



Should the Irish Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) data collection move online?

Finnegan, K., Kavanagh A., Gavin, A., Kolto, A., Kelly, C. & Nic Gabhainn, S., HBSC Ireland, Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway

INTRODUCTION

HBSC is a cross-national research study that is conducted in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO).

This study takes place every four years with the aim to increase our awareness and understanding of young people's health and wellbeing.

HBSC is a school-based survey administered in classrooms. The current method of data collection is self-completed paper questionnaires.

We were interested in whether schools would prefer online completion, and what issues may arise if the mode of data collection was changed.

METHODS

All schools that had been included in the HBSC Ireland 2018 sample were invited to participate.

Of the 111 schools who responded, 82% ($n=91$) had taken part in the 2018 HBSC survey, while the remainder had declined to participate.

Data were collected using an online survey tool which asked various questions relating to internet access, availability of desktops, laptops and tablets for student use, and preferences for using online or paper questionnaires for future HBSC studies.

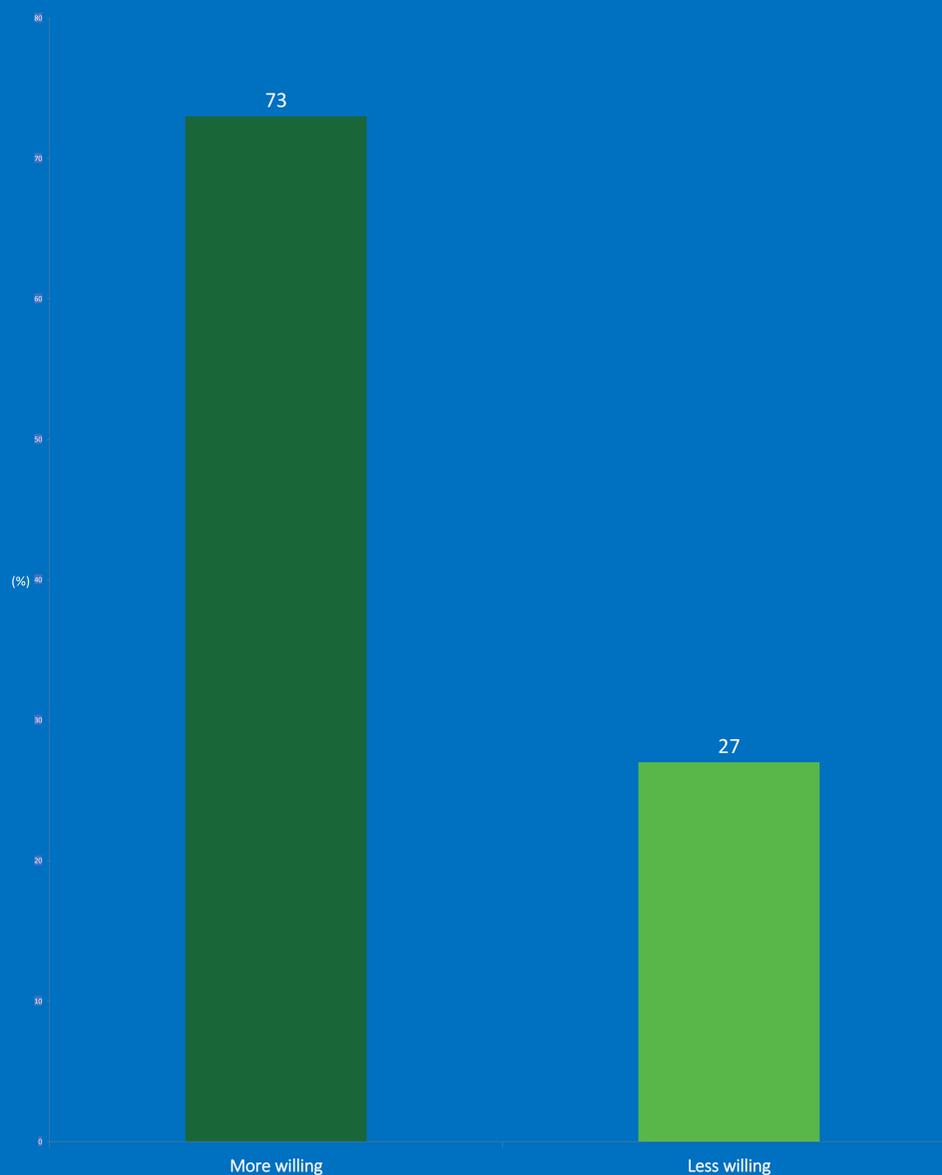
Descriptive analyses were conducted using SPSS v.24.

60% of schools would prefer online questionnaires

13.6% of schools would prefer paper questionnaires

26.4% said either method of data collection would suit their school.

Would schools be more or less willing to participate if HBSC was administered online?



RESULTS

Of the 111 responding schools, 54.5% were primary and 45.5% were post-primary. All schools had access to the internet.

Larger schools and post-primary schools were more likely to report that they would be willing to participate in the HBSC study online.

Facilitating factors for online surveys were reported as time saving, ease of administration and being more environmentally friendly.

Limited access to facilities, infrastructure and poor internet capacity were reported as barriers.

DISCUSSION

A change in administration of HBSC Ireland requires appropriate consultation with all stakeholders.

Findings suggest that most schools would be willing to move to an online survey, but an important minority prefer traditional data collection mechanisms.

A structured comparison of the response patterns received online and on paper supplemented with further consultations with parents and children will be required before a final decision can be made.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

HBSC Ireland is funded by the Department of Health. Further information from: www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc