Least Awards Held	0

Table 18: Academic Award Equivalence between Ireland, Scotland, and the UK

Academic Award Equivalence – Ireland, Scotland, and UK				
	No. of Awards	Level Ireland	Level Scotland	Level UK
Level 5 Certificate	1	5	6	3
Level 6 Certificate	1	6	7	4
Ordinary Degree	0	7	9	5
Honors Degree	7	8	10	6
Postgrad/Masters	6	9	11	7
Other (no level)	2			
Total Awards	17			

Appendix 9: Crumlin and Ballyfermot Deprivation Indices

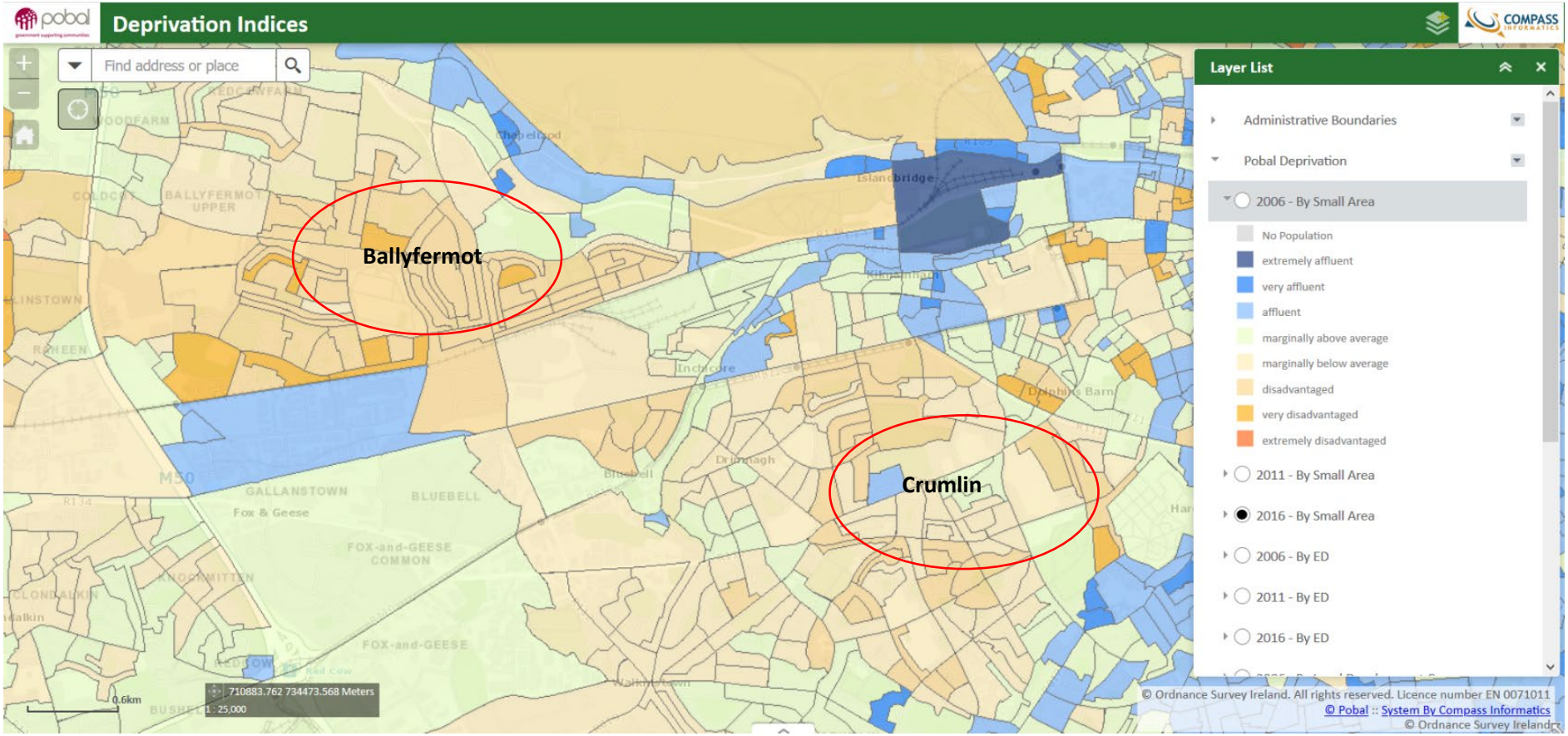


Figure 19: Deprivation Indices Map for Crumlin and Ballyfermot (Pobal, n.d.).

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