

**Fitzgerald Eamonn, 2000, *Student Perceptions of Factors Influencing their Post-Primary School Choice: An Irish Study***

## **ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate student perceptions of the factors influencing their post-primary school choice in Ireland. It confines itself to students in mainstream education and to one minority group, travellers.

Chapter one sets the study in the context of school choice on transfer from primary to post-primary school.

Chapter two reviews seven previous studies in Ireland, which examined school choice on enrolment in post-primary school. It also focuses on the literature relating to factors influencing choice of post-primary school in OECD countries particularly in Scotland and in England. Comparative studies in the USA are also reviewed.

Chapter three outlines how students were surveyed by questionnaires and also how interviews were conducted with the principals of the their post-primary schools and the visiting teacher for travellers.

Chapter four provides a comprehensive presentation of the findings and analysis. It emerges that self and family, other influential people, particularly friends of the students and the concept of what constitutes a good school providing academic and non-academic criteria, categorise this study's findings of the influences on choice of post-primary school and how this choice is exerted.

Chapter five presents the conclusions. The central conclusion is that the cohort of Irish post-primary students in this study perceived themselves to be the most influential factor in choice of school, irrespective of school type, or gender. Other influential factors are friends' choice of school, joint family decision, visit of post-primary principal to the primary school and the desire to be enrolled in a good school judged by the criteria of good examination results, nice friends, good range of subjects and discipline. The author suggests that the implications of these findings for school authorities and parents are significant in an era of dropping enrolments. This dissertation also suggests further areas of study.