

**Grades 1 to 3 learners' perceptions of psychosocial
well-being in at-risk school communities**

Natalie Sadie

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UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
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**Grades 1 to 3 learners' perceptions of psychosocial well-being
in at-risk school communities**

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS
(Educational Psychology)

Department of Educational Psychology
Faculty of Education
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PRETORIA
2018

I dedicate this study to my mother, Jeanne Knoesen, as well as my late father, Kobus Sadie.

- ⌘ This study has been made possible through the support of the University of Pretoria; I would therefore like to thank the institution for granting me this enriching opportunity.
- ⌘ I would like to honour the time and guidance of my supervisor, Mrs Karien Botha, for her outstanding support and faith in me as a researcher.
- ⌘ My sincere appreciation goes to my co-supervisor, Dr Margaret Omidire, for offering her insight and guiding me in the completion of this mini-dissertation.
- ⌘ The field workers from the University of Pretoria who collected the raw data from two at-risk school communities and the research participants should be mentioned as significant contributors to my completion of this study.
- ⌘ It would not be possible for me to complete this mini-dissertation without the emotional, physical and financial support of my loving family, especially Jeanne Knoesen, Henrico Knoesen and Cornelia de Waal.
- ⌘ Sincere thanks to all my friends in Pretoria and Stellenbosch for their trust in my potential on this journey towards becoming an Educational Psychologist.
- ⌘ I thank my Heavenly Father for opening the door to this growth spurt in my professional, relational and personal life.

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Declaration of originality

I, Natalie Sadie (student number 16238185), hereby declare that this study is my personal independent research product and that I have not previously submitted this mini-dissertation for a degree at the University of Pretoria or any other tertiary institution. I hereby submit this mini-dissertation for the partial completion of the degree Magister Educationis in Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria. The resources consulted have been acknowledged according to the referencing technique of the American Psychological Association.

Natalie Sadie

31 August 2018

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The author, whose name appears on the title page of this mini-dissertation, has obtained, for the research described in this work, the applicable research ethics approval. The author declares that she has observed the ethical standards required in term of the University of Pretoria's *Code of ethics for researchers and the Policy guidelines for responsible research*.

Natalie Sadie

31 August 2018

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RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	CLEARANCE NUMBER: UP 12/09/02 Botha 17-001
DEGREE AND PROJECT	M.Ed Grades 1 to 3 learners' perceptions of their psychosocial well-being in at-risk school communities
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This Ethics Clearance Certificate should be read in conjunction with the Integrated Declaration Form (D08) which specifies details regarding:

- Compliance with approved research protocol,
- No significant changes,
- Informed consent/assent,
- Adverse experience or undue risk,
- Registered title, and
- Data storage requirements.

Supervisor: Mrs Karien Botha

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Degree: MEd (Educational Psychology)

The current study formed part of the NRF-funded UP/Fordham collaboration and was undertaken as part of the broader research project, focused on a health promotion intervention for 330 Grades 1 to 3 learners in two at-risk school communities. The purpose of the study was to explore and describe the perceptions of learners in two conveniently selected at-risk school communities, regarding factors that influence their psychosocial well-being.

A deeper understanding of the topic was enabled by considering learners' perceptions of the protective factors that promote their psychosocial well-being as well as the risk factors that they identified as inhibiting their psychosocial well-being. Furthermore, a qualitative research approach was employed with Phenomenology as the epistemological paradigm and Social Ecological Model as the theoretical framework. A previously collected PRA-based data set was analysed after conducting an ethically sound inductive qualitative thematic analysis. I identified emerging themes and the analysis mostly concurred with the literature reviewed in this study.

Learners' psychosocial well-being was influenced by various levels of the Social Ecological Model, which have an impact on learners' development. Some of the findings included learners' negative descriptions of themselves; the supporting role of relationships; nutrition and learning opportunities provided at the school as well as learners' strong identification with the media. The need for psychoeducational programs that offer guidelines and practical skills in areas such as self-acceptance, skills development, healthy attachment to others, learning styles, play, self-regulation and screen time, is emphasised.

Keywords: at-risk; Grades 1 to 3 learners; perceptions; PRA; protective factors; psychosocial well-being; risk factors; school communities

Confirmation of language editing

18 August 2018



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To whom it concerns:

This letter serves to confirm that I have edited a dissertation by Natalie Sadie for English language usage, titled:

*Grade 1 to 3 learners' perceptions of psychosocial well-being
in at-risk school communities,*

submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Magister Educationis (Educational Psychology) in the Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Louise van Niekerk', with a horizontal line underneath.

Louise van Niekerk

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1.1 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE FOR UNDERTAKING THE STUDY

This study of limited scope forms part of a broader NRF-funded research project at the University of Pretoria in collaboration with Fordham University in New York City (USA). The broader research project is aimed at facilitating social change by means of a school-based health promotion intervention. It focuses on healthy eating habits, physical fitness and the psychosocial well-being of Grades 1 to 3 learners (n=330) in two at-risk school communities in Pretoria, Gauteng. The planning and development of the health promotion intervention is based on pre-intervention assessments of the Grades 1 to 3 learners, as well as discussions and completed questionnaires by teachers and parents.

The development and implementation of the school-based health promotion intervention involved the following sequential stages:

- Stage 1: Obtaining baseline information from learners, teachers and parents in terms of their eating habits, physical fitness and psychosocial well-being respectively.
- Stage 2: Planning and development of the school-based health promotion intervention.
- Stage 3: Implementation of the school-based health promotion intervention.
- Stage 4: Evaluation of the outcome of the school-based health promotion intervention.
- Stage 5: Reporting on findings and exploring the option of extending the school-based health promotion intervention to other at-risk school communities.

This study of limited scope forms part of the first stage of the broader project within the psychosocial well-being focus area, and specifically focuses on the Grades 1 to 3 learners' perceptions of factors affecting their psychosocial well-being. The information obtained during this study had been used during the planning and development of the school-based health promotion intervention, by emphasising the

factors affecting the psychosocial well-being of Grades 1 to 3 learners (n=330) within the two selected at-risk school communities.

According to Barry and Friedli (2008), psychosocial well-being can be conceptualised as encompassing aspects of psychological (positive functioning) and social (relations with others in society) well-being. Diener, Saptya and Suh (1999, p. 34) regard psychosocial well-being as “individuals’ perception of their quality of life and their overall happiness with the various aspects of their life”.

Psychosocial well-being promotion is a concept with a preventative focus relating to the promotion of health behaviours and strengthening of the multi-domain functioning of individuals in various at-risk school communities (Eloff & Ebersöhn, 2004). Eloff and Ebersöhn (2004) also point out that society will not have a significant influence on the psychosocial well-being of learners unless health promotion is integrated into the learners’ school-based learning experiences.

The basic psychological needs of relatedness, competence and autonomy, as specified by the self-determination theory, contribute significantly to the psychosocial well-being of individuals (Chen, Van Assche, Vansteenkiste, Soenens & Beyers, 2015). According to these authors (Chen et al., 2015), individuals’ search for meaning and psychosocial support in adverse situations, indicate that society is not satisfied with physical or material wealth only.

Van der Merwe (2006) explored individuals’ perceptions of poverty and noticed that individuals who experienced adversity still had positive beliefs about themselves despite their deprivation. In addition, Crivello, Camfield and Woodhead (2009) emphasise that the focus on learners’ psychosocial well-being go beyond investigating survival and deprivation; it may also be on recognising learners’ potential for resilience in the face of adversity.

According to Prever (2006), there seems to be interaction between risk factors and protective factors in a young person's life. The reason for this is that a young person is more likely to cope with difficulty if there is a balance between risk and protective factors. Prever (2006, p. 23) states that: “protective factors are important because it suggests ways in which interventions can be made by the school and other professionals to increase a pupil's ability to cope with change and survive adversity”. Similar to protective factors, risk factors are also found within learners, their families and their communities. In addition, the context or environment in which the learners or family live can also contribute to risk (Prever, 2006).

The broader research project includes certain objectives of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The United Nations indicates that since 1990, almost one billion people globally, have been supported due to poverty (Ferlay et al., 2014). The only region where approximately half of the people live on fewer than US \$1.25 daily is Sub-Saharan Africa.

In an attempt to address the SDGs, Ferlay et al. (2015) identified health promotion and well-being as an important strategy to promote effective school-based interventions, universal primary education for all and improved psychosocial well-being. By supporting learners during early childhood development, the psychosocial well-being of the learners can have a positive impact on their future (Phillips & Shonkoff, 2000). The vital task is for school communities to find ways to translate protective factors into practical action (Prever, 2006).

Crivello et al. (2009, p. 69) regard learners as the “key actors in broader social, economic and political processes” to shape everyday lives and pave supportive pathways over time. According to Singh and Keenan (2010), research efforts related to younger learners tend to be merely conducted ‘on’ learners, and not ‘with’ or ‘for’ learners. In addition, Singh and Keenan (2010) point out that younger learners are not viewed as active agents and key informants in matters pertaining to their health and psychosocial well-being. These authors furthermore conclude that limited research is available on the experiences, perceptions and voices of younger learners regarding factors affecting their psychosocial well-being (Singh & Keenan, 2010).

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Early childhood development plays a role in learners' thinking and feelings about their environment, relationships and psychosocial well-being needs (Frongillo, Tofail, Hamadani, Warren & Mehrin, 2014). Savahl et al. (2015) state that the psychosocial well-being, rights and needs of learners in at-risk school communities have been emphasised through the implementation of developmental support strategies by governments globally. Despite this action-oriented process, learners still live in impoverished, abusive and exploitive environments that may lead to the prevalence of low psychosocial well-being among them (Savahl, et al., 2015). In addition, Savahl et al. (2015) accentuate that limited research is available on the topic of learners' perceptions of factors affecting their psychosocial well-being, specifically in Sub-Saharan Africa (Savahl et al., 2015; Grantham-McGregor et al., 2007). Against this

background, the purpose of this study is to describe the perceptions of Grades 1 to 3 learners (n=330) in two selected at-risk school communities on factors affecting their psychosocial well-being.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study of limited scope was directed by the following primary research question: *What are Grades 1 to 3 learners' perceptions of factors affecting their psychosocial well-being in at-risk school communities?*

In order to address the primary research question, I was guided by the following secondary research questions:

- Which risk factors do Grades 1 to 3 learners identify that may inhibit their psychosocial well-being in at-risk school communities?
- Which protective resources do Grades 1 to 3 learners identify that may promote their psychosocial well-being in at-risk school communities?

1.4 WORKING ASSUMPTIONS

Based on my literature review, I conducted this study of limited scope against the background of the following assumptions:

- Grades 1 to 3 learners in at-risk school communities are exposed to different challenges within their contexts, which may have an impact on the perceptions these learners may have of their psychosocial well-being.
- The experiences and perceptions of psychosocial well-being are linked to learners' contexts and school communities.
- Similar to protective factors, risk factors are also found within learners, their families and their communities.
- The context or environment in which the learners or their families live, can also contribute to psychosocial well-being
- Psychosocial well-being in at-risk school communities is associated with protective factors. These protective factors include personal factors, familial factors and extra-familial factors.

1.5 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

In this section, I clarify the key concepts that guided this study of limited scope.

1.5.1 GRADES 1 TO 3 LEARNERS

The South African Schools Act (South African Government, 1995) and the Department of Basic Education (2017) define a learner as an individual who is attending school (primary or secondary) and receives education. Grades 1 to 3 learners have been referred to as school-attending learners between seven and nine years of age within the South African school system (Department of Basic Education, 2017; Fleisch, 2008).

According to the Psychosocial Developmental theory of Erikson (1986), learners between seven and nine years of age are in the middle childhood phase of development (Le Roux & Perold, 2004), and experience industry *versus* inferiority as developmental challenge. This developmental challenge is marked by a strong need for autonomy (Erikson, 1986) and rapid physical, cognitive, social and psychological development (Grobler, 2011). Grades 1 to 3 learners (n=330) who reside in two at-risk school communities, participated in this study of limited scope. The participating learners' contextual background is characterised by poverty, a lack of basic services and limited resources.

1.5.2 PERCEPTIONS

Perceptions are defined as the subjective view of phenomena or the organising of a truthful version of reality (Burr, 2004). According to Mareno (2013, p. 35), perceptions are the “construction of mental symbols or representations of reality gained from senses”. Individual and social meanings can be derived from the senses through active interpretation (Cobern, 1993) and allow the interpretation of contexts (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). In this study, perceptions refer to Grades 1 to 3 learners' understanding or representations of psychosocial well-being in the at-risk school communities in which they live, based on their experiences and information gathered through their senses.

1.5.3 PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING

Psychosocial well-being can be described as behavioural, emotional, interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of psychological and social development (Snowman & McCown, 2013). In addition, psychosocial well-being can be connected to the overall health and well-being of individuals and communities. Psychosocial well-being is furthermore associated with positive functioning and linked to the mental health continuum (Wissing, Temane, Khumalo, Kruger & Vorster, 2014). Ryff (1996)

indicates that positive functioning includes, self-acceptance, positive relationships, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery and autonomy.

According to Snowman and McCown (2013), learners' perceptions of psychosocial well-being are influenced by their thinking patterns, social interactions, moral development, psychological maturity and personal characteristics. In this study of limited scope, psychosocial well-being is regarded as psychological (positive functioning) and social (relations with others in society) well-being.

1.5.4 AT-RISK SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

At-risk school communities have been referred to as poverty stricken communities within South Africa (Van der Merwe, 2006). These at-risk communities are being challenged in terms of sustainability, security, support, well-being, resilience and quality of life (Drimie & Casale, 2009). People living in these at-risk communities often lack basic services, education, employment, and social support and, as a result, they may develop passive coping strategies (Wissing et al., 2014).

Quality teacher-learner interaction (Baker, 1999) and parental involvement (Ingram, Wolfe & Lieberman, 2007) might enable at-risk schools to manage environmental risks and a shortage of financial resources. Effective partnering between families and at-risk schools are required to promote coping at such educational institutions. In this study, at-risk school communities can be described as schools situated in communities that are poverty stricken and where learners subsequently receive government-aided nutritional support.

1.6 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVES

In the following sections, I introduce the epistemology, methodological approach and theoretical framework that guided this study of limited scope. A detailed description is provided in Chapter 3.

1.6.1 EPISTEMOLOGICAL PARADIGM

I relied on Phenomenology as a meta-theoretical approach (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Phenomenology aims to gain a deep understanding of the life worlds of participants and their interpretations thereof in an attempt to understand a social phenomenon. According to Cohen et al. (2011), a phenomenological paradigm furthermore aims to find an insider perspective from context-specific experiences (Nieuwenhuis, 2007b). In addition, Creswell (2014) acknowledges that individuals

continuously assign subjective meaning to their lived experiences. This allows for more meaningful insight regarding individuals' subjective experiences and the role social influences play in these individuals' experiences.

1.6.2 METHODOLOGICAL PARADIGM

I employed a qualitative research approach as methodological paradigm (Creswell, 2014). A qualitative research approach allowed me to extract the “depth and richness” (James, Milenkiewicz & Bucknam, 2008, p. 58) of the way in which the Grades 1 to 3 learners perceive the factors affecting their psychosocial well-being. In addition, a qualitative research approach acknowledges the complexities of phenomena embedded in local contexts and social situations, as well as possible needs based on meanings that participants attach to experiences (Creswell, 2014).

According to McMillian and Schumacher (2014), a qualitative research approach also identifies multiple realities and explains numerous features of the context being studied. A qualitative research approach is furthermore constructed through analysing data that is typically generated through observations, focus group discussions, interviews and documents (Sandelowski & Leeman, 2012). In addition, McMillian and Schumacher (2014) highlight participants' understanding and the significance they attach to their lived experiences. A qualitative research approach therefor allowed me to gather detailed information on the perceptions of Grades 1 to 3 learners on factors affecting their psychosocial well-being.

1.6.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

I relied on the Social Ecological Model (SEM) as theoretical framework (McLeroy et al., 1988¹) to provide a holistic understanding of the interwoven levels of systemic development (Gunderson & Holling, 2002). Intrapersonal, interpersonal, community and policy levels of the psychosocial perceptions of poverty, learner development and mental health, emphasise the value of supportive families, schools and neighbourhoods to assist with individuals' psychosocial well-being during different phases of their lives (Petanidou, Daskagianni, Dimitrakaki, Kolaitis & Tountas, 2013).

The SEM also emphasise the interdependence between learners (individuals), their contexts and social relationships, which influence these learners (individuals) on a daily basis (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2010). In addition, according to the SEM, if there is an action in one of the systems, that action may influence the other systems.

¹ This theory serves as a valid and reliable systems theory for the study.

The SEM furthermore provides a framework to implement and restructure intrapersonal to policy-level ripple effects in at-risk school communities (Walker, Holling, Carpenter & Kinzig, 2004).

Bauer et al. (2003) suggest that empowerment, participation and equality of all people and systems might build supportive environments, develop healthy public policy, re-orientate health services, and strengthen community action, as well as the development of personal skills for better psychosocial well-being.

1.7 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Figure 1.1 presents a brief overview of the research process during this study of limited scope. A more detailed explanation follows in Chapter 3.

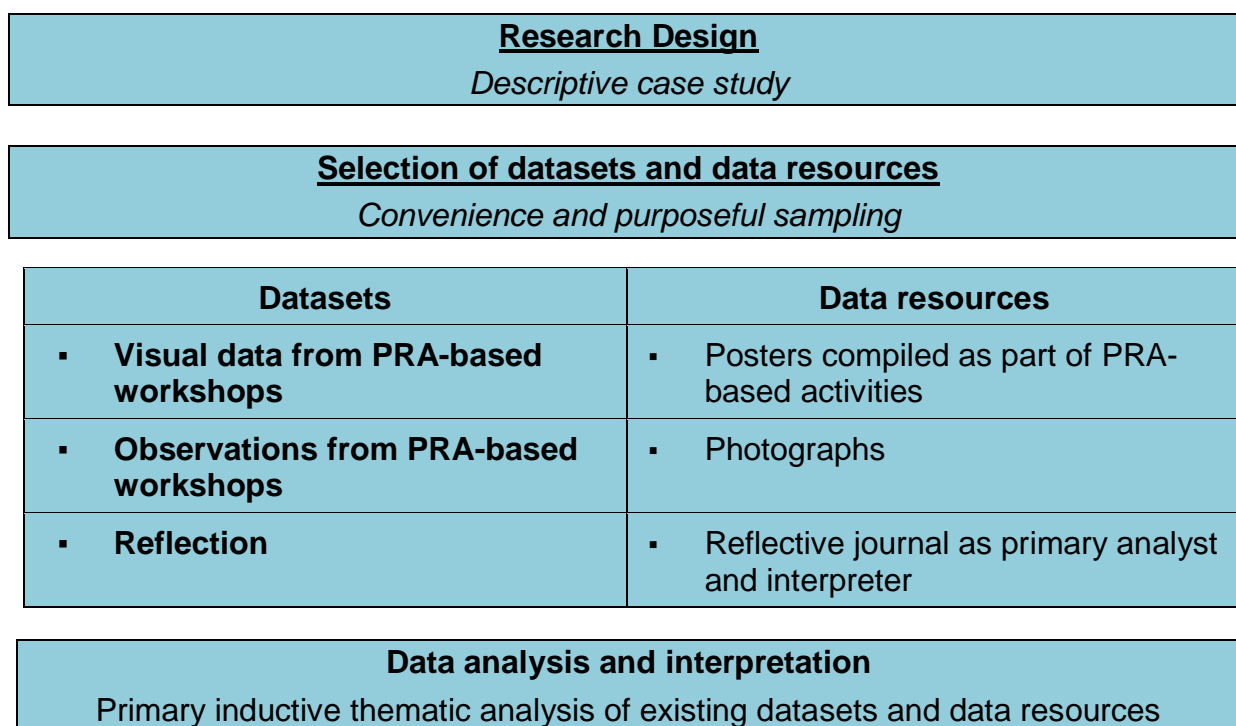


Figure 1.1: Overview of the research process

For the purpose of this study of limited scope, I used a descriptive case study design (Yin, 2003). Yin (2003) describes a case study as an inquiry, while investigating a social phenomenon within a real-life context, where multiple sources of evidence are being used. Case studies, within a phenomenological perspective, strive to understand “what an experience means for persons who have had the experience” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13). Working from a descriptive case-study design enabled me to investigate the perceptions of learners regarding factors affecting their psychosocial well-being.

As my study of limited scope forms part of the broader NRF-funded research project at the University of Pretoria in collaboration with Fordham University in New York City (USA), I conducted primary inductive thematic analysis and interpreted the existing datasets and data resources that were previously collected by the project leaders and field workers during 2015 (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014; Mouton, 2001). Thus, the existing datasets and data resources have not been analysed for any other purpose previously (De Vos, Delport, Fouché & Strydom, 2011). In my study of limited scope, I also did the initial primary analysis and interpretation of the existing data as part of the broader projects' aim to facilitate social change by means of a school-based health promotion intervention. As mentioned previously, the information obtained during my study had been used as part of the planning and development of a school-based health promotion intervention, by emphasising the factors affecting the psychosocial well-being of Grades 1 to 3 learners (n=330) within the two selected at-risk school communities.

I relied on convenience sampling (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016) in selecting the datasets and data resources, as I conducted my study within a broader research the project's aim. In addition, I used purposive sampling to select the specific qualitative datasets and data resources that included the collected qualitative data focusing on Grades 1 to 3 learners' psychosocial well-being.

Although purposeful sampling may not be representative or generalisable, the aim of this study of limited scope is to acquire an in-depth understanding of Grades 1 to 3 learners' perceptions of factors affecting their psychosocial well-being (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Thus, my study of limited scope included all the qualitative data generated during the PRA-based activities in 2015 with 330 Grades 1 to 3 participants from the two at-risk school communities, to determine their perceptions of factors affecting the learners' psychosocial well-being.

The existing datasets and data resources include visual data (posters and photographs) compiled as part of the PRA-based activities with 330 Grades 1 to 3 learners, and a reflective journal. Posters were created to capture the participating Grades 1 to 3 learners' perceptions of factors affecting their psychosocial well-being (Chambers, 2008). I furthermore transcribed the posters to capture the written information during the research process (Chambers, 2007; Nieuwenhuis, 2007b). Throughout my involvement in the broader research project, I also kept my own reflective journal to facilitate reflexivity in my capacity as a researcher (Ortlipp, 2008).

Primary inductive thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2013) was conducted by means of “identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within (the) data” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 82), as a result of “recurrence and importance” of the analysed datasets and data resources (Buetow, 2010, p. 123). The preliminary scanning of datasets and data resources was done as part of the initial data analysis process (Gavin, 2008).

This was followed by coding, marking and the indexing of the datasets and data resources, which contributed to developing themes. I identified the emerging themes through the clustering of codes according to their similarities. The identified themes capture specific patterns and represent responses that are directed at the research questions (Ebersöhn, Eloff & Ferreira, 2016). I discussed the initial results with my supervisor before interpreting the analysed data to ensure that an advanced understanding of the perceptions of participants was reflected (Chambers, 2012).

1.8 QUALITY CRITERIA

To contribute towards the trustworthiness of my study of limited scope, I made use of quality criteria related to credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and authenticity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). First, credibility refers to the in-depth descriptions of the datasets and data resources and allows readers to better understand the experiences of participants involved in research projects (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). The credibility of my study of limited scope was enriched by the extensive descriptions of the datasets and data resources, prolonged time spent with the transcripts and an audit trail I provided (Tracy, 2010).

Second, according to Creswell (2014), transferability indicates the degree to which conclusions may be generalised and transferred to other contexts. The aim of this study of limited scope was not to generalise, but to provide a detailed description of Grades 1 to 3 learners’ perceptions of factors affecting their psychosocial well-being.

Thirdly, dependability refers to whether findings are “an outcome of a consistent and dependable process” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 318). During this study, I depended on reflection and discussions with my supervisors in an effort to ensure dependable findings. I furthermore relied on an audit trail (Creswell, 2014) to provide a detailed account of the research methods, datasets and data resources I utilised.

Fourthly, confirmability refers to the prerequisite of findings to reflect the perceptions and experiences of the participants (Snyman, 1989). I aimed to enhance the

confirmability of my study of limited scope by relying on multiple data datasets and data resources. I also include direct quotations from the participants when presenting the results in Chapter 4, to support my interpretations of their responses. (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Lastly, I focused on authenticity, which refers to the degree to which different points of views are equally represented (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). I aimed to conduct authentic research through “solicit(ing) and honour(ing)” the experiences and perceptions obtained from different Grades 1 to 3 learners (Morrow, 2005, p. 252) by accurately reporting the participants’ perceptions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) and including an audit trail in this mini-dissertation of limited scope (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Graneheim & Lundman, 2003).

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this study of limited scope, I adhered to the guidelines for ethical behaviour as stipulated by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria. Ethical considerations incorporated during the broader NRF-funded University of Pretoria/Fordham University project, which are relevant to this study, include confidentiality, respect and anonymity (Cohen & Morrison, 2011).

I furthermore respected the Grades 1 to 3 learners’ (who participated in the data generation process) right to privacy and dignity (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013) by using pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality (Wiles, Crow, Heath & Charles, 2008). Throughout this study, I did not falsify, misrepresent or invent findings to meet my own or an audience’s needs (Creswell, 2009). In addition, I displayed integrity during the primary thematic analysis of the datasets and data resources, while honouring my professional and scientific responsibility (Miller & Salkind, 2002). Lastly, I ensured that the datasets, data resources and my own reflective journal had been stored in a secure location. I elaborate on the ethical considerations that guided me in Chapter 3.

1.10 OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS

The chapters in this dissertation have been structured as follows:

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCING THE STUDY

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to this study of limited scope. I provide an outline of the rationale for undertaking this study, explain the purpose of the study and

provide the research questions I formulated to guide the study. I then introduce my selected epistemology, methodological approach and theoretical framework and briefly state the methodological strategies I employed. I conclude the chapter with a brief overview of the quality criteria and ethical consideration adhered to throughout this study of limited scope.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In Chapter 2, I discuss literature relevant to the global impact of poverty, the prevalence of poverty in at-risk South African school communities and the importance of understanding well-being in at-risk school communities. I also discuss Grades 1 to 3 learners' developmental phase of middle childhood in relation to psychosocial well-being and contemplate interventions promoting psychosocial well-being. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of the SEM as a theoretical framework of this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In Chapter 3, I describe the research process followed in terms of the selected epistemology, methodological paradigm, research design, datasets and data resources, as well as the primary inductive thematic analysis and interpretation I completed. I conclude the chapter by discussing the ethical considerations and quality criteria I adhered to throughout this study of limited scope.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

In Chapter 4, I present the results of this study of limited scope in terms of the themes and subthemes that emerged following the primary inductive thematic data analysis of existing datasets and data resources. I subsequently position the results in terms of existing literature, with the aim of presenting findings.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Chapter 5, I provide my conclusion in terms of the research questions and purpose of the study, based on the findings presented in Chapter 4. I also reflect on the challenges experienced in conducting the study, as well as the potential value and strengths of the study. I conclude with recommendations for future research, training and practice.

1.11 CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter is to provide an introduction to this study. I discuss the purpose of the study, outline the research questions and specify the working assumptions with which I approached the study. This is followed by a clarification of key concepts and an introduction of the selected theoretical, epistemological and methodological approaches used. I also postulate the research design and research methodology I used.

Lastly, I provide a brief overview of the ethical considerations and quality criteria followed throughout this study of limited scope. In the next chapter, I discuss existing literature in the field of this study. I also explain the theoretical framework selected as background to this study of limited scope.

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2.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1, I provided an overview of the study approach. I explained the rationale and the purpose of the research, indicated my working assumptions and clarified key concepts. I subsequently introduced the theoretical framework of my study, namely the Social Ecological Model (SEM) that guided the study (McLeroy et al., 1988). I briefly provided an overview of the selected epistemological and methodological approaches, the research process, quality criteria and ethical considerations employed during the study.

In this chapter, I explore existing literature related to South African school communities that are considered to be at-risk. I also discuss the global impact of poverty, while paying special attention to the prevalence of poverty in South-African at-risk school communities. In order to understand the challenges influencing all levels of society, I also focus on the at-risk school communities facing poverty. Information on Grades 1 to 3 learners' perceptions of psychosocial well-being is subsequently interwoven with investigations of learner profiles.

Learners' development in the middle childhood phase should be considered in order to relate the impact of poverty on their social and psychological well-being. In this chapter, I therefore also extensively discuss psychosocial well-being, overall well-being and health, including risk and protective factors that promote or act as promoting risk. Awareness of the risk- and protective factors in the lives of Grades 1 to 3 learners enables a better understanding of perceptions shaping their world view in terms of health inhibition versus health promotion. Global and South-African interventions aimed at promoting psychosocial well-being are also included. In conclusion, the theoretical framework is discussed in detail and applied to South-African at-risk school communities, with special attention to themes relating to vulnerability in learners' lives.

2.2 GLOBAL IMPACT OF POVERTY

The term 'at-risk' can be scaled in terms of a continuum of minimal, remote, high, and imminent to at-risk categories, with at-risk being the category where learners are

already experiencing problems of the risks related to vulnerability and poverty (McWhirter et al., 2013). Challenges with which at-risk learners are faced, include cyber technology, dropping out of school, youth suicide, vulnerability, substance abuse, racism, sexual inclination and risky behaviour (UNICEF, 2009). These challenges are influenced by wider society, primary social interactions, and attributes of the individual, which sprouts into learners' adaptation to society (McWhirter et al., 2013).

Globally, more than 125 million individuals needed humanitarian assistance over the last two decades as a result of conflict, displacement, natural disasters and profound vulnerability (UNICEF, 2017). Viruses, malnutrition, food security, natural disasters, political conflict and violence threatened communities' well-being (Merrel, 2008; Weinstein, Rosen, Snowman, McCown, Maphalala & Tebane, 2016). Over the last two decades, children in Sub-Saharan Africa have been 12 times more likely to die before the age of five than children in high-income countries.

Mental health and well-being are associated with physical and emotional health, as well as positive functioning, a sense of meaning and purpose in life and positive societal relations (Barry & Friedli, 2008). Psychosocial well-being is influenced by high-risk environments and may decline in circumstances of poverty (Negovan, 2010). Definitions of poverty within at-risk communities include a lack of access to adequate services, infrastructure, social networks and material possessions (Noble Wright, Magasela & Ratchiffe, 2008). A lack of food, safe drinking water and sanitation, as well as inadequate shelter and education are also associated with at-risk communities.

Poverty can furthermore be divided into aspects relating to livelihood, sustainability, security, support, well-being, resilience and positive outcomes (Drimie & Casale, 2009). Learners living in at-risk circumstances often lack education, live in areas of high unemployment, lack social support, and develop passive coping strategies and pessimism (Wissing et al., 2013). Along with these circumstances, a diminished sense of self-esteem and the loss of control over their lives are often associated with chronic stressors (Amato & Zuo, 1992).

2.2.1 PREVALENCE OF POVERTY IN SOUTH-AFRICAN AT-RISK SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

According to Statistics South Africa (2015), 15% of households in South Africa have no income. The status of no income and severe poverty, can partially be attributed to an increase in population growth in both the Western Cape and Gauteng (Statistics

South Africa, 2015). It was reported that in 2017, social grants to the value of R17 million were supporting at-risk South African households (Merten, 2017). During the same year, 70% of South African households in Gauteng were able to generate a salary, while the rest were dependent on the social grants only. People living in poverty, do not have access to sufficient basic resources and are dependant on the government in meeting their basic nutritional needs and living costs.

Poverty intersects with causes of vulnerability, including the HIV and AIDS epidemic, high unemployment and inadequate delivery of basic services (Fotso et al., 2012). In addition, insufficient qualifications and low motivation among teachers, poor resources and the physical condition of schools, as well as inadequate sanitation facilities, overcrowded classrooms, the prevalence of sexual offences and widespread violence, contribute towards poor learner achievement and inadequate neurological development of children in at-risk school communities (Semrud-Clikeman & Ellison, 2009). As such, poverty has an influence on education, which is an important indicator of human development and specifically of learners' well-being. South Africa has been facing serious challenges in terms of the effectiveness of the country's schooling system, while substantial social and economic inequality still persist regarding access to education (Timaeus, Simelane & Letsoalo, 2013).

Relations between learners and parents from at-risk families should be harmonious in order to strengthen the family's upbringing potential in the face of poverty (Michigan Department of Community Health, 2003; Ungar, 2014). Families may address social, economic, cultural and educational crises in order to support "somatic, mental and social health and impaired psychosocial development, as well as lowered adaptive and socialising possibilities" (Reprintseva, 2009, p. 3). According to Fotso et al. (2012), one in five children are stunted in terms of growth and less than 10% of infants are breastfed up to six months. Children are furthermore deprived of adequate parental care, because almost 4 million children have lost a parent or both parents. UNESCO confirms that 26% of children in Sub-Saharan Africa are living without their biological parents and it is likely that many at-risk children are not living with either of their biological parents (Walsh, 2016).

Van der Merwe (2006) explored individuals' perceptions of poverty and noticed that most individuals who live in poverty-stricken at-risk communities in South African still had some positive beliefs about themselves and their worth. Human capital influences problem-solving, determination and confidence levels (Van der Merwe, 2006). Interventions that strengthen individuals' ability to cope, while supporting

vulnerability and promoting physical and psychological well-being, could promote psychosocial stability (Chen et al., 2015). Quality health care and education are possible through the promotion of sufficient stimulation and development comprising emotional, cognitive, sensory, spiritual, moral, physical, social and communication aspects (UNICEF, 2009).

Inequality among households, coupled with socio-economic conditions in South Africa, make it difficult for children in at-risk communities to develop and learn according to age-appropriate milestones, and to complete their schooling (Swart & Pettipher, 2011). South African national policies, interventions and legislation currently focus on home- and community-based support in terms of standards of nutrition, health care and child care, especially aimed at supporting vulnerable or at-risk learners (UNICEF, 2009). Nel et al. (2016) confirm the need for more health professionals to support Grades 1 to 3 learners with physical and learning resources, and to address the need for increased psychological services.

Existing literature about poverty and living in at-risk communities, focus mainly on children's loss, shortages and limited resources (Sarvimäki, 2006). According to Crivello et al., 2009, p. 54), research efforts may be informed by children's "resourcefulness, resilience, optimism and sense of agency" that enable them to exercise resilience by bouncing back from adversity and adapting in the face of poverty.

2.2.2 AT-RISK SCHOOL COMMUNITIES IN THE FACE OF POVERTY

Poverty influences learners' level of vulnerability and could lead to malnutrition and chronic health issues (McWhirter et al., 2013). Abuse, high crime rates and violence are associated with at-risk communities (Charleswood et al., 2008).

Schools offer hope to holistic learners' well-being and neurodevelopmental maturation (Semrud-Clikeman & Ellison, 2009). Resourcefulness, optimism and agency in at-risk school communities can help learners to become more resilient despite contexts of risk (Crivello et al., 2009). Interventions focusing on the identification of assets within at-risk school communities, such as human agency, strengths and satisfaction, can enhance learners' self-confidence, creativity, capacity for hard work, self-determination, optimism and faith (Ungar, 2014; Van der Merwe, 2006).

The long-term partnering of teachers with other professionals who are tools of transformation could aid the process of dealing with poverty in South African schools that lack sufficient resources (Ebersöhn, 2015). Teachers' knowledge of resilience (Ebersöhn, 2015) can be shared and developed to improve learners' health and well-being, and to meet their psychological and social needs.

2.3 GRADES 1 TO 3 LEARNERS AND MIDDLE CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Middle childhood is the period after early childhood and before adolescence, known for gradual maturation of learners in terms of self-sufficiency, interpretation of the world and emotional awareness, as well as agency (Thomson et al., 2004). Grades 1 to 3 learners are generally school-attending children between seven and nine years old, but may include learners between the ages of six to 12 years (Harold & Hay, 2003). During this phase learners start to experience the environment beyond the home context and familial interaction through play and socialisation.

Factors of support or risk promote or hinder the development of healthy psychosocial milestones. Positive relationships of care, cooperation and free expression are considered to be building blocks that support the way learners approach teaching and learning activities (Michigan Department of Community Health, 2003). Secure attachment between learners and parents are characterised by stability, consistency, responsiveness, sensitivity and comfort (Michigan Department of Community Health, 2003; Offord Centre for Child Studies, 2009). Such relationships of care, contribute to learners' self-confidence and enthusiasm. They are more attuned to understanding relationships, emotions and morality; they are able to explore their surroundings more freely and master tasks of increased novelty (Klein, 2002). Positive, authoritative parenting styles promote psychosocial maturity by fostering security, love, discipline and respect (Maggi et al., 2010).

Personality maturation is strongly linked to temperament during middle childhood (Offord Centre for Child Studies, 2012). Individual differences in patterns of behaviour, self-regulation, attention and reactivity to emotional and motor stimulation are incorporated into learners' temperamental development (Sanson, Hempill & Smart, 2004). Neural development is enhanced during this phase of life as brain circuits are formed and reinforced through experiences in the environment and their individual needs (Chief Medical Officer of Health, 2011).

Play-based interaction is critically important since it reinforces resilience, adaptability, learning ability and creativity (Hurdle, 2001; Isenberg & Quisenberry, 2002; Michigan

Department of Community Health, 2003; Singer & Lamm, 2009). In addition, the development of logic, social negotiation, self-regulation, narrative understanding and positive approaches to learning serve as a protective factor during middle childhood (Bartlett, 2010; Bergen, 2002; Berk, Mann & Ogan, 2006; Michigan Department of Community Health, 2003). However, neurological development could be stunted through continued toxic stress, neglect, trauma or abuse. Coping ability and cultural factors also contribute towards values, expectations and learner behaviour (Grusec, 2011). Learner rights should be respected and abided by during teaching and learning in order to expand their rights (Pillay, 2003).

Learners in the middle childhood phase of development reach developmental milestones (Snowman & McCown, 2013) within the concrete-operational phase of their development (Erikson, 1986). They strive towards experiencing industry or competence versus inferiority (Erikson, 1986). Learners' identity development takes place as the child learns to move around more freely, while establishing wider radiuses of goals. Their language development and understanding increases and their imaginations develop to ignite a sense of ambition and purpose (Erikson, 1986). Weinstein et al. (2016) and Charlesworth et al. (2008) elaborate that physical development is supported through higher levels of sport- and play-based relationships (Offord Centre for Child Studies, 2009), ultimately developing a healthy self-esteem. Reality-based friendly and rule-based sport and play can be utilised to encourage learners' perspective-taking (Snowman & McCown, 2013).

Healthy development during childhood lays the building blocks for the optimal development of human beings and society in general (Biersteker & Dawes, 2008). From birth until about nine years of age, children's process of growing and thriving takes place physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally and socially (Santrock, 2009). Physical, motor, emotional, cognitive (Chief Medical Officer of Health, 2011) and language development take place during this age range and is critical for the child's optimal well-being (Biersteker & Dawes, 2008).

Psychosocial well-being of learners in Grades 1 to 3 requires a broad network of social support from family, community, peers and caregivers, which in turn promotes reciprocal well-being and positive psychosocial health (Casale et al., 2015; Snowman & McCown, 2013; Offord Centre for Child Studies, 2009). Within the African context and the reality of adolescents living with HIV and AIDS, high mortality rates of biological parents, caregiver morbidity and absence, are complex factors which form

part of the holistic understanding of learners' well-being (Fattore, Mason & Watson, 2007).

While deprivation in terms of parental care is linked to developmental regression (Snowman & McCown, 2013), it is remarkable to note that less time is spent with parents than peers during middle childhood (Louw & Louw, 2007). Stable involvement and secure attachment are therefore required to support learners during Grades 1 to 3 to ensure that relations with parents remain intact, even during the decrease in quality time with learners (Charlesworth et al., 2008; Michigan Department of Community Health, 2003; Offord Centre for Child Studies, 2009).

During the middle childhood development phase, learners develop cognitive, social, physical, emotional and psychological mastery as their competency increases (Snowman & McCown, 2013). These cognitive processes (Chief Medical Officer of Health, 2011) require sufficient nutritional intake to sustain neural growth and stimulation (Nel et al., 2016). A lack of proper nutritional resources may be viewed as a threat to physical and psychosocial well-being (Landsberg et al., 2016; UNICEF, 2017). Development and health could be stunted without access to adequate nutritional resources (Louw & Louw, 2012).

Psychological development relating to behavioural, emotional, interpersonal and intrapersonal needs, along with social needs relating to people and environments, should be considered when these developmental milestones and stages are approached or reached. The provision of different types of supportive measures and systems of influence is necessary to ensure attention to psychosocial needs, aimed at achieving optimal health and well-being of the youth (Swart & Pettipher, 2011; Offord Centre for Child Studies, 2009).

The perception of learners' own psychosocial well-being is influenced by their thought patterns, social interaction, moral development, maturity and typical characteristics associated with middle childhood. Secure parental attachment could relate to better established direct and indirect motivational levels during task completion (Louw & Louw, 2007) and school achievement (Charlesworth et al., 2008).

Learners in the developmental stage of middle childhood, evaluate friendship bonds, organise play in smaller groups; engage in physical fights and verbal arguments. Learners are also increasingly eager to please teachers and are aware of others' emotions (Snowman & McCown, 2013; Thomson et al., 2004). Negative peer

interaction infringes on learners' basic rights of privacy and dignity (Louw & Louw, 2007), but these become increasingly common, leading to absenteeism, social isolation, mood disorders and developmental regression (Landsberg et al., 2016). Bullying behaviour by perpetrators, bystanders, adherents and victims becomes more prevalent, whether it be verbal, non-verbal or relational (Louw & Louw, 2007), while manipulation and exploitation also increase during this phase of development (Weinstein et al., 2016). Learners' social status is affected by interpersonal peer relationships, leading to them being labelled as popular, rejected, neglected or obtaining a controversial social liking (Nel et al., 2016).

On a cognitive level of development (Chief Medical Officer of Health, 2011), learners are able to distinguish that there are various ways to discover or know things and that some ways are better than others, while comprehending that learning is comprised of organised cognitive processes they can control (Bartlett, 2011; Bergen, 2002; Berk et al., 2006; Michigan Department of Community Health, 2003). Social and interpersonal reasoning skills also become more sophisticated during middle childhood (Snowman & McCown, 2013). Health can thus be conceptualised in terms of behavioural, emotional, intra- and interpersonal equilibrium (Snowman & McCown, 2013).

Another factor influencing this equilibrium is exposure to technology and media, as the content of media that learners are exposed to is not always age-appropriate (Louw & Louw, 2007; Snowman & McCown, 2016). Cyber technology (UNICEF, 2009) and the use of electronics could also influence interpersonal dynamics in society (McWhirter et al., 2013), as well as the quality of friendships (Louw & Louw, 2007; Snowman & McCown, 2013). Such behaviour, which increases passivity, inattention and aggression, has already been noticed among learners over the last decade (UNICEF, 2009).

Rapid cognitive development, maturation and linguistic development take place during this phase of childhood, while the ability to categorise and classify thoughts and ideas are formed (Chief Medical Officer of Health, 2011; Louw & Louw, 2007; Semrud-Clikeman & Ellison, 2009). The roles of responsibility, loyalty, faithfulness and generosity become more evident (Snowman & McCown, 2013; Tuckman & Monetti, 2011; Weinstein et al., 2016), while developing new skills and tasks becomes more prominent (Lightfoot, Cole & Cole, 2009). Learners become increasingly aware of their psychological traits and qualities during middle childhood (Louw & Louw, 2007). Failing a school grade and dealing with criticism become

factors to consider in terms of middle childhood (Landsberg et al., 2016), as these contribute to learners' self-esteem. Early school exit is related to a lower level of psychological well-being (Landsberg et al., 2016) and a potential decrease in sustainable quality of life (Hlongwane, 2018).

Systematic thinking processes and awareness of rules develop during this life phase and the underpinning assumption of certain thinking patterns become evident (Nel et al., 2016). More options and views on topics or events become clear to learners in these years, and barriers to learning, as well as giftedness become evident (Bartlett, 2011; Bergen, 2002; Berk et al., 2006; Landsberg & Krüger, 2016; Michigan Department of Community Health, 2003). Recall, automatic processing, and comprehension abilities improve, while learners become aware of cultural and other differences between them and their peers (Louw & Louw, 2007).

Learners begin to perceive their own worth based on the judgements and support of others (Louw & Louw, 2007; Offord Centre for Child Studies, 2009), and their scholastic, social and physical characteristics seem to be compared to those of the peer group. Rejection, isolation and exclusion from the peer group is regarded as detrimental in terms of social and cultural identity, as likability is desired (Louw & Louw, 2008) and social worth is determined by the peer group (Charlesworth et al., 2008).

School readiness is one of the key aspects of middle childhood as the school career starts during this phase of learners' lives. Learners become increasingly aware of achievement and competitiveness, but also personal strengths as they are being graded at school (Louw & Louw, 2007). Social learning takes place and positive peer interaction is more easily obtained when learners' judgement, emotional intelligence and motivation is well-developed (Charlesworth et al., 2008; Michigan Department of Community Health, 2003). Learners learn through educators what the learning process means and how it proceeds through social learning (Bartlett, 2011; Bergen, 2002; Berk et al., 2006; Charlesworth et al., 2008).

Learners' understanding of well-being, when considering "risks, spaces, people, expectations and life changes" may address protective factors or knowledge that enables them to be resilient in the face of adversity (Crivello et al., 2009, p. 123). Interpersonal social relationships, strong relational bonds between immediate family and peer groups, as well as access to institutions are important factors that influence learners' psychosocial well-being. Possible local or emic understanding of learners'

psychosocial well-being may be explored in order to grasp the diverse ways in which individuals view reality and challenge sources of knowledge (Swart & Pettipher, 2011).

During learners' school careers, the involvement and collaboration of parents, teachers and the community (Landsberg et al., 2016) significantly influences the learner's school involvement and experience. Teachers model the learning of new skills, attitudes, values and behaviours in learners' lives (Moosa, 2018) and inspire observational learning among them. Socio-economic resources have a significant influence on a learner's achievements and development (Nel et al., 2016). Classroom climate, school climate and structure, as well as discipline and education policies have a direct influence on learners' development during these years. Giftedness and disabilities are discovered and creativity is developed during these years. Personality, emotional and social development takes place, while self-conceptualising, relationships and peer acceptance play an increasingly influential role in learners' lives.

2.4 UNDERSTANDING WELL-BEING IN AT-RISK SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

According to Sarvimäki (2006), well-being is associated with quality of life. Living a healthy life implies different dimensions of well-being, including physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being. Living in at-risk environments significantly influences quality of life, which cannot be regarded as an objective pursuit or simply feeling good, but rather an emphasis of physical capacity, social and personal resources (Halfon & Hochstein, 2002). Well-being has been defined in holistic, contextualised and longitudinal research on experiences within the context of childhood and poverty, as being culturally-anchored constructs that are ever-changing based on learners' individual life courses and exposure to social contexts (Crivello et al., 2009). According to Davies and Spencer (2010), the expression of the emotional life world may promote determination and resilience in at-risk community contexts.

The focus of learner well-being may go beyond investigating survival and deprivations, and can entail recognising young people's potential for coping, transcendence and resilience in the face of adversity (Charlesworth et al., 2008). Bio-psychosocial factors influence learner's vulnerability and in turn determine whether learners focus on mere survival, or thrive in life. The strengthening of intimacy, trust and respect (Charlesworth et al., 2008) in interpersonal and social relationships, as well as access to institutional services, and economic and political aspects, which

shape learners' lives and future aspirations, may form supportive coping mechanisms for healthy development and flourishing (Crivello et al., 2009). Schools have the opportunity to enhance the resources of parents, teachers and the community to support the development of its learners (Offord Centre for Child Studies, 2009; Weinstein et al., 2016).

According to Savahl et al. (2015) learners' subjective perceptions of well-being indicate that the most common factors that influence their well-being referred to personal safety, infrastructural deficiencies and psychosocial functioning. Perceived well-being is defined as cognitive and affective views that individuals may have concerning their own lives, events affecting their lives and the circumstances in which they function. Perceptions or interpretations of global and specified life satisfaction (Barry & Friedli, 2008; Chief Medical Officer of Health, 2011), along with feelings about their lives, influence their experience and perceptions of personal well-being.

Little research has been carried out that covers the subjective, personal perceptions of learners about their own quality of life. A dynamic process of allowing learners to interpret, analyse and present their concerns in terms of their future identities, form part of supporting families and communities in a holistic manner. Diversity should be acknowledged, inequality emphasised and agency respected in the understanding of psychosocial well-being (Camfield et al., 2009). The psychological and social constructs of well-being should not be seen as the mere experience of feeling good. Debates about the definitions of well-being are prominent and involve considering the managing of stress in order to avoid a decline in well-being (Sarvimäki, 2006).

2.4.1 PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING

Psychosocial well-being can be defined as the interrelationship between psychological components such as personal thoughts, emotions and behaviour, as well as social experiences that involve relationships, tradition and culture which enable learners to cope with daily stressors and to fulfil their potential (Ferreira et al., 2008; UNICEF, 2009). Psychosocial well-being is addressed in self-determination theory based on the eudaimonic tradition that the fulfilment of basic psychological needs is required for overall well-being and growth (Ryff & Singer, 1996). In addition, patterns of short-term emotional dynamics, such as emotional variability, emotional instability and long-term emotional inertia, serve as indicators of psychological well-being and influence interactional dynamics (Houben, Van Den Noortgate, & Kuppens, 2015). According to Bradburn (1969), psychological well-being relates to

the ability to cope with adversity and difficult situations without undue pain to oneself or others, as the interaction between individuals' long-term personality dispositions and the reality of real life situations are influential in these situations.

Well-being can be interpreted in terms of the environment within which a community exists. Environmental conditions play a role in the experience of well-being since ecological, social, political, economic and institutional factors are interrelated with the structural and functional conditions of a community, as well as with individuals' interactions with their environment (Temane & Wissing, 2008). Studies on the relationship between education and income, found that well-educated people who are well off financially, were more likely to experience positive emotions and psychological well-being (Bradburn, 1969; Temane & Wissing, 2008). This suggests that learners who do not complete school, or complete lower levels of education and have insufficient financial resources, may struggle to function effectively on a psychological level or experience positive emotions (Bradburn, 1969; Landsberg et al., 2016; Thomson et al. 2004).

According to Snowman and McCown, (2013), psychosocial well-being can be described as behavioural, emotional, interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of a person's psychological and social health status. They also emphasise that the events that take place in individuals' lives, influence their psychosocial well-being (Snowman & McCown, 2013), while resources, qualities and competency influence adaptation to changes in their personal lives. Socialisation, leisure activities and playful experiences further contribute to people's mental health status (Maslanyj, Lightfoot, Schüz, Sienkiewicz & McKinlay, 2010; Snowman & McCown, 2013). Play-based relationships between siblings and peers incorporate the use of social skills as either caregiving, comrades or rivals.

Psychosocial well-being is associated with optimal functioning on the mental health continuum (Wissing et al., 2014). Multi-component and multi-disciplinary interventions in primary schools have been effective in developing self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills (Humphrey, Kalambouka, Wigelsworth & Lendrum, 2010). Schools as educational institutions are considered prevention sites in addressing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (Humphrey et al., 2010).

Mental health and psychosocial learning can be supported through early promotion programmes aimed at addressing the difficulties that learners face. This will benefit, their social and emotional skills and maximise positive outcomes and emotional well-

being (Bartlett, 2011; Berk et al., 2006; Landsberg et al., 2016; Michigan Department of Community Health, 2003). Early intervention in learners' lives can facilitate personal development, the exploration of personal issues, practising of new skills, learning more about themselves, developing ways of relating to others and promoting reflection (Bergen, 2002; Berk et al., 2006; Landsberg et al., 2016). Relational identity first develops in familial and sibling relationships, which support the development of identity concepts of belonging (Charlesworth et al., 2008; Temane & Wissing, 2008).

Psychosocial well-being, which includes behavioural, emotional, interpersonal and intrapersonal needs, should be identified during the progression between significant milestones in early childhood development (Snowman & McCown, 2013). One could therefore conclude that during the initial years of their school careers, the involvement of parents, teachers and community has a significant impact on learners' psychosocial development (Michigan Department of Community Health, 2003).

Socio-economic factors, the school and class climate, as well as discipline and health education policies should be in constant interaction with learners to mould their personal development by incorporating learning into daily activities (Louw & Louw, 2007; Weinstein et al., 2016; Michigan Department of Community Health, 2003). Reducing learners' exposure to biological and developmental risks could improve their well-being (Emerson, 2004).

Learners' perceptions of their psychosocial well-being should be explored in order to grasp the diverse ways in which they view their reality (Crivello et al., 2009). Social interaction, reasoning and conflict resolution skills, as well as the exploration of interpersonal relations, are often developed most firmly in sibling relationships (Louw & Louw, 2007). Learners' well-being can be explored by reviewing their life skills, civic participation and culture through asking questions about their activities, feelings, thoughts, available resources and needs, as well as connections and contributions linking them to broader society.

The complexity of learners' socio-economic contexts and social world can furthermore be explored through their perceptions, the safe relationships in which they engage and how their emotional processing takes place (Swart & Pettipher, 2011). Children's perspectives are important for informing policymakers; providing a foundation for child advocacy and enhancing legal and political socialisation of children (Swart & Pettipher, 2011).

The effects of urbanisation and health needs are yet to be unravelled to better understand psychosocial well-being and quality of life. Urban poverty is widespread globally and urbanisation often exposes individuals to stressful situations, resulting in the gradual deterioration of mental health. Factors such as social support, self-efficacy and higher economic status can lead to the strengthening of psychosocial well-being as they represent a support structure and the availability of resources (Wissing et al., 2013).

Research emphasise that the psychosocial well-being of individuals in at-risk communities should be monitored, developed and sustained in order to alleviate existing psychosocial needs. In addition, it is suggested that collaboration and guiding networks among individuals, community members, school communities, institutions and government departments, may address multiple psychosocial needs and support learners in high-risk environments (Moleki, Van Rensburg & Human, 2013).

According to Theron and Theron (2013), positive psychosocial development and attention to learners' health, as well as their interaction with their families and communities, could prevent dysfunctional patterns, promote well-being and strengthen assets and resilience. Individual psychological development might encourage other role players in learners' families to improve their psychological maturity, ensuring a more stable and healthy psychosocial living environment (Theron & Theron, 2013). Socio-economic status, mental wellness and living conditions, as well as social and political forces come into play when evaluating the quality of human well-being and psychological health (Heflinger & Christens, 2006).

Rurality and rural education (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2012) should be considered when reflecting on the integration of health and well-being. Mental ability, programme development, school functioning, research processes and cross-cultural language situations should also be explored. In addition, opportunities for employment and education, the impact of emotional trauma, the nature of policies and practice, the influence of vulnerability, present and potential risks, regular health assessments, inequality and the systems within which learners in Grades 1 to 3 function (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2012; Heflinger & Christens, 2006; Theron & Theron, 2013) should be covered when studying the multiple aspects related to learners' well-being in at-risk communities.

2.5 INTERVENTIONS PROMOTING PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING

2.5.1 BASIC NEEDS, RESILIENCE AND ADVERSITIES IN THE LIVES OF GRADES 1 TO 3 LEARNERS

Learners' psychosocial well-being and needs, such as physical safety, social esteem and self-actualisation can be met during psychosocial interventions in at-risk school communities (Maslow, 1970). Needs such as clean drinking water, food and accommodation, as well as a safe and secure environment, should also be included in interventions developed for at-risk school communities. In addition, aspects such as acceptance, belonging, social communication skills, the need for respect and recognition, as well as realising learners' potential and creativity, should be addressed (Poston, 2009).

Resilience is an important contributing factor towards well-being (Theron & Donald, 2012). The resources and assets in communities and schools unlock authentic knowledge and enable the creation of context-based interventions to lead to social change, even in the presence of adversity. Studies of at-risk communities should be explored in order to understand why some people who come from backgrounds and contexts of adversity, still display signs of resilience and well-being even though some resources, forces and agencies seem to be against them (Moletsane, 2012).

Many South African learners are studying, working and living in environments with extremely high levels of adversity. The role of the school and teachers is instrumental in enhancing learners' resilience as a protective resource in challenging environments (Theron & Engelbrecht, 2012; Theron & Donald, 2016). The risks, needs and contexts of these learners are often complex. The transformation of school settings can be supported by making use of school-based interventions with teachers as positive role models (Ebersöhn, Eloff, Finestone, Grobler & Moen, 2015). In this regard, more research should be conducted on the topics that could be included in psychosocial education and the promotion of health.

Interventions could integrate themes that reflect ideological and political risks in the current school curriculum, while keeping in mind that it should take place within the South African context. Factors such as cultural, social and political diversity, as well as multilingualism and gender identity, influence the outcomes of education in South Africa. Schools that are at-risk can benefit from interventions, as well as inter-school and inter-teacher partnerships that create collaboration between the identities of the

schools. This will result in an increased sense of well-being among learners, their families, schools and communities (McWhirter et al., 2013).

Communities challenged by poverty are often associated with heightened exposure to trauma (Thomson, Rudolf & Henderson, 2004), such as starvation, violence and rape, that have an impact on members' psychosocial well-being (Peeke, Moletsane, Tshivhula & Keel, 1998). Psychological growth is negatively influenced by low self-esteem and poor articulation along with self-consciousness about race or employability. When these influences are overcome, community concerns may be relieved through interpersonal support. Relationships with family, at work or within organisations, might buffer some adversities, for example loss and change, and enable a renewed sense of purpose.

2.5.2 THE ROLE OF POLICIES AND APPLICATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Universal policies aimed at addressing inequality in terms of income, should explore the complicated relationship between poverty and learners' health. Learners' well-being could be improved by increasing child-related welfare benefits, improving housing quality and building more supportive communities (Emerson, 2004). Comprehensive early intervention programmes addressing learners' educational, health and social needs are associated with positive results and the development of resilience. It would therefore be the most cost-effective method of psychological and educational intervention.

The individual, family and community can develop learners' resilience by using problem-solving language and encouraging self-efficacy. This could include skills that are based on self-determination, and supportive relationships, as well as developing inclusive organisations and supportive social networks (Makhubele & Qalinga, 2008). Organisations could provide more services that address learner poverty, define family resources and provide support, as well as connecting families with local initiatives that reduce the force of poverty, monitor access to services, reduce discrimination against those living in harsh conditions and motivating them to fulfil their aspirations.

Prevention-based psychosocial programmes and principles have emerged since the 1960s (Caplan, 1964), spanning time and various disciplines. Psychological and psychoeducational programmes target the entire risk continuum of early intervention in both low-risk and high-risk populations. Universal programmes should include specific selected approaches, such as imminent at-risk and second-chance

approaches for long-term change (McWhirter et al., 2013). School-community intervention programmes, which take a whole-school approach in acknowledging the importance of learner well-being, can make use of the positive psychological paradigm of promoting learners' mental health by focusing on increasing self-esteem, self-efficacy and optimism and reducing interpersonal sensitivity (Thomson et al., 2004).

Several South African school-based policies have been developed by district- and school-based support teams (Nel et al., 2016). Some of the policies introduced to serve the needs of vulnerable learners by addressing barriers to learning and protecting children's right to quality education, are the White Paper on Education and Training, the South African Schools Act, the UN Convention for the Rights of the Child, the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy, the National Commission on Special Educational Needs and Training, the Children's Act 38 of 2005 and the National Plan of Action for Children (Landsberg & Krüger, 2016). This may facilitate supportive school policies and curriculum changes, as well as mobilising of environmental or societal resources, while strengthening interpersonal relationships and enhancing personal characteristics such as resilience, thus allowing learners to thrive in a supportive school-community system.

Stable and safe environments should be created for learners in at-risk communities by helping them to become resilient and to untangle the factors that weigh them and their families down (Drimie & Casale, 2009). Family-based and wider social support, act as a protective supportive factor in individuals' lives (Casale et al., 2015). Comprehensive, holistic, decisive and well-informed interventions (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2012) that address the challenges faced by the country's youth, should be prioritised since this will strengthen their ability to cope, support internal and external vulnerability, promote physical and psychological well-being, create stability and safety nets and break the negative cycle of poverty.

2.5.3 HEALTH INTERVENTIONS AND ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

One of the most influential resources of at-risk school communities is the teacher as the affective caregiver within the pastoral role (Landsberg & Kruger, 2016). Family and community partnerships may be enabled through such a role player in the lives of Grades 1 to 3 learners. Their presence, involvement and skills may mobilise collaborative relationships of support (Robinson, 1999). Critical thinking, effective decision-making, reflection, positive self-image, innovation, motivation, ownership,

planning and confidence may be mirrored by learners if their teachers are positive role models in class and in organisational settings (Mattson & Harley, 2002).

Connectivity among teachers and their engagement with school politics and ideologies in alliance with teacher agency could ensure resources that may help to reduce present risk and harmful forces (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2012). Individuals and groups can be influenced to acknowledge and utilise opportunities to enable the development of the community and school. Research should consider contextual cultural values and participant identity, as well as the rapidly westernising context of South Africa (Theron, 2016). Community resources could be accessed and extended through collaborative efforts of commitment, connection and agency (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2012).

The assessment of learners' health is often related to psychological aspects. Listening to learners' life stories and determining their needs, provides explanations for suggested support (Hultman, Cederborg & Magnusson, 2015). Learners' social and physical development could be supported by social services. General needs and especially psychosocial needs can be assessed accurately and parental behaviour evaluated in a complimentary light to be able to argue for learners' needs (Hultman et al., 2015).

Risk factors can be identified, followed by biological preconditions, relations to peers, and the family's economic situation as possible indicators of which needs should be addressed. Learners' interaction with parents or caregivers seem to be the most influential and educative social relationship, while the observations of parents or caregivers are also known to be a source of learning and development (Michigan Department of Community Health, 2003; Weinstein et al., 2016).

South Africa's integrated school health system has been assessed by reflecting on the past and creating prospects for the future. Sustained policies are required to ensure effective health care in educational settings with the focus being on formal, structured relationships between stakeholders at all levels of the departments of Health, Basic Education and Social Development (Shung-King, Orgill & Slemming, 2013). Simplified assessments of learners' health may lead to limited information or perspectives as foundations for decisions. This may lead to inadequate support structures for learners' physical and psychological health and overall well-being. Learners' health and well-being can only be enhanced and promoted when their

needs are accurately understood, identified, addressed and supported, especially in the context of the family setting (Ungar, 2014).

Careful planning and referrals are only possible with relevant guidelines, support and resources (Semrud-Clikeman & Ellison, 2009). To strengthen the referral process and the provision of good quality health care services, internationally relevant themes could be merged into evidence-based health care programmes (Landsberg et al., 2016).

Health care resources should be prioritised, especially the strengthening of human resources, with professional nurses and well-trained community health workers working in collaboration with each other. Primary health care programmes in schools could assist with early identification of learners who display health-related development challenges, thus supporting the referral or monitoring of referral services (Shung-King et al., 2013).

A mixed-methods approach can be used to include all learners' and role players' opinions and perceptions regarding their psychosocial or relational challenges, such as powerlessness, unbalanced gender and social expectations, distress, shame, humiliation, low self-esteem or negative coping strategies. Insights regarding the planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes could be contemplated with the holistic approach in mind. Attention should be given to non-material needs in collaboration with meeting material needs (Samuels & Stavropoulou, 2016).

The role of social relationships is essential in the improvement of well-being. Breaking out of isolation and sustaining engagement with community members contributes significantly to psychosocial support (McWhirter et al., 2013).

It is recommended that future studies include a well-being framework to gain insight into different people's situations and investigate the interaction between beneficiaries and service providers, as well as carrying out more vulnerability assessments to be able to monitor psychosocial well-being more specifically, continuously and successfully.

2.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For the theoretical framework of the study, I relied on the Social Ecological Model (SEM) (McLeroy et al., 1988) to facilitate a holistic approach to the interwoven intrapersonal, interpersonal, community-level and policy-level influences, as well as

adaptability and resilience that is possible through the systems-based framework of sustainable development (Gunderson & Holling, 2002). The model furthermore provides the opportunity to develop intrapersonal to policy-level ripple effects in at-risk school communities. This relates to the capacity to absorb challenges and restructure communities while undergoing changes in personal, ecological, economic or social conditions (Walker et al., 2004).

In addition, SEM serves in an adaptive capacity relevant to biological and social behaviours; it provides information on objective physical conditions and represents environmental affordances or opportunities (McArthur & Baron, 1983). Individual perceptions and adjustment to these factors may guide goal-related behaviour and a level of well-being. Through the application of SEM (McLeroy et al., 1988), education may be supported through health education (Wallerstein & Bernstein, 1988). A discussion of each of the four levels follows.

Focusing on the intrapersonal, interpersonal, community and policy levels in addressing the psychosocial perceptions of poverty, learner development and mental health, indicates the importance of supportive families, schools and neighbourhoods to assist with individuals' psychosocial adjustment to different phases in life (Petanidou et al., 2013). Social contexts and social relations during a young learner's life could potentially mobilise prevention-oriented support teams (Laftman & Ostberg, 2006).

The intrapersonal level includes the developmental history of the individual, along with idiosyncratic characteristics of the person. Knowledge, attitudes, behaviour, self-image and skills will be considered at this level (McLeroy et al., 1988; McLeroy et al., 2003). Genetic factors, sensory impairment, learning difficulties, chronic illness, low self-esteem, confused identity or culture, developmental delays and challenges with behaviour, could increase risk in Grades 1 to 3 learners' lives (Prever, 2006). Contradictory to these impacts, an extensive vocabulary, cognitive development as aligned with chronological age, attractive physical features, emotional intelligence, a sense of humour, empathy, problem-solving skills, secure attachments, self-awareness and the ability to cope with change, may be considered to contribute to learners' levels of resilience (Chief Medical Officer of Health, 2011; Walsh, 2016).

Social-ecological understanding of resilience shed light on the culturally aligned interaction between learners and their social systems when living interdependently, nurtured by the community as a high-functioning system (Theron & Donald, 2012;

Theron & Theron, 2013). Positive attachment systems, promotion of culture, family communities, spiritual attachment, and belonging to a network, have been suggested to support increased resilience (Theron & Theron, 2013). A learner's temperament, personality type, neurophysiology, genetic predispositions, cognitive skills and intelligence may promote healthy functioning and resilience in the face of great adversity, such as poverty, or when learners' living conditions, as well as their social and physical environments promote their strengths (Chief Medical Officer of Health, 2011; Merrel, 2008).

Psychosocial well-being influences cognitive dimensions, emotions, perceptions and overall life satisfaction (Ben-Arieh et al., 2014; Thomson, Rudolph & Henderson, 2004). An ecosystemic intervention is thus required to address learners' possible mental health challenges later in life (American Psychological Association, 2013). Individually focused behaviour adaptation or coping strategies may constitute a part of health promotion programmes developed from the psychosocial model (Stokols, Allen & Bellingham, 1996). The social ecology of health promotion: implications for research and practice. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 10(4), 247-251.), highlighting the need for health practitioners to be inclusive and to understand the intrapersonal aspects of development.

Intrapersonal health behaviour and personal characteristics are influenced by contextual forces and have an impact on relationships within the larger interactive social system (Golden, McLeroy, Green, Earp & Lieberman, 2015). Individuals' knowledge, practices, beliefs and skills can be adjusted through interventions grounded at the intrapersonal level of influence (Golden et al., 2015; Stokols, 1996). Strengths, challenges and reviews through implementing individually-based programmes at the intrapersonal level, may mature and expand the implementation of health programmes for interpersonal application based on social cognition, planning of behaviour, self-efficacy and subjective norms (Dunn, Deroo, & Rivara, 2001; Rhodes et al., 2007).

The interpersonal level comprises formal and informal social networks and support systems, which involve the family, work groups and a network of friendships (McLeroy et al., 1988; McLeroy et al., 2003). At this level, parental, mental or physical illness, family discord, criminality, lack of mutual attachment, family size, abuse and loss could constitute risk factors in the lives of Grades 1 to 3 learners (Prever, 2006). These influences, are counteracted by strong relationships, pre- and post-natal care, a stable family income, good family management, sufficient quality

time with parents, interaction with extended family, child involvement in decision-making, spirituality and mature communication, all of which build resilience (Michigan Department of Community Health, 2003; Walsh, 2016).

Adjustments within or around the individual are influenced by personal characteristics, as well as interactions with the wide social, cultural, economic and environmental contexts within which individuals are situated (Davison & Birch, 2001). Interpersonal and institutional improvement can be addressed through interventions targeting change in social relationships and organisational environments (Golden et al., 2015; Wallerstein & Bernstein, 1988).

The SEM represents layers of influence, including various organisations, government, industry (Zagami, 2013) and societal domains dependent on interpersonal relations (Lobstein, Baur & Uauy, 2004). Proper assessment of interpersonal relations and situational populations provides insight into the single most effective and feasible “intervention leverage point” to sustainable change (Meadows, 2008, p. 368). Social networks, social support, group activities and pedagogic techniques may reduce mortality rates, improve recovery from illness and increase use of preventative health practices (Hurdle, 2001).

The community level refers to relationships in defined boundaries among organisations, institutions and informal networks (McLeroy et al., 1988; McLeroy et al., 2003). Risk factors could refer to a socio-economic disadvantaged status, poverty, unemployment, poor housing, peer factors, or membership of an at-risk group (Stretch, 1999). Factors that influence resilience could be proper housing, living in a respectable neighbourhood, positive relations, good health and social care, as well as recognition of achievement (Prever, 2006).

The demonstration of resilience while being exposed to adversity, implies that the learner exceeds expectations while functioning in an abnormally high-risk environment (Ungar, 2014). Biological, psychological, relational and sociocultural factors may contribute towards the risk, could increase vulnerability and call for intervention in order to facilitate coping in culturally meaningful ways (Stofile, Raymond & Moletsane, 2013).

The needs of learners from at-risk school communities are multiple and require universal collaboration between intrapersonal, interpersonal, community and policy levels (Donovan, Halpern & Sargeant, 2002; WHO, 1997). Quality education at the institutional or community level in an atmosphere of nurturing learners’ social,

emotional, academic and cognitive ability, provide opportunities for preventative action programmes at policy level (Jané-Llopis, Barry, Hosman & Patel, 2005).

The phenomenon of learners' perceptions of psychosocial well-being, may initiate future interventions in the two communities involved in the study, as well as other communities experiencing challenges in terms of promotion of psychosocial well-being (Ohri-Vachaspati et al., 2015). Thus, environmental enhancement and enabling environmental or community support resources, is another objective of the psychosocial model (Stokols, 1996). Partnerships with agencies, churches, neighbourhoods and mediation structures as multi-layered environments, can increase access to health services and empower at-risk groups or communities to attend to social and economic structures (Golden et al., 2015).

The policy level concentrates on local, state, and national laws and policies (McLeroy et al., 1988; McLeroy et al., 2003). Racism, discrimination and recursive trauma could be potential risk factors to address at policy level (Prever, 2006). The effective implementation of laws, legislation and policies could serve as protective factors (Department of Education, 1995).

Healthy education communities can transform lives, create peace, eradicate poverty, drive sustainable development and help learners to flourish (Wissing et al., 2014). Education as a basic human right for all South Africans is enshrined in Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights (The Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

Developing learners in school communities in Sub-Saharan Africa should start from pre-school, continue throughout the primary phases and reach beyond higher education. Yet, many children in this region are deprived of educational opportunities, most often as a result of social, cultural and economic factors. Education as a tool of empowerment or enablement, can benefit at-risk children economically and socially by lifting them out of poverty and helping them to make a positive contribution to society, while turning pain into hope in their lives (Savikas, 2007).

The core principle of the social ecological model (Figure 2.1) lies in the design and evaluation of programmes that enhance personal and societal well-being (Stokols, 1996). Solid national legal and policy frameworks could create the foundations and conditions for the delivery and sustainability of quality education and health interventions in at-risk school communities. Collaboration regarding effective education policies and strategies (Taylor, 1999) embodies the African Union's Pan-

African vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena. (Stofile et al., 2013).

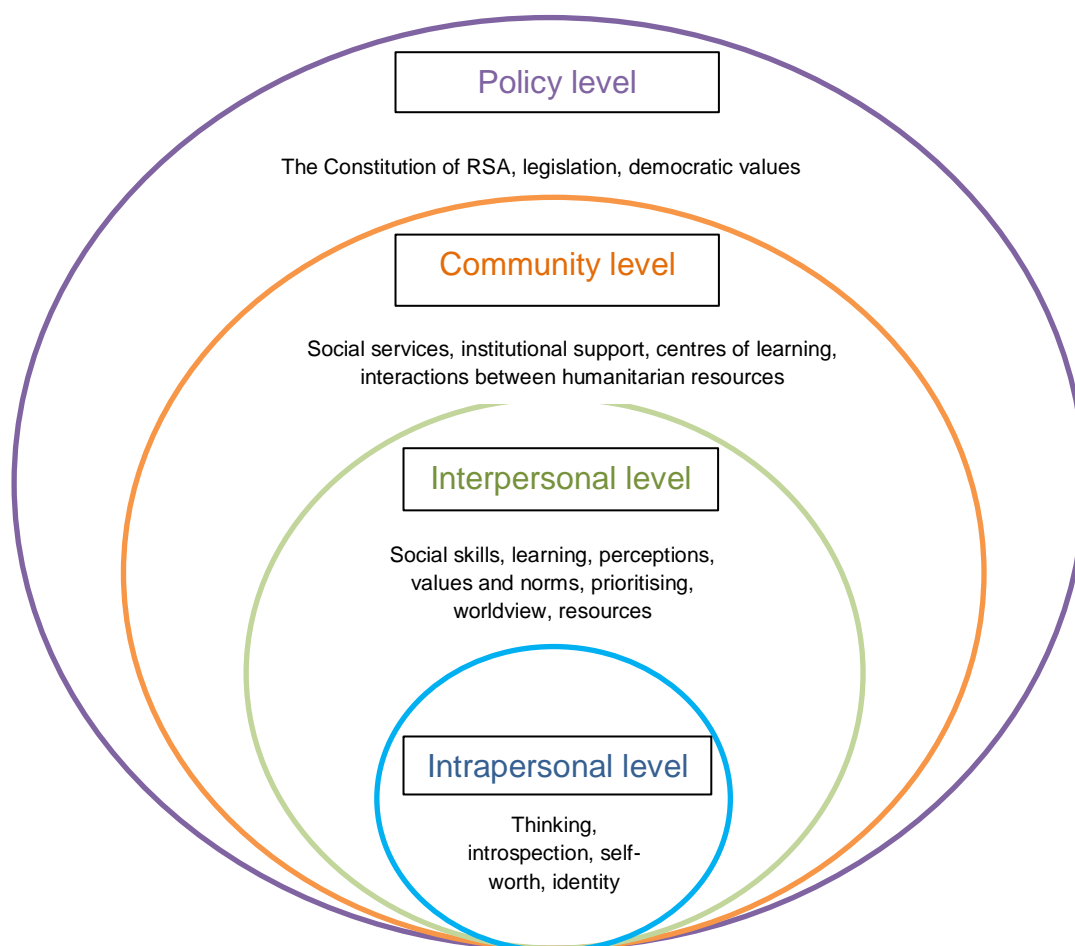


Figure 2.1: The Social Ecological Model in relation to poverty and psychosocial well-being (McLeroy, Bibeau, Steckler & Granz, 1988)

2.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I discussed the global and national impact of poverty on the lives of Grades 1 to 3 learners and their support systems, as well as levels of influence in terms of their psychosocial well-being. Key aspects of middle childhood development were considered, since psychological and social well-being are linked to the contributing factors that influence their experience of coping and developing resilience. Factors of risk and support that are available to learners were emphasised for South-African at-risk school communities. Previous psychosocial interventions

were cited and suggestions were made for improving the effectiveness of promotional psychosocial interventions. The SEM was discussed and interwoven with examples applicable to the influences on the lives of at-risk foundational phase learners.

In the following chapter, the research methodology will be explored through the perspective of the chosen paradigms and research design of the study. The qualitative research approach will be reviewed, coupled with phenomenology. Phenomenology is an approach through which thoughts, expectations, and explanations are constructed to make sense of everyday experiences. Data is grouped with codes into meaningful clusters, structured and assisted through carefully crafted definitions. Ethical processes for data selection, -collection, -documentation and analysis will be taken into consideration under the influence of the quality criteria set out for the study.

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3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2, the current study was placed within existing literature, and understood by means of a theoretical framework. Chapter 3 is devoted to the research methods and quality criteria utilised to answer the following primary research question: *What are Grades 1 to 3 learners' perceptions of factors affecting their psychosocial well-being in at-risk school communities?*

Researchers need to be inquisitive about the nature of reality as well as the relationship between the “knower and the knowable” when initiating the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p. 37). The paradigmatic perspectives are discussed in conjunction with the details regarding the selected research methodology. In this study of limited scope, primary inductive thematic data analysis is utilised with secondary datasets. PRA-based data documentation is divided into visual datasets, as well as textual datasets. At the end of the chapter, quality criteria specifications, ethical considerations and the role of the researcher are explored.

3.2 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVES

3.2.1 EPISTEMOLOGICAL PARADIGM: PHENOMENOLOGY

Phenomenology entails a dynamic dialectical relationship (a logical discussion of ideas and opinions) between research participants and the outside social world and reality (Chapman & Smith, 2002; Embree, 1997; Ihde & Zaner, 1977; Moustakas, 1994; Smith, 1996). The researcher may not describe the objective or subjective world, but only the events as perceived by, or the world as experienced by, research participants (Cerbone, 2006). The discovery of the essence of things or trends as they appear, composes the heart of phenomenology (Ihde & Zaner, 1977).

Phenomenology requires interpretive activity (Lopez & Willis, 2004) from the researcher as he/she attempts to access the participant's personal world and, acknowledges that access depends on, and is complicated by, the researcher's own conceptions (Flowers, Hart & Marriott, 1999). Social comparison, temporal and metaphorical interpretation are all methods to be used in order to interpret and contextualise participant responses (Osborn & Smith, 1998). Thus, the researcher

attempts to acknowledge and suspend existing knowledge of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Emotional or action-based experiences can be sufficiently accounted for through a phenomenological study (Pacherie, 2008). Lambie and Marcel (2002) state that the nature and content of experiences depends on three aspects of attention, which could be the experience mode (analytic or synthetic; detached or immersed), experience direction (self or world), and the experience focus (evaluation or action).

Lopez and Willis (2004) mention that while conducting a phenomenological study, the strategy of hermeneutics is useful in making messages clear and interpreting for further meaning-making. Hidden experiences, environments and relations are emphasised through the use of hermeneutic investigation, as these meanings are consciously known to participants (Cohen, 1987). During data collection, participants engage in self-reflection of events, experiences, relationships or a particular phenomenon (Allen, 1995). Personal understandings, views and perceptions (Goulding, 1998) are reflected as participants seek to interpret their experiences into some form that is understandable to them and this response constitutes as the raw data.

Data becomes diluted by the disaggregation and unitisation through analytic procedure (Brocki & Wearden, 2006) and afterwards there is the opportunity for the unique nature of each participant's experience to re-emerge. Unfortunately, judgement about what is a good qualitative analysis is a rather subjective and ineffable opinion regarding this paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

3.2.2 METHODOLOGICAL PARADIGM: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Vast strategies of analysing text and image data were used in this study in order to systematically guide the researcher as the key instrument, in the understanding of the meaning and contexts of research participants in their natural settings (Creswell, 2009). The accuracy of information is validated through organising the raw data for analysis, as well as coding the data in terms of themes, descriptions and relating emerging constructs (Creswell, 2009; Miller & Salkind, 2002). An interpretation of the meaning of the themes and descriptions follow. Writing strategies adhered to, range from quotes varied in length; reflection of cultural sensitivity; presenting textual information in visual form; along with narrative descriptions, theories and literature (Creswell, 2009, pp. 193-194; Howell, 2013).

Qualitative research is often not well understood, but this approach is deeply rooted within participants' personal knowledge and understanding, complex in subject matter, specialist in nature and role to society, delicate in the manifestation of the phenomenon and sensitive in terms of participants' emotions and the potential to cause distress (Ritchie, 2003).

Humanity sprouts from the inner world, with social life being a product of humanity which is dependent on knowledge. The human mind serves as the origin of meaning; while behaviour is social and based on knowledge (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, pp. 59-60). In terms of my postmodern perspective on qualitative research, the emphasis fell on rational discovery, viewing facts and values as interactive, embracing the creation of subjective knowledge. The written word consists of concepts, terms and symbols which serve as tools to communicate meaning and emotion to one another (Houben et al., 2015; Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

Complex sets of meanings, human behaviour and understanding can be considered to make sense of reality. What we think about this world and our actions cannot occur without paradigms, as our actions are guided by our thoughts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Stories can be used to gain insight into the patterns of thought, and belief in research, while conceptualising findings during the awareness of sociocultural contexts (Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

Lincoln and Guba (1985, pp. 2-3) refer to qualitative research as being "a situated activity" engaging the observer in interpretive practices that makes the world visible as a series of representations. There is no single way to conduct qualitative research as a wide range of methods can be applied to different research disciplines, which require the researcher to capture the essence of the study by incorporating a set of key characteristics (Snape & Spencer, 2003).

The process is based on the researcher's ontology; beliefs about the nature of the social world in terms of realism, materialism and idealism. Additionally, the epistemology or the nature of knowledge and how it can be acquired is also an important influence (Howell, 2013). Finally, the aim and purpose of research, characteristics of the participants, audience of the research, funders of the research and position of the researchers' themselves are determinants of the research outcomes (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

The frame of reference of the research participants is defined as the social world which is flexible and entails a large volume of rich data (Hurdle, 2001; Jacob, Ouard

& Bélanger, 2011). Deep understanding could be enhanced by unravelling research participants' experiences, perspectives, and their histories, as well as their social and physical circumstances through the use of a purposefully selected sample allowing for the exploration of emergent issues (Snape & Spencer, 2003).

The functions of qualitative research include social investigation emphasised by contextual, explanatory, evaluative and generative classifications. When considering assumptions, intentions, attitudes, beliefs and values on human activities, a holistic and interactive view on reality is constructed contextually. Individuals make meaning of phenomena in their environment through rationality, perceptions, ideations, systems and multi-causality by interpretivism (Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

Qualitative research methods can be applied to social research in order to more fully understand phenomena and evaluate social problems. Explanatory links between factors that underlie attitudes, beliefs and perceptions, motivations that lead to decisions or non-actions and formation of events or experiences, can be uncovered (Ritchie, 2003). Interpretivism is based on the foundations that perceptions relate to human senses and interpretative knowledge exceed simple empirical enquiry (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Practical reason is based on moral freedom, social and historical contexts, self-determination and human creativity. Mediation of meaning can aim to solve contemporary issues in transdisciplinary data analysis by attending to reflexivity, assumptions, values, perspective and human agency and tend to the dynamic quest of interaction between participants' and researchers' social worlds (Snape & Spencer, 2003).

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology is discussed in terms of qualitative thematic analysis and convenience selection of data, as well as the collection and documentation of data.

3.3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN: DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDY

The descriptive case study enables the exploration of a phenomenon situated within a particular context and is based on various data sources (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2006). This type of case study could also explore a specific intervention, as well as the real-life context in which it occurred (Yin, 2006). Descriptive inference-based analysis, such as the case study, is one of the most undervalued social sciences, yet certainly influential in social inquiry and answering questions about the particulars of phenomena (King, Keohane, & Verba, 1994).

The aim of a descriptive case study is to interpret, analyse and describe the behaviours and responses of research participants (Noor, 2008). Rich descriptions allow for emerging patterns to become meaningful and to generalise a phenomenon across a larger set of units (Gerring, 2004). Case studies could be small in the number of participants, a single case or phenomenon or could be founded on process-tracking; it could be ethnographic, clinical, participant-observation or data could be collected in the field (Yin, 2003). According to Gerring (2004), the case study is thus “an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of similar units” (p. 342).

Baxter and Jack (2008) clarify that a multiple or collective case study will allow the analysis across different settings in order to understand the similarities and differences between the cases. This research design is considered robust and reliable, but can unfortunately become an extremely time-consuming process (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

3.3.2 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Participatory Reflection and Action-based (PRA) posters and photographs were the insightful datasets enlightening the understanding of health-related aspects, vulnerabilities and barriers relating to the participating community (Ferreira, Botha, Fraser & Du Toit, 2016). The present experiences and future support of participants in Grades 1 to 3 are to be explored through PRA-based activities as a method or approach of mutual and critical reflective learning and personal responsibility involving continuous reflection, followed by action and leading to reflection (Ebersöhn, Eloff & Ferreira, 2016). Posters and photographs are visual instruments which capture non-verbal behaviour, as well as meaningful moments emerging from groups; it precedes the engagement of analytic skills and may include vulnerable groups (Cornwall & Pratt, 2011). Descriptive observations may incorporate deeper understanding of information, behaviour and actions, and should record constant personal reflections to overcome challenges of the data collection and documentation method (Creswell, 2014).

Establishing and maintaining supportive relationships could enable sufficient clarification of meaning and context, which in turn could lead to heightened value and trustworthiness of the research through integrating mutual teaching and learning in partnership with the community (Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2012). Participatory practices

are multifaceted and aligned with power relations that have implications for health promotion and reflects some complexities (Nock et al., 2008).

The principles of participation, empowerment and social transformation may be developed when the local insights and community contributions are valued (Nock et al., 2008), and individual and collective social practices are reviewed (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2014). Collaboration with the community is grounded on local, or social, indigenous, technical knowledge, as well as the acknowledgement of the critical role of participants in the research process to create local and sustainable solutions to local problems (Ferreira et al., 2016). Social inclusion, lay knowledge and citizen inclusion may be explored through processes which may change or transform work, lives, situations, and sustainability, and promote justice (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2014). Sustaining of genuine dialogue and a deep level of understanding and respect should be honoured (Payne et al., 2005) to enable personal and collective reflections on current situations, as well as practice, action and interaction with others that can constrain or enable social functioning.

Participatory practices are multifaceted with situational and structural components enabling the sharing, creativity and diversity of participant behaviours and attitudes (Chambers, 2007). The examination of social, political, economic, cultural and spiritual factors of context, displaying respect for knowledge from participants' life experiences, should be embodied in order to produce local knowledge (Payne et al., 2005).

The perceptions of Grades 1 to 3 learners were the sources which made it possible to analyse the risk profiles, influential factors, knowledge and skills, as well as health promotion relating to psychosocial well-being. I emerged myself in the data and saturated it to the point where informed conclusions could be made about health-related perceptions (Creswell, 2014). Intervention, activism and change are the main components of engaging with the available assets of communities (Ferreira, 2006), while participants investigate, analyse, generate and take ownership of the research outcomes (Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2012).

Present specific risks and protective factors in children's lives contribute towards their sense of agency and may be enlightened through child-focused methods, placing them as the experts in their lives and daily interactions, and acknowledging that they are embedded within a network of social and economic relationships (Crivello et al., 2009).

Inductive thematic analysis is an interactive method of the researcher and participants to co-create meaning and knowledge while systematically interpreting the participants' understanding of phenomena and communicating these understandings (Chambers, 2012). Thematic analysis can be defined as a flexible method for identifying, analysing and reporting data that involves minimal organising and plenty of collaborative engagement (Chambers, 2012). This synthesising strategy is a method used to make meaning by finding relationships, analysing, systematically observing and quantifying qualitative data (Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010).

3.3.3 DATASETS AND SOURCES

As part of the NRF-funded University of Pretoria/Fordham University collaboration, a research team² from the University of Pretoria collected the data that was carefully analysed in this study of two conveniently selected at-risk school communities. Purposeful selection was used in the selection of 330 learner participants, as part of the broader project. Selection criteria included that participants had to be in Grades 1 to 3; they had to be able to communicate in English; attend a school in one of the two selected at-risk communities, and they had to give voluntary assent. Their parents also had to give informed consent to participate in the study.

Purposeful selection is often used in the qualitative paradigm (Morgan & Sklar, 2012) and entails selecting information-rich data for studying a phenomenon in depth, while offering insights about a phenomenon (Mathison, 2005). Unfortunately, the findings only serve a specified purpose and enlighten an understanding of participants who meet the criteria (Creswell, 2014). For the purpose of the study, I analysed PRA-based posters and photographs in order to determine the learners' perceptions of their own psychosocial well-being. The perceptions of Grades 1 to 3 learners were viewed as the perceptions of experts, while PRA-based resources made it possible to analyse the risk profiles, influential factors, knowledge and skills and health promotion relating to psychosocial well-being.

The active creation of documents and sources of data that learners engaged with in a social community context, allowed me as researcher to reflect on the learners' own voices, opinions and views on psychosocial well-being. My research question and sub-questions were answered by incorporating the PRA-based data items to be analysed, which shed light on learners' health in terms of detailed themes. I emerged

² Prof Ronél Ferreira, Mrs Karien Botha, Prof William Fraser, Prof Peet du Toit and Mrs Gerda Gericke

myself in the data, and saturated it to the point where informed and justifiable conclusions could be made about health-related perceptions and health promotion in real contexts of risk and poverty (Creswell, 2014).

Intervention, activism and change are the main components of engaging with the available assets of communities (Ferreira, 2006), while participants investigate, analyse, generate and take ownership of the outcomes of research (Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2012). I made use of the following data collection techniques in guiding my research: a reflective journal, as well as visual data in the form of photographs and posters.

Descriptive observations could incorporate a deeper understanding of information, behaviour and actions and should record constant personal reflections to overcome challenges of the data collection and documentation method (Creswell, 2014). Personal thoughts and insights may be organised through the use of reflective journals, but is regarded as a subjective account of events and interactions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

3.3.3.1 Visual data

Visual data, in the form of posters and photographs, are techniques that capture non-verbal behaviour, as well as meaningful moments emerging from groups; it precedes the engagement of analytic skills and may include vulnerable groups (Cornwall & Pratt, 2011). Posters are created to document participants' perceptions in a visual way, and an interpretive qualitative process engages with perceptions and emerging themes based on collaboration, interactive learning and shared knowledge by gaining new and holistic insights into the psychosocial well-being of learners (Chambers, 2012). Participants' creation of visual data captures their local knowledge. The textual data of the photographs and posters were analysed through thematic analysis, but meanings could be misinterpreted or interpreted in multiple ways; additionally, photographs of the participants' verbatim contributions could expose the anonymity of participants. It may have been challenging to obtain permission to take photographs and informed consent, but the process was successful (Chambers, 2008).

3.3.3.2 Reflective journal

A democratic inquiry process, collaborative research, and research that results in changing communities based on action research, as well as organisation through

empowerment, constitute the PRA or the manifestation of the rapid participatory rural appraisal method (Chambers, 2012). PRA empowers participants through group-synergy and democracy in a cyclical process with participatory and interactive character in terms of relationships and knowledge to study and assess social issues that constrain individual lives (Ebersöhn et al., 2016).

Collaboration with the community is based on local, or social, indigenous, technical knowledge and the acknowledgement of the critical role of participants in the research process to create local and sustainable solutions to local problems (Ferreira et al., 2016). The planning, developing and implementing of health-based school interventions, actively involves participants as the experts with local knowledge of their context (Ferreira et al., 2016). Mapping, sketching, diagramming, sorting, observing, branding, modelling, labels, ranking exercises and diagrams can be the forms of expression that may be used in this humble process to appreciate people's ways of knowing by symbols, object and diagrams that represent reality (Chambers, 2007).

Personal and collective reflections on current situations, as well as practice, action and interactions with others can either constrain or enable social functioning (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2014). Social inclusion, lay knowledge and citizen inclusion can be explored through processes which may potentially change or transform work situations, lives, situations, sustainability and promote justice (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2014). Sustaining of genuine dialogue and a deep level of understanding and respect could be created to enable these constructive changes in society (Payne et al., 2005).

The examination of social, political, economic, cultural and spiritual factors of context, displaying respect for knowledge from participants' life experiences should be embodied in order to produce local knowledge and reflect local experiences (Payne et al., 2005). Action research is described as contributing to knowledge creation and improved practice in a cyclical process with participatory character and interactive form of knowledge development, which is underpinned by a democratic impulse (Ebersöhn, Eloff & Ferreira, 2016).

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION: PRIMARY INDUCTIVE THEMATIC ANALYSIS

I relied on inductive thematic analysis, an interactive method to co-create meaning and knowledge while systematically interpreting the participants' understanding of the

phenomenon under study (Chambers, 2012). Relations and comparisons between data of the PRA-based data and photographs is essential, as all aspects of the data may be related to the research questions, the coding frame and iterative process of sequential steps by making use of clear and repeated coding (Schreier, 2014).

The content of communication and the complex, holistic and context-dependent meaning of interactions, are to be included in objective and systematic research. Inductive thematic analysis is unobtrusive and user-friendly and is furthermore focused on the production of a research product of extensive detail and unanticipated insights. The identifying, analysing and reporting on repeated patterns of meaning is informed by considerations of time, context and place when reflective diaries are utilised (Ebersöhn et al., 2016).

Preliminary scanning of materials took place in the initial process, the development of a set of thematic categories were informed by pre-existing understanding along with content and codes of representative themes used to refer to the elements in the data (Gavin, 2008). The participant's definitions, understandings and perceptions should be familiar to the researcher.

Coding, marking or indexing sections of texts or data on the PRA-based posters, contributes to developing themes (Schwandt, 2007); the emerging themes are subsequently identified through the clustering of codes according to their similarities. Potential themes, sub-themes and categories are confirmed through summarising these aspects (Gavin, 2008). Themes capture important, specific patterns that are discovered in data and represent some level of patterned responses that are directed at the research question (Ebersöhn et al., 2016). The structures embodied in data are structured explicitly by highlighting and noting occurring themes and providing an overview of complexities of phenomena in a reflexive nature (Gavin, 2008). Findings are discussed and interpreted before interpretation of analysed data is concluded to ensure that an advanced discussion of the participants' perceptions is reflected from mutual understanding, collective overall purposes and many discussions to produce change, flexibility and empowerment (Chambers, 2012).

Creswell's steps of inductive thematic analysis (2014) constructs the foundational base for the PRA-based study. Challenges of thematic analysis consider that the influence of interpretivism is limited if not used in association with a theoretical framework and that thematic analysis may be time-consuming and exhaustive as no

standardised categories exist (Creswell, 2014). Too much flexibility during analysis can be reviewed as induction resisting formulaic description (Mills et al., 2010).

Despite critique, the powerful insights of thematic analysis lead to many studies across fields and disciplines, being approached according to this method (Mills et al., 2010). Only truly comprehensive and representative sub-themes were included as arguments for selecting specific themes and are supported by literature and supervision (Gavin, 2008). A highly useful method of analysis, approaches meaning generation in a way that enables participants' views, experiences, perceptions, behaviour, practices, feelings, actions and thoughts to be reflected through careful exploration and interpretation of key features of data as guided by the research question and sub-questions (Clarke & Braun, 2016).

Potential challenges considered is that thematic analysis may be time-consuming and exhaustive for the researcher as there are no standardised categories in the analysis of content (Creswell, 2014). Research questions are not fixed and can only be discovered through coding and theme development in a rigorous review of the whole data set (Clarke & Braun, 2016). The influence and bias of the researcher should be managed by making use of a reflective journal and supervision sessions to ensure that the true perceptions of the participants are embodied in the report (Gavin, 2008).

Too much flexibility during analysis can be viewed as induction resisting formulaic description (Mills et al., 2010). The breaking of texts into parts to reduce, sort and label these texts may fracture the coherence and conceptuality of the narratives in data (Mills et al., 2010). The keeping up of a reflective journal was used to distinguish my personal interpretations and perceptions from the participants' perceptions and maintain a clear vision of the coherent narrative derived from emerging themes (Creswell, 2004).

In an attempt to address the possible challenges, I consulted with my supervisor as codes and themes emerged to create opportunity for careful revision (Ferreira & Ebersöhn, 2012). The relationships between constructs, concepts and variables indicated themes discovered and then only truly comprehensive and representative sub-themes are to be included that are supported by literature (Gavin, 2008). Themes served as frameworks for organising and reporting the analytic observations not by simply summarising the content of data, but to interpret the key features of data as guided by the research question and sub-questions (Clarke & Braun, 2016).

Careful planning and sufficient time were set aside for the analysis of data (Ebersöhn et al., 2016).

Present specific risks and protective factors in children's lives contribute towards their sense of agency and may be highlighted through child-focused methods, placing them as the experts in their lives and daily interactions, and acknowledging that they are embedded within a network of social and economic relationships (Crivello et al., 2009). Inductive thematic analysis is an interactive method of the researcher and participants to co-create meaning and knowledge while systematically interpreting the participants' understanding of phenomena and communicating these understandings (Chambers, 2012).

Thematic analysis can be defined as a flexible method for identifying, analysing and reporting data that involves minimal organising and plenty of collaborative engagement (Chambers, 2012). This synthesising strategy is a method used to make meaning by finding relationships, analysing, systematically observing and quantifying qualitative data (Mills et al., 2010).

Qualitative thematic analysis is a common approach which does not rely on specialised procedures in analysis (Schwandt, 2007). This method of analysis is unobtrusive and user-friendly as it is focused on the production of a research product of extensive detail and unanticipated insights while identifying, analysing and reporting on repeated patterns of meaning within socio-cultural and psychological contexts of time, context and place (Ebersöhn et al., 2016).

Rich data can be provided through the data itself and reflection by making use of the inductive approach to thematic analysis in the organising and preparing of data for analysis. This includes reading and studying the data, coding, generating descriptions and categories or themes for analysis, providing a qualitative narrative and interpreting the data (Ebersöhn et al., 2016) of particular aspects of the world (Gavin, 2008). Making meaning, reducing and managing large volumes of data can take place through shared ideas (Clarke & Braun, 2016), immersing oneself in the data, organising and summarising and focusing on interpretation (Mills et al., 2010).

3.5 QUALITY CRITERIA

Trustworthiness refers to the quality of inquiry, whether they are systematic outcomes and if findings can be trusted (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lincoln & Guba, 2013). Tracy (2010, p. 839) suggests that "high quality qualitative methodological research is

marked by a worthy topic, rich rigor, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethics, and meaningful coherence”. I relied on Lincoln and Guba’s (1985; 2003) criteria for trustworthiness in this study, namely credibility, dependability, transferability, authenticity and confirmability, in order to produce a study of sound quality.

3.5.1 CREDIBILITY

Credibility refers to the confidence in the accuracy of data, as well as processes of analysis addressing the intended focus and can be assured by implementing “prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation of sources, methods, theories, and researchers, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, referential adequacy, and member checks” (Lincoln & Guba, 2003, p. 103). Prolonged and persistent fieldwork sessions, member checking and an audit trail have been used in the broader project. In addition, I enhanced the quality of findings by implementing reflexivity during the primary thematic analysis of secondary data sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1994).

A trail of evidence is included in the emerging of themes and categories as the integrated findings developed after a well-defined research design was aligned with the research method and questions (Cohen et al., 2007; Harding, 2013; Nieuwenhuis, 2016). Trustworthiness, verisimilitude and plausibility of findings imply that good qualitative research is dependable and reflected through a cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of reality (Tracy, 2010). My reflective journal reflects my critical thought processes in considering socio-cultural aspects of reality.

Credibility can be achieved by providing clarification of data offered by participants (Nieuwenhuis, 2016), thick descriptions, concrete detail, explication of non-textual knowledge and showing rather than telling, alongside the methods of crystallisation, multivocality and member reflections (Tracy, 2010). The process of crystallisation proposes “symmetry and substance within infinite varieties” in terms of the research approach” (Tracy, 2010, p. 843). Researchers should gather multiple types of data and employ various methods, applicable theoretical frameworks along with multiple researchers in order to uncover complex and in-depth understandings of phenomena (Tracy, 2010). I applied the principle of crystallisation by making use of three types of secondary sources, namely PRA-based posters and photographs.

3.5.2 DEPENDABILITY

Dependability corresponds to whether the findings of a study would be similar if the study were to be replicated. It involves factors of instability of design (Lincoln & Guba, 1994) and can be achieved by a critical audit or review of the data, findings, interpretations and recommendations. I kept different perspectives in mind, considered my research design and included alterations to accommodate the degree to which data could change (Graneheim & Lundman, 2003). Overlaps between the portrayals of the viewpoints co-create meaning (Chambers, 2012). I also kept a journal of my data analysis in order to enhance the transparency of the process (Nieuwenhuis, 2016).

In addition, self-reflection, insight and observational documentation is valuable in research, and I therefore explored data according to the specific two at-risk school community contexts (Bengtsson, 2016; Endacott, 2008). Change is acceptable and expected throughout the process of qualitative inquiry, thus the findings of my research is not predicted, but rather documented with great effort, revision and precision in order to verify the accuracy of the presented findings (Babbie, 2005; Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Cohen et al., 2007; Chambers, 2007; Mertens, 1998; Patton, 2002)

3.5.3 TRANSFERABILITY

Transferability refers to the extent to which descriptive understanding of issues can be transferred to other settings or groups in clear description of culture, context, selection and characteristics of participants, data collection and analysis (Bengtsson, 2016; Graneheim & Lundman, 2003).

The findings are transferable to, or representative of, other broader communities after applying the strategy of thick descriptions. This is achieved by the provision of sufficient or a saturated number of descriptions of the context so that the reader of the study can judge whether or not the findings apply to a specific context (Lincoln & Guba, 2003). I aimed to provide the contextual features which enable readers to judge the transferability of this research (Lincoln & Guba, 1994).

Rich descriptions of the perceptions of research participants are provided in order to determine the applicability of the findings of the study in other or broader contexts (Mertens, 1998). As this study aims to effectively and honestly reflect the reality of the research participants, I made use of secondary data sources and a reflective

journal to assess my personal responses and potential biases during the process of analysis (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2008; Cohen et al., 2007; Nieuwenhuis, 2016).

3.5.4 AUTHENTICITY

Authenticity refers to the neutrality of research and acquisition of a balanced view of all perspectives, values, beliefs, insights, experiences, cultures and languages of participants reflected in the analysis (Andres, 2012). Lincoln and Guba (2003) distinguish between educative, catalytic and tactical authenticity. Educative authenticity is the facilitating process of making use of various stakeholders in learning about each other in order to improve informed judgements (Lincoln & Guba, 2003). Catalytic authenticity considers that findings of qualitative inquiry should serve social change or action. Tactical authenticity requires the researcher to act as an agent of knowledge on how to bring about the social change or action based on the research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 2003).

Acting as a responsive researcher, I made sure that my study would be neutral by reflecting the perceptions of Grades 1 to 3 learners, as well as making use of the reflections of the field workers, which could deepen insights of social change. I included quotations and presentation of data as demonstrated through sufficient authentic citations, appendices and tables, to establish arguments for meaning and finally come to a carefully constructed and objective report (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Graneheim & Lundman, 2003).

Furthermore, continuous data analysis and the use of multiple sources enabled contradictions to be clarified and to emphasise conflicting evidence; thus, ensuring a high level of trustworthiness (Endacott, 2008). The data and interpretations of my study were related to specific documents sourced and produced by the research participants and are supported by my transparent audit trail, as an attempt to limit researcher bias (Endacott, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1994; Mertens, 1998; Creswell, 2009).

3.5.5 CONFIRMABILITY

Confirmability suggests that data, interpretation and findings are strictly related to the data sources and emerge solely from data items and that researcher bias can be limited (Lincoln & Guba, 1994; Nieuwenhuis, 2016). My qualitative study is based on a small sample (n=330) requiring that confirmability revises the neutrality of the data. I sorted the data that was collected by multiple researchers and labelled it in a

consistent and systematic way to accurately reflect participants' interpretations (Graneheim & Lundman, 2003).

The techniques may include heightening confirmability by an audit, triangulation, and reflexive journal (Lincoln & Guba, 2003), as well as reproducing the original data and text, conceptualising my understanding of the text, and staying clear from forcing my opinion on the reader by allowing him/her to follow and/or criticise my reasoning (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). My personal bias and mindset were acknowledged and guarded against through supervision, reflection in the research process and thorough documentation techniques ensuring reflexivity on aspects such as radical and challenging power, conditioning, attitudes and interests (Chambers, 2012). A balanced and fair presentation of all perceptions and experiences of the contributing research participants was the goal of this qualitative study, as I aimed to explore the psychosocial perceptions of Grades 1 to 3 learners in two specific school-communities (Creswell, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1994; Mertens, 1998; Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I was guided by ethical considerations that were implemented during the broader NRF-funded University of Pretoria/Fordham University project. Ethical considerations that had to be taken into account during my study comprised anonymity, confidentiality, the right to privacy, informed consent and respect (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). In addition, I followed the ethical stipulations of the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria (2018). During this study, I was furthermore guided by ethical awareness, safeguarding of human rights and social justice (Shaw, 2008). Additional ethical considerations included permission to utilise existing data (as a secondary data set), the primary (inductive, thematic) analysis and dissemination of research findings.

Permission was obtained from the Department of Basic Education (Gauteng region), the principals of the two participating schools and the school governing bodies, as part of the broader NRF-funded University of Pretoria/Fordham University project, to utilise the data generated by the broader project. In addition, permission was granted by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education. I was therefore able to use the data generated from the pre-intervention assessment to obtain baseline information in order to determine the factors affecting participating learners' psychosocial well-being in the two at-risk school communities.

Informed assent and consent (Kuther, 2003; Slaughter, Cole, Jennings & Reimer, 2007) was obtained from learner participants and their parents or guardians as part of the broader NRF-funded University of Pretoria/Fordham University project (See *Appendix A and B*). Learner participants and their parents or guardians were informed about the nature of the broader project and the research processes before they were requested to give assent and consent to participate voluntarily in the project (See *Appendix B*) (Winick, 1991). Learner participants and their parents or guardians were given the opportunity to clarify any concerns or questions before signing the assent and consent forms of the learner participants and their parents or guardians. These are in the possession of the project leader at the Department of Educational Psychology, University of Pretoria, and will be safely stored (Diesburg & Wang, 2010).

By utilising the PRA-based posters and photographs (visual data), and a reflective journal as secondary data sources in the current study, I conformed to the ethical stipulations of confidentiality, anonymity and privacy (Coyne, 2010). Participants' anonymity was guaranteed by ensuring that presented information did not reveal any of the participants' identities (Parry & Mauthner, 2004). I furthermore removed any names indicated on the posters throughout the transcription and analysis process. I numbered each participant according to the order of participation.

I furthermore adhered to the ethical principle of privacy, through handling the obtained information with sensitivity and in confidentially (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). I also focused on the principle of accuracy by including and analysing accurate secondary data sources and not falsifying any detail (Kluge, 1997; Lakatos, 1969). Only the project leaders of the broader NRF-funded University of Pretoria/Fordham University project will have access to the data sources, which will be securely stored for a period of 15 years in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria (Maree, 2016).

According to De Vos, Delpont, Fouché and Strydom (2011), minimal ethical dilemmas are associated with the primary thematic analysis of secondary data sources, as harm to participants is not possible. I did however remain aware of possible language differences and acknowledge the potential influence that this could have had on my study (Van Nes, Abma, Jonsson & Deeg, 2010). I have therefore attempted to analyse the research phenomenon via secondary data sources from the participants' viewpoints (Easterbrook, 1993) and refrained from making my own value judgements in terms of any cultural aspect of the participants (Clifford, 1988). My decision-making

was thus informed by reflexivity and continuous discussions with my supervisor, one of the project leaders who was directly involved with the data generation since the start of the broader project, to ensure trustworthy research (Shenton, 2004).

Ethical considerations are furthermore applicable to the analysis, writing and dissemination of the research findings. According to Babbie (2005), an accurate account of the research process, results and findings have to be documented continuously. Throughout this study, I did not misrepresent or falsify any findings to meet my own or a specific audience's needs (Creswell, 2009; Kluge, 1997).

3.7 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

Qualitative research is utilised as a tool to promote social justice and intergroup bonds (Ponterotto, 2013). As a qualitative researcher, I was guided by the principles of validity and trustworthiness as the conclusions drawn provided an accurate description of phenomena and the reasons for the phenomena (Harding, 2013). I aimed to provide a scientific, transparent and ethically reputable study illustrating knowledge, cognitive choices, integrity, sensitivity, commitment to morality and ethical skills (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2008).

Relational ethics meant that I had to be mindful of my character, actions and consequences and the impact thereof on participants (Tracy, 2010). Harbouring the goal of informing, maintaining confidentiality and acting in the best interest of participants (Shaw, 2010), self-awareness, multicultural competence and collaborative commitment served as a critical function of the reflective journal (Ponterotto, 2013). Moral equality, moral autonomy, impartiality, reciprocity and equivocality should be honoured during primary inductive thematic analysis (Shaw, 2010). Considerations beyond the data collection phase include being mindful of potential unjust or unintended consequences and considering the meaning that can be interrogated in writing by anticipating how the public and policy makers could possibly misread research findings.

Learners are regarded as part of the vulnerable population group in research and as a result of regulations and policies concerning ethical dimensions, the interests of learners should be protected (Singh & Keenan, 2010). Anonymity is of concern as the identities of participants must be protected according to particular levels and standards of sensitivity so that they cannot be identified in published research by making use of pseudonyms (Wiles et al., 2011), although only the content of original communication was investigated (Wiles et al., 2011). Procedural ethical

considerations often include self-reflexivity and multivocality as these pathways lead to improved ethical guidelines universally necessary in the research process and valuing the principles of doing no harm (Tracy, 2010).

The aspirational principles of ethical professional conduct guided my analysis, as well as the publication of study (Miller & Salkind, 2002). I explored my professional competences and displayed integrity in my research analysis while honouring my professional and scientific responsibility to the communities involved (Miller & Salkind, 2002). I demonstrated respect for learner's rights, dignity and diversity by being aware of my social responsibility in order to serve the public good by reflecting the principle of beneficence (Franzosi, 2004).

3.8 CONCLUSION

In Chapter 3, I discussed the selected methods of analysis and the documentation of secondary datasets, applied in a meaningful way to respond to the research questions at hand. The quality criteria and ethical considerations by which these processes were completed were described.

Chapter 4 follows with its dedication to the research findings.

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4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3, I explained the research process and described the paradigmatic approaches I employed. I also elaborated on the data generation and documentation methods of the broader project, as well as interpretation strategies utilised for this study. In conclusion, I discussed the quality criteria and ethical considerations that guided the study.

In this chapter, I report on the results of the study in terms of the themes and sub-themes I identified following the primary inductive thematic analysis of the secondary datasets and sources in this study of limited scope. As part of the results, I include verbatim quotations and photographs of the posters, as well as extracts from my reflective journal to support the identified themes and sub-themes. Lastly, I discuss the findings of the study by linking the results to current literature, as included in Chapter 2.

4.2 RESULTS OF THE STUDY

In this section I discuss the four main themes I identified, with associated sub-themes. Table 4.1 provides an overview of the themes and sub-themes of the study.

Table 4.1: Themes of the study

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Theme 1: Learners' understanding and evaluation of themselves	1.1: Self-worth beliefs 1.2: Emotional expression and awareness
Theme 2: Role of relationships	2.1: Parent-learner interaction 2.2: Sibling relationships 2.3: Peer interaction
Theme 3: Role of the school	3.1: Food-related needs 3.2: Opportunities for learning 3.3: Teachers as role models
Theme 4: Role of media	4.1: Influence of television 4.2: Influence of gaming

4.3 THEME 1: LEARNERS' UNDERSTANDING AND EVALUATION OF THEMSELVES

Theme 1 captures the participants' understanding and evaluation of their own individual attitudes and behaviour. Two sub-themes were identified that relate to self-worth beliefs and emotional expression and awareness. Table 4.2 provides a summary of the criteria I employed to identify the relevant sub-themes.

Table 4.2: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 1

Identified sub-themes	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Sub-theme 1.1: Self-worth beliefs	This sub-theme includes data related to participants' beliefs of their own self-worth	This sub-theme excludes data related to participants' emotional awareness and perceptions of others
Sub-theme 1.2: Emotional expression and awareness	This sub-theme includes data related to participants' emotional expression and awareness	This sub-theme excludes data related to participants' self-worth beliefs

Table 4.3: Data codes for PRA-based posters

Symbol	Representation
First sequence: three letters	These letters represent the data generation method employed by the previous team of field workers, which was a PRA-based workshop, i.e. PRA.
Second sequence: one letter	This letter represents the code used for the school name, i.e. School A or School B.
Third sequence: number	This number represents the poster number.
Fourth sequence: number	This number represents the participant number.
Semi-colon	A semi-colon indicates that more than one contribution is mentioned.

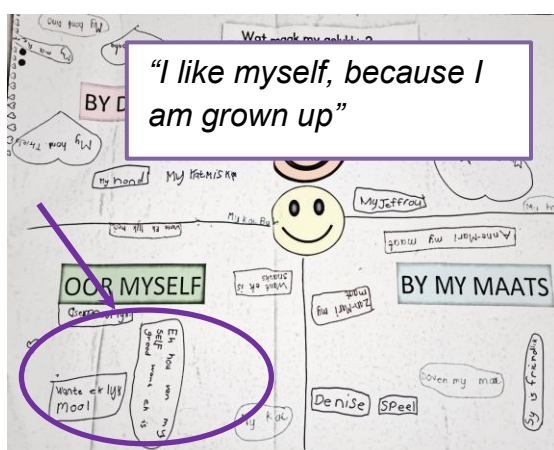
4.3.1 SUB-THEME 1.1: SELF-WORTH BELIEFS

This sub-theme relates to participants' self-worth beliefs. Personal self-descriptions contributing to perceptions in terms of self-worth might include unique attributes, qualities, abilities and characteristics. Self-worth beliefs and values are often shaped by social comparison with the peer group.

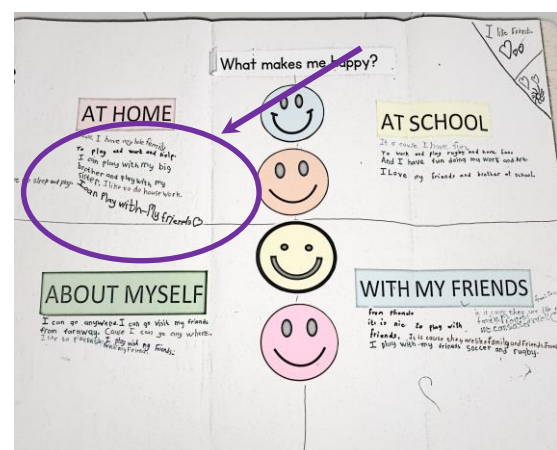
The data suggests that participants described themselves in a concrete way in terms of individual attributes or qualities with their self-descriptions including external and internal characteristics, as well as psychological traits without comparing themselves to their peer group. One participant from School B noted: *“I am fast, I am smart”* (PRA-B-24-279)³. This contribution is supported by another participant from School B, who observed: *“I am very smart, my hair is nice, I have a nice body”* (PRA-B-26-293). Similarly, a participant from School A reiterated: *“I love myself because it is my body”* (PRA-A-16-116). Closely related, two participants from School A respectively confirmed: *“I like myself because I can run faster”*, while another participant remarked: *“I like myself with my smile”* (PRA-A-10-74; 68). In addition, some participants from School B reiterated: *“I love myself because I am clean”* (PRA-B-20-259), and another participant noted: *“I love my body”* (PRA-B-20-252).

After analysis of the data, participants also seemed to include self-esteem as another aspect of their self-understanding and focused on judgements about their own independence. A participant from School B soberved: *“I like myself because I am grown up”* (PRA-B-14-219). In addition, one participant from School B stated: *“I love that I can sleep by myself in my own bed”* (PRA-B-19-246). Furthermore, two participants from School A emphasised their independence and competence by observing: *“I can go anywhere”* (PRA-B-18-218), as well as: *“I can go anywhere. I can go visit my friends for far away”* (PRA-A-18-133).

Photographs 4.1 and 4.2 capture participants’ understanding and description about their own independence.



Photograph 4.1: Competence and industry is reflected through increased levels of maturity



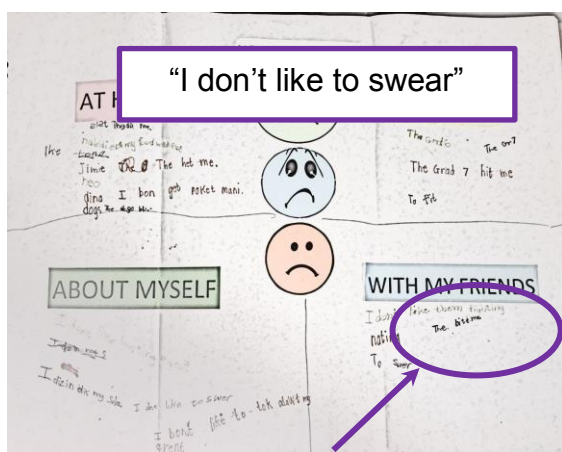
Photograph 4.2: Competence and industry is reflected through increased levels of independence

³ See the explanatory table for the data code on the previous page.

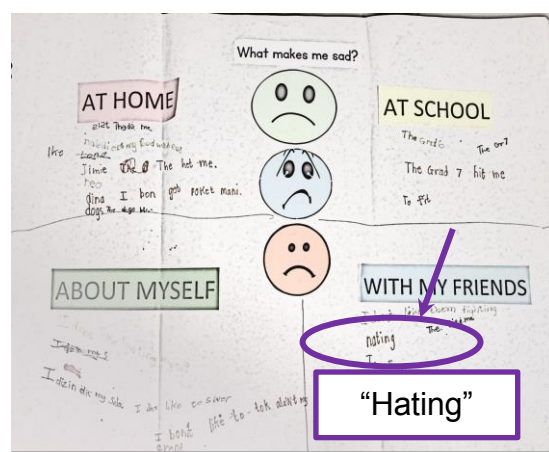
It furthermore indicated a refined self-concept during their self-descriptions, as evidenced by the following responses: *“I make myself food. I love myself”* (PRA-B-6-173). In this regard, a participant from School A responded with: *“I love myself for making friends”* (PRA-A-6-64). One participant from School A indicated: *“I like to live”* (PRA-A-10-73), while another participant from School B observed: *“I care for myself”* (PRA-B-26-295). A participant from School A noted: *“I am relaxed”* (PRA-A-8-59).

In confirmation of participants’ perceptions and self-descriptions, I wrote the following in my research diary: *“Participants seem to be quite aware and proud of their talents, characteristics and personalities, as well as their strengths. Positive perceptions of individual character traits draw learners closer to the people around them, which might serve as a protective factor”* (Research diary, 15 May 2018).

Data from participants contained certain positive values during their self-descriptions. Participants from School A, for example noted: *“I do not like to swear”* (PRA-A-2-124), as well as: *“Not swear”* (PRA-A-2-121) as values they aspire to. Participants from School A also provided other examples, such as: *“To fight”* (PRA-A-2-121), together with: *“Hating”* (PRA-A-2-123). In this regard, as examples of negative behaviour they tend to avoid through positive values. A participant from School A observed: *“Sometimes people say I am ugly. This makes me sad”* (PRA-A-4-23). Similarly, two participants from School B respectively indicated: *“I do not like myself because I have an eye problem”*, while the other participant noted: *“Sometimes I’m nervous”* (PRA-B-19-230; 226). In addition, a participant from School A said: *“I feel sad when I get myself hurt”* (PRA-A-4-20). Photographs 4.3 and 4.4 indicate participants referred to during their self-descriptions.



Photograph 4.3: Participants mention negative habits such as swearing



Photograph 4.4: Participants mention that they have negative attitudes towards others

On the other hand, analysis highlighted learners' dislike of certain physical characteristics and qualities. One participant from School B commented: *"I don't like myself. My face is small"* (PRA-B-13-192). Similarly, a participant from School B said: *"I have big feet"* (PRA-B-4-145). A participant from School A mentioned: *"I look ugly"* (PRA-A-4-19).

Further exploration of data from School B indicated the following: *"When my hair(piece) is out"* (PRA-B-8-168), as well as: *"I don't like myself because I don't have dreads (dread locks)"* (PRA-B-19-228). Similarly, a participant from School B remarked: *"I am ugly"* (PRA-B-6-156). Reflecting on participants' physical self-descriptions, I wrote the following in my research diary: *"Disapprovals of unique physical qualities might contribute toward a lower self-esteem and a decrease in self-confidence. Lower levels of self-confidence and self-esteem may be associated with lower levels of psychosocial well-being"* (Research diary, 2 June 2018) (See Appendix E).

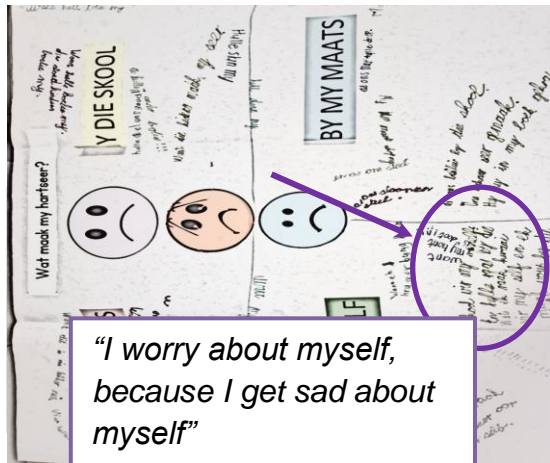
4.3.2 SUB-THEME 1.2: EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION AND AWARENESS

This sub-theme relates to participants' level of emotional expression and awareness during middle childhood. To this end, emotional expression refers to the ability to effectively articulate affective experiences through the use of an emotional vocabulary. In addition, emotional awareness refers to the ability to effectively recognise one's own affective reactions and to be able to identify others' affective experiences. I also became aware of participants' emotional expression during the primary analysis of the posters as secondary data source.

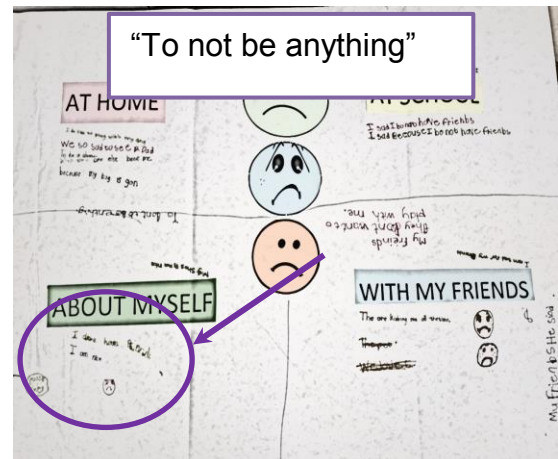
Based on the primary analysis PRA-based posters and photographs, a participant from School A expressed her general state of well-being as follows: *"I feel happy"* (PRA-B-9-66) as did another participant from School A, who noted: *"At school I feel happy everyday"* (PRA-A-8-73). Similarly, a participant from School B mentioned: *"I can laugh"* (PRA-B-8-57). Two participants from School A respectively indicated: *"Smile"* and *"I smila [smile]"* on their posters (PRA-A-2-16;19). A participant from School B remarked: *"I love myself because I am overjoyed"* (PRA-B-20-251). I noted the following in my research diary: *"I notice that the participants are aware of positive emotions and that they are able to express it with ease. This skill of verbalising positive affect supports individual well-being and the act of processing these positive experiences or perceptions increases personal levels of gratitude"* (Research diary, 3 May 2018).

I gathered from the poster contributions, that one participant from School B reflected about his emotional expression and awareness by indicating: *“I worry about myself. Because I get sad about myself”* (PRA-B-23-224). Another participant from School B mentioned: *“When I am not proud of myself”* (PRA-B-20-231). Closely related, one participant from School B noted: *“To not be anything”* (PRA-B-25-73).

Photographs 4.5 and 4.6 capture participants’ examples of their emotional awareness.



Photograph 4.5: Participants start to regulate their emotions and start to think about what emotions mean



Photograph 4.6: Participants express perceptions of low self-worth

During my inductive thematic analysis of the primary data, a participant from School B confirmed his emotional expression by saying: *“My friends scare me”* (PRA-B-3-128). To this end, another participant from School B noted: *“When they [my friends] hurt my feelings”* (PRA-B-15-206). One participant from School A also expressed her emotions and responded: *“When I am lonely”*, illustrating emotional expression and awareness (PRA-A-1-1). A participant from School B indicated: *“To be a shame”* as part of her emotional awareness (PRA-B-25-219). One participant from School B expressed: *“I hate my life. I hate my life?”* (PRA-B-3-132).

In terms of an expression and awareness of the needs and emotions of others, participants from School A wrote: *“We share with each other”* (PRA-A-16-5), while another participant from School B confirmed: *“When we share, care and help”* (PRA-B-16-227). Further demonstrating empathy for the needs of others, a participant from School B added: *“I am sad with my friends. I am sad when my friends cry. I am sad when a dog is hurt.”* (PRA-B-5-152). Reflecting emotional expression and awareness, a participant from School B indicated: *“When my friend cries it makes me unhappy”* (PRA-B-28-217). Additionally, certain circumstances and situations also contribute to

emotional reactions. A participant shared that emotional experiences are linked to events: *“Because my dog is dead!”* (PRA-B-23-242). Another participant from School B described: *“I am unhappy, because my dad almost died”* (PRA-B-21-238).

In addition, a participant from School B indicated on a PRA-based data source: *“I am sad when my mom is sad”* (PRA-B-5-153). To this end, a participant from School B incorporated: *“Seeing my friend crying”* (PRA-B-18-227). Aligning emotions with those of significant role players, a participant from School B indicated: *“I am sad that my mom said that she is fired”* (PRA-B-5-154). I noted the following in my reflective journal: *“The compassion reflected in learner participant responses relate to an increase of emotional awareness for the needs of significant role players in their lives. Insight into the emotions of people in learners’ lives reflects an increased focus on altruism. Outward perspective taking served as a protective factor in learners’ lives”* (Research diary, 28 May 2018).

4.4 THEME 2: ROLE OF RELATIONSHIPS

Theme 2 captures participants’ perceptions of their relationships and interactions with family members and peers. This theme comprises three sub-themes that relate to parent-learner interactions, sibling relationships and peer interaction. Table 4.4 indicates the inclusion and exclusion criteria that apply to Theme 2.

Table 4.4: The inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 2

Identified sub-themes	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Sub-theme 2.1: Parent-learner interaction	This sub-theme includes data related to the interaction between parents and learners	This sub-theme excludes data related to participants’ relationships with siblings and peers
Sub-theme 2.2: Sibling relationships	This sub-theme includes data related to the relationships of siblings	This sub-theme excludes data related to participants’ relationships with parents and peers
Sub-theme 2.3: Peer interactions	This sub-theme includes data related to interactions with the peer group	This sub-theme excludes data related to participants’ relationships with parents and siblings

4.4.1 SUB-THEME 2.1: PARENT-LEARNER INTERACTION

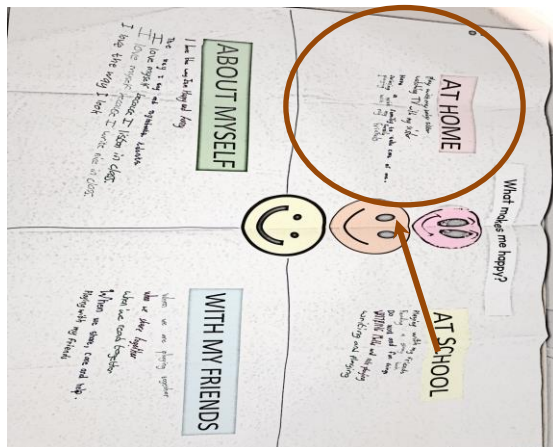
The first sub-theme indicates the participants' relationships between parents or caregivers and the learner as influential in their lives. The parent-learner relationship is a primary bond of nurture in learners' lives that provide the foundation for the development of attachment to other people.

According to my analysis, participants characterised their interactions with parents and/or caregiver by means of both care and victimisation. A participant from School A expressed: *"I love my mom"* (PRA-A-7-46). Closely related another participant from School A elaborated: *"My mom makes me happy"* (PRA-A-8-53). A participant from School B agreed and emphasised: *"My dad likes me. My mom likes me"* (PRA-B-4-163). As such, a participant from School A continued by saying: *"I love my dad"* (PRA-A-13-103). To this end, two participants from School B similarly commented: *"Seeing my mother"* (PRA-B-27-299) contributes to the experience of happiness: *"My mommy loves me"* (PRA-B-3-133).

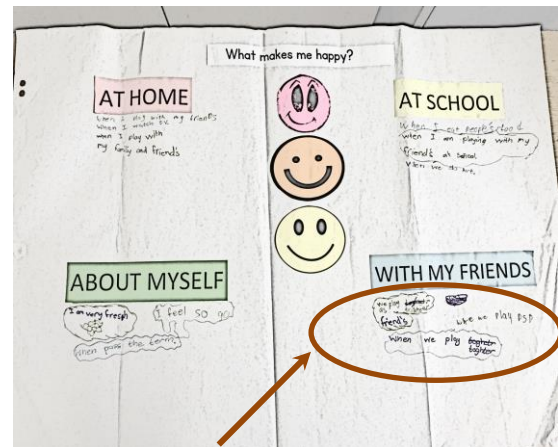
From the data analysed, a participant from School B communicated: *"Sometimes I am sad. I am sad when they leave me."* (PRA-B-24-247). A professedly heartfelt response is shared by a participant from School B: *"When it is a funeral it makes me sad"* (PRA-B-9-176). I noted the following in my research diary: *"Some participant contributions are underpinned by physical or psychological trauma and abandonment. Not having secure attachment to parents or caregivers has detrimental effects of children's courage, curiosity, exploration and industry"* (Research diary, 20 June 2018).

Appreciation for family members was expressed by a participant from School A, who said: *"Because I have my whole family"* (PRA-A-18-128). A participant from School B confirmed this view by commenting: *"Having a family taking care of me"* (PRA-B-16-226) was a source of joy. I noted the following in my research diary: *"The love for and appreciation of family was refreshing"* (Research diary, 15 June 2018).

Photographs 4.7 and 4.8 show participants' visual posters, indicating their gratitude for the involvement of family members.



Photograph 4.7: Being taken care of by family unit seems to be of importance to participants



Photograph 4.8: Relationships with family are often play-based

The topic of play surfaced in relation to family members. The data revealed that a participant from School B shared the following view: *“When I play with my family and friends”*, influences positive emotional experiences (PRA-B-2-148). One participant from School B accentuated play with parents and said: *“Play with my mother”* (PRA-B-25-285). Another participant from School A added: *“Play with my dad”* (PRA-A-11-77).

Negative emotional experiences are also shared by participants. It became clear during my analysis that a participant from School B expressed: *“When I do not have anyone at home”* contributes to sadness (PRA-A-11-77). One participant from School B furthermore communicated: *“When someone else beats me”* (PRA-B-25-254). More incidences of violence were added by a participant from School B, who indicated: *“Because I have had many hidings at home in my room and I don’t like myself because it is not nice in my life”* (PRA-B-21-239). Similarly, a participant from School B shared: *“I do not like it when my mom beats me”* (PRA-B-16-210).

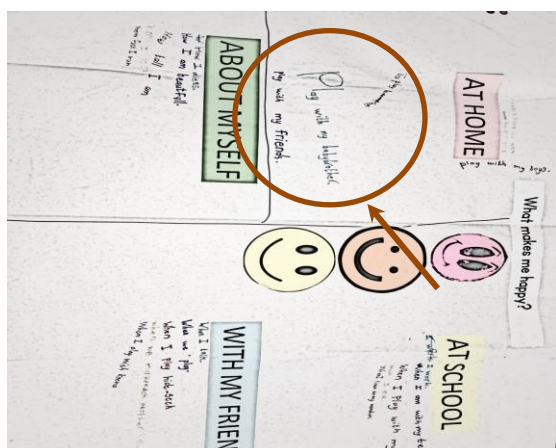
The data suggests that three participants from School B elaborated on negative experiences and indicated: *“When my mother is cross”* (PRA-B-17-215), while another said: *“My mommy and my daddy fights”* (PRA-B-8-163) as well as: *“Mother and Father fight”* (PRA-B-8-166). A participant from School A agreed and said: *“And when my father shouts and hits me, I get sad”* (PRA-A-4-20). I noted the following in my research diary: *“Parents seem to be viewed as caregivers, but also as quite violent disciplinarians. Parenting styles impact upon how learners make sense of rules and interpret relationships with authority figures, which could be a factor of risk in their lives”* (Research diary, 30 June 2018).

4.4.2 SUB-THEME 2.2: SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS

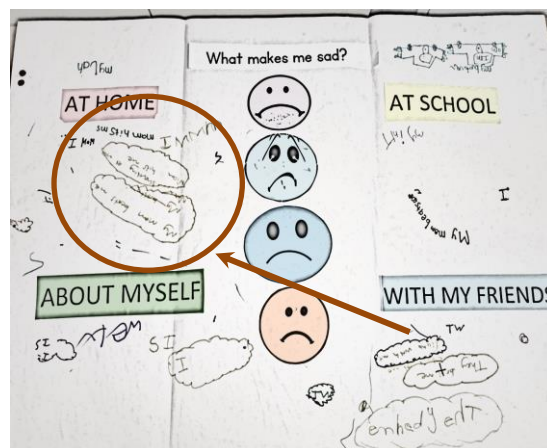
The second sub-theme explores the participants' relationships with siblings. Learners who grow up with siblings develop their social and conflict management skills from a young age. Strong emotional bonds are explored within sibling relationships.

Interaction with siblings seems to be significant in the lives of the participants. Participants emphasised interaction through play with siblings frequently. After reviewing the data, I observed that one participant from School A communicated: *"I can play with my big brother and sister"* (PRA-A-18-130). A participant from School B agreed: *"I play with my baby sister"* (PRA-B-4-159). The context of play-based interactions was also confirmed to by another participant from School B and mentioned: *"I play with my sister at home"* (PRA-B-19-245). One participant from School B supposedly enjoyed interaction with siblings and said: *"I love to play with family"* (PRA-B-4-162).

Photographs 4.9 and 4.10 show participants' visual posters, indicating play-based interactions with family members.



Photograph 4.9: Comradeship between siblings is considered to be explored through play



Photograph 4.10: Siblings are united through parental punishment

On the other hand, some participants shared their view that sibling rivalry was prevalent. The data showed that a learner from School A said: *"My brother shouting at me"* (PRA-A-12-55) and a participant from School B noted the following: *"What makes me sad is that my brother hurts me"* (PRA-B-17-216). Similarly, a participant from School B related by saying: *"My brother makes me sad"* (PRA-B-27-274). Participants are not always on the receiving end, as reportedly experienced by a participant from School B who indicated: *"When I argue with my brother"* (PRA-B-23-241).

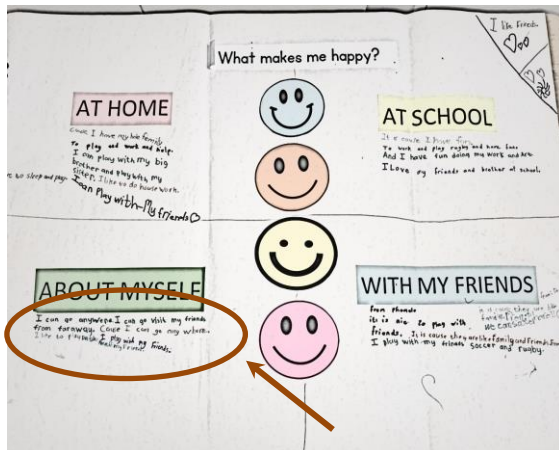
4.4.3 SUB-THEME 2.3: PEER INTERACTION

The third sub-theme focuses on peer relationships and relates to positive and negative peer interaction. Peer interaction is characterised as a relationship of belonging and/or victimisation. Learners develop their ability to share, collaborate and build friendships through peer interaction.

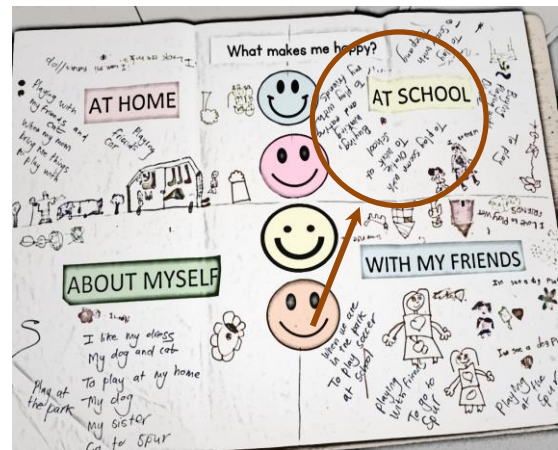
Positive peer interaction is revealed through engaging with peers within the school and home context. This was reiterated by comments from participants, for example a participant from School B expressed his positive feelings: *“I like to laugh with my friend”* (PRA-B-18-237). Another participant from School B substantiated this by saying: *“Talking with my friends”* is significant (PRA-B-20-257), while one added: *“I am happy when I am with my friends”* (PRA-B-26-292). Two participants from School A concurred: *“They play nice with me”* (PRA-A-12-87) and added: *“Sharing with my friends”* (PRA-A-12-88).

The value of close friendships is evident from some of the views expressed, for example the following observation by a participant from School A: *“You can do everything with them”* (PRA-A-10-76). The PRA-based data indicated that one participant from School B agreed by saying: *“We are happy friends”* (PRA-B-1-145). A second participant from School A contributed: *“It is because they are like family and friends”* (PRA-A-18-129). In addition, one participant from School A emphasised: *“I feel so, so safe”* (PRA-A-9-64). I noted the following in my research diary: *“Close bonds of trust and safety are revealed through participant comments. A feeling of belonging might support psychosocial well-being and influence more positive perceptions of daily events”* (Research diary, 6 May 2018).

Photographs 4.11 and 4.12 show participants’ visual posters, indicating their positive peer interactions.



Photograph 4.11: Friendships with peers equally as close as relationships with family members



Photograph 4.12: Practicing sport might initiate peer interactions and meaningful friendships

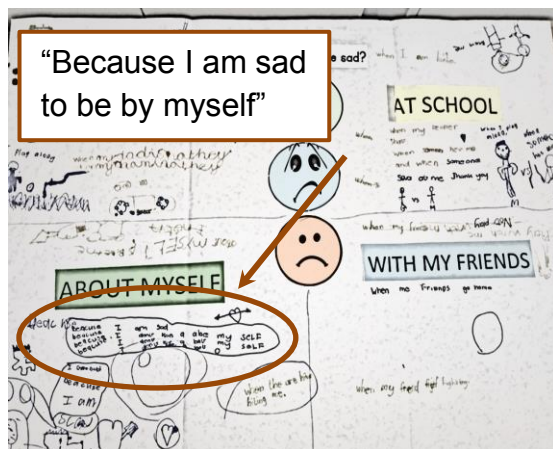
Physical activity is evident in positive peer interaction, for example a participant from School B observed: *“We like to play touch rugby”* (PRA-B-27-300). Another participant from School B added: *“At school I play netball”* (PRA-B-28-307). A participant from School A confirmed the value of peer participation in sport: *“To play soccer with friends”* (PRA-A-4-31). Three participants from School B viewed physical activity in a positive way, for example one observed: *“I like to swim with my friend”* (PRA-B-18-240), while another said: *“I like to play catch the ball with my friend”* (PRA-B-18-242), with a third adding: *“I like to play hide-and-peek with my friend”* (PRA-B-18-241).

Participants often experienced that their peers victimised them, which made them feel physically and psychologically excluded and abused. The datasets revealed that a participant from School B expressed feelings of sadness: *“I am sad to not have friends. I am sad because I do not have friends”* (PRA-B-25-252). Two participants from School A confirmed this feeling by saying: *“Being on my own”* (PRA-A-18-81), and another mentioned: *“When I have no friends”* (PRA-A-18-83). I noted the following in my research diary: *“More contributions are shared about the negative impact of being isolated, than being abused. Neglect is considered to be the worst form of trauma and greatest risk to well-being when considering interpersonal relationships”* (Research diary, 18 May 2018).

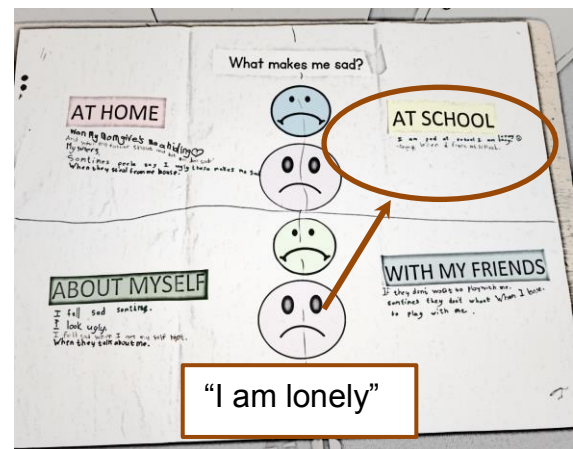
The data also revealed that the peer group is not always accepting of others. A participant from School B, for example mentioned: *“Because I am sad. Because I can't be myself.”* (PRA-B-26-267). This is confirmed on the PRA-based poster by a participant from School A, who remarked: *“When someone teases you”* (PRA-B-14-64). Closely related, a participant from School B added: *“When they drop me/let me*

down. When they hit me. When they make fun of me.” (PRA-B-4-143). Two participants from School A similarly mentioned: *“When they don’t want to play with me”* (PRA-A-18-83), while another added: *“When I’m lonely”* (PRA-A-18-82). In terms of isolation, a participant from School B observed: *“My friends make me sad”* (PRA-B-6-154).

According to the existing datasets, participants also experienced that victimisation often takes place in the form of bullying behaviour. A participant from School B commented: *“My friends hurt me at school”* (PRA-B-6-155). A participant from School A added: *“If they hit us”* (PRA-A-19-88). Closely related, one participant from School B said: *“When other children bully me”* (PRA-B-6-157). Another participant from School A confirmed this by observing: *“When my friends swear at me”* (PRA-A-16-75). Photographs 4.13 and 4.14 show participants’ visual posters, indicating factors contributing to perceptions of sadness.



Photograph 4.13: Isolation is considered to be a form of non-verbal, social bullying



Photograph 4.14: Exclusion from a peer group or peer interactions influences participants’ perception of the school environment

According to my data, a participant from School A confessed personal bullying behaviour by indicating: *“When I fight at school”* (PRA-A-4-20). Two participants from School B added: *“And when we steal”* (PRA-A-23-243), along with: *“When we fight at school. We hurt each other.”* (PRA-A-23-240). A participant from School B confirmed bullying by saying: *“When my friends bully each other”*, it seems to lead to sadness (PRA-B-9-180). I noted the following in my research diary: *“It seems that bullying behaviour has become normalised in the primary school setting. When learners observe bullying so frequently, this behaviour almost becomes acceptable as a form of self-defence, sacrificing the psychosocial well-being of all parties involved”* (Research diary, 24 June 2018).

4.5 THEME 3: ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

The third theme incorporates the roles of the school with specification in terms of food-related needs, opportunities for learning and teachers as role models. Table 4.5 explains the criteria I utilised to establish the relevant sub-themes.

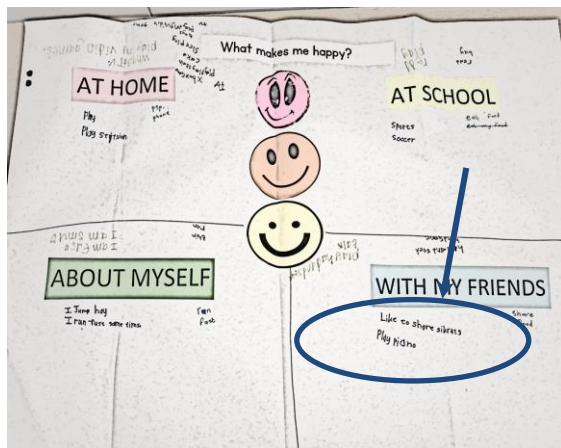
Table 4.5: The inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 3

Identified sub-themes	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Sub-theme 3.1: Food-related needs	This sub-theme includes data related to the participants' food-related needs in the school context	This sub-theme excludes data related to opportunities for learning and teachers as role models in the school context
Sub-theme 3.2: Opportunities for learning	This sub-theme includes data related to the participants' opportunities for learning in the school context	This sub-theme excludes data related to participants' food-related needs and teachers as role models in the school context
Sub-theme 3.3: Teachers as role models	This sub-theme includes data related to teachers as role models in the school context	This sub-theme excludes data related to participants' food-related needs and opportunities for learning in the school context

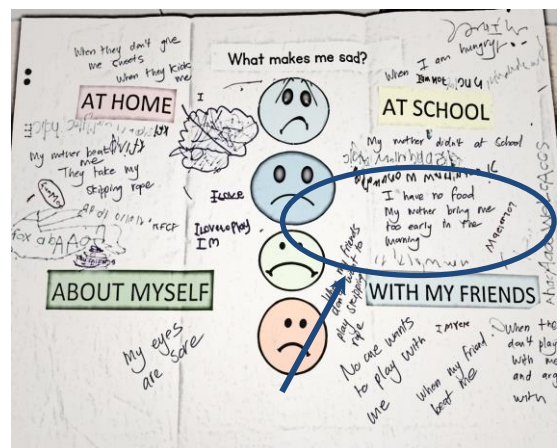
4.5.1 SUB-THEME 3.1: FOOD-RELATED NEEDS

The first sub-theme discusses participants' food-related need in the school context. Learner nutritional development influences the physical, cognitive and psychosocial level of functioning. Proper nutritional intake supports the development of a healthy immune system and contributes to learners' healthy functioning.

Based on the participant contributions, having access to food and nutrition might be regarded as a benefit of attending school. A participant from School A was of the following opinion: *"I like to eat at school"* (PRA-A-17-124). Another participant from School B mentioned: *"Eating with my friends"* (PRA-B-27-298). In addition, one participant from School A said: *"I like food"* (PRA-A-1-3). Photographs 4.15 and 4.16 show participants' visual posters, indicating learners' need for food and nutrition at school.



Photograph 4.15: Enjoying food is associated with the school experience



Photograph 4.16: Having no access to food has detrimental effects on learning and development

On the other hand, not having proper nutritional resources was evidently regarded as contributing to increased levels of sadness. Participants from both schools mentioned during the PRA-based workshops: *“When I have nothing to eat”* (PRA-B-19-230), or: *“I have no food”* (PRA-A-20-99), as well as: *“I am without food”* (PRA-B-2-119). One participant added: *“Not getting lunch”* (PRA-B-6-29) as a negative experience. I noted the following in my research diary: *“Literature seldom notes that learners enjoy the school environment because they receive food at school. Not being properly nourished may negatively impact physical, cognitive, emotional and social development”* (Research diary, 30 April 2018).

4.5.2 SUB-THEME 3.2: OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

The second sub-theme elaborates on opportunities for learning in the school context. Educational activities focused on building literacy, numeracy and life skills is perceived as developing learners’ sense of mastery. However, some learners do not find these learning opportunities to be pleasurable.

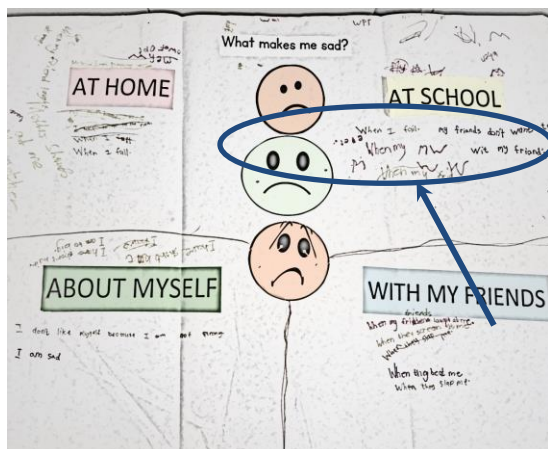
During analysis of the data, it became clear that learners viewed schools as educational settings which should foster effective opportunities for learning. Most participants enjoy these learning opportunities within the school environment and confirmed that school had a positive influence on their lives. One participant from School A said: *“At school I feel happy everyday”* (PRA-A-10-73). Two participants from School A explored their perceptions by adding: *“I like it at school”* (PRA-A-10-73), as well as: *“I love school”* (PRA-A-2-14).

Other participants emphasised during the PRA-based workshops, that they perceived learning more specifically as a positive experience. Two participants from School A

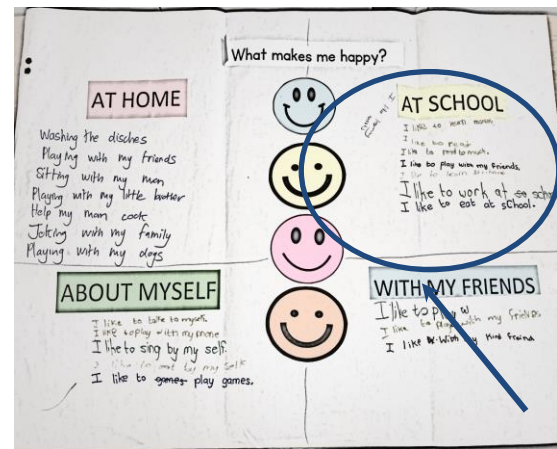
confirmed: *“I like to learn Maths”* (PRA-A-17-119) and another added: *“I like to read”* (PRA-A-17-120). One participant expressed a sense of pride and enthusiastically added: *“When I work in class”* (PRA-B-9-176). Closely related, a participant from School A contributed by saying: *“I love to make me art with my friends”* (PRA-A-16-117). To this end, a participant from School B agreed and indicated: *“And I have fun doing my work and Art”* (PRA-B-18-135). I noted the following in my research diary: *“Overall, I gathered the general impression that the curiosity and love of learning triumphs over negative perceptions of school”* (Research diary, 25 April 2018).

The data suggests that a participant from School B furthermore noted: *“I like to write and read and go to break”* (PRA-B-25-288). Activities that took place at the school are incorporated by one participant from School B who said: *“Work in class, play at the playground; play with friends”* (PRA-B-26-290). A participant from School B confirmed this by adding: *“I love to work”* (PRA-B-1-139).

However, analysis revealed that some participants accentuated a dislike in terms of the learning environment and mentioned: *“And I don’t want to be sad. I am sad at school”* (PRA-A-9-36), while another confirmed: *“I hate homework”* (PRA-A-2-7). Two participants from School B emphasised: *“When I fail”* (PRA-B-12-186) and another commented: *“Failing at school makes me sad”* (PRA-B-18-223). A participant from School A added: *“I hate it when I do a bad thing at school”* (PRA-A-7-31). Photographs 4.17 and 4.18 show participants’ visual posters, indicating learners’ fear of inferiority and their appreciation for developing academic competence.



Photograph 4.17: Participants mention failing a school grades as a negative experience



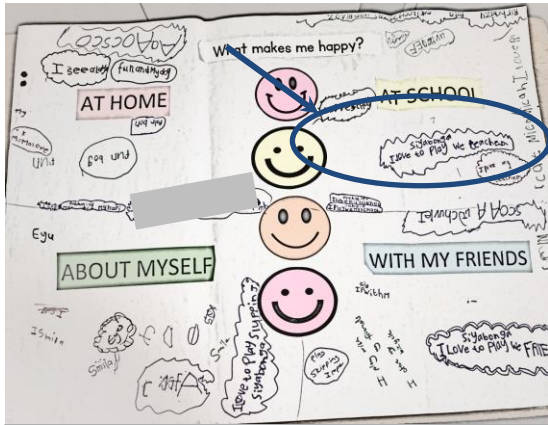
Photograph 4.18: Some participants are eager to learn new content of scholastic subjects

4.5.3 SUB-THEME 3.3: TEACHERS AS ROLE MODELS

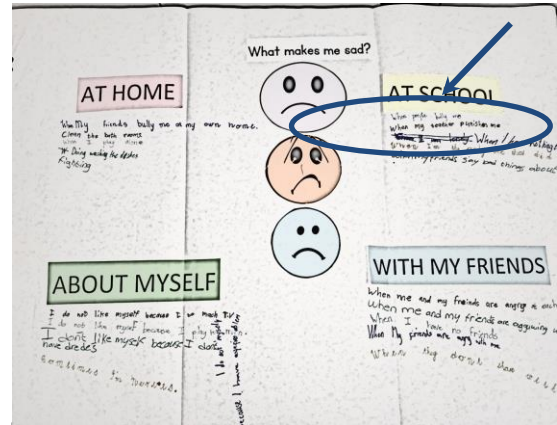
The third sub-theme incorporates the perception of teachers as role models, whether it is positive or negative. Learners' quality of affective relationship with teachers and the discipline method that teachers employ influence learners' perceptions of the type of role models that teachers embody.

According to primary inductive analysis, teachers were regarded as being both positive and negative role models in the lives of participants. A participant from School A observed: *"My teacher makes me happy"* (PRA-A-15-106). One participant from School B mentioned: *"When I am with my teacher"*, as contributing to feeling safe and secure (PRA-B-21-264). A participant from School A said: *"I love my teacher"* (PRA-A-2-16). One participant from School B pointed out: *"Talking to my teacher"* (PRA-B-20-253) as a positive experience. Furthermore, two participants from School B expressed strong attachment to their teachers and expressed sadness in terms of the absence of their teachers: *"When my teacher, Teacher U, is not at school"* (PRA-B-20-231), as well as: *"That the teacher is going [away]"* (PRA-B-13-67).

The data showed that a participant from School A observed: *"We love to play that we are the teacher"* (PRA-A-2-15). One participant from School B contributed: *"When my teacher teaches me"* (PRA-B-6-170) seems to be a rewarding, positive experience. I noted the following in my research diary: *"Literature seldom notes the loving relationship between learners and teachers from the perspective of the learner. Respecting the voice of learners might improve teacher-learner interactions, which may support overall learner well-being"* (Research diary, 30 April 2018). Photographs 4.19 and 4.20 show participants' visual posters, indicating factors contributing to perceptions of teachers as positive and negative role models.



Photograph 4.19: Mimicking the role of the teacher indicates the admiration for the positive influence of the teacher in participants' lives



Photograph 4.20: Negative reinforcement and corporal punishment is often encouraged at school settings

Contrastingly, the data also proposes that not all teachers are perceived as positive role models. Negative influences and experiences include a remark by a participant from School B: *“When my teacher punishes me”* (PRA-B-19-228). Closely related, a participant from School A supported this viewpoint: *“Because teacher screams at me and us”* (PRA-A-13-66). Two participants from School B also confirmed: *“When my teacher shouts at me”* (PRA-B-4-141) and another concurred: *“Teacher shouts at me all the time”* (PRA-B-16-210).

It was confirmed through thematic analysis, that one participant from School B indicated a negative perception by confirming: *“When my teacher reprimands me. When my teacher hits me. When I sit in the naughty corner.”* (PRA-B-4-143). A participant from School B added: *“My teacher said I must not go out for school break”* (PRA-B-5-148). I noted the following in my research diary: *“Learners do elaborate on the reasons why teachers could be considered to be negative role models, but their positive perceptions of teachers still triumph over the negative. As caregivers, teachers can nourish positive foundations to further their learners’ learning and development, as learning and development may serve as a supportive factor in learners’ lives”* (Research diary, 5 June 2018).

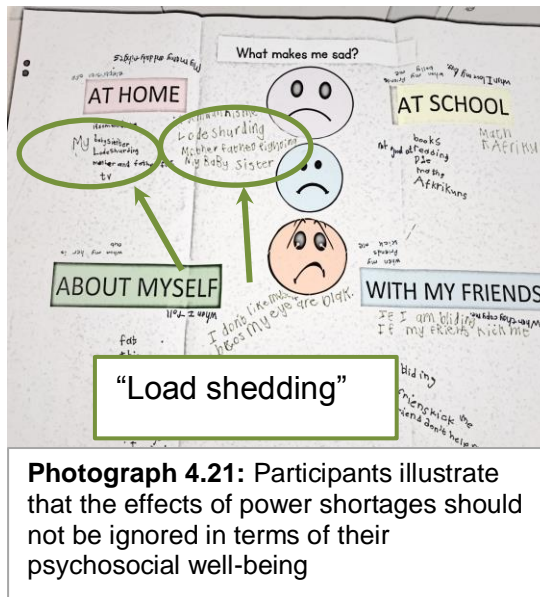
4.6 THEME 4: ROLE OF THE MEDIA

The fourth theme incorporates the roles of the media with special attention to the influence of television and gaming. Table 4.6 explains the criteria I utilised to establish the relevant sub-themes.

Table 4.6: The inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 4

Identified sub-themes	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Sub-theme 4.1: <i>Influence of television</i>	This sub-theme includes data related to the influence of television in participants' lives	This sub-theme excludes the influence of gaming in participants' lives
Sub-theme 4.2: <i>Influence of gaming</i>	This sub-theme includes data related to the influence of television in participants' lives influence of gaming in participants' lives	This sub-theme excludes the influence of television in participants' lives

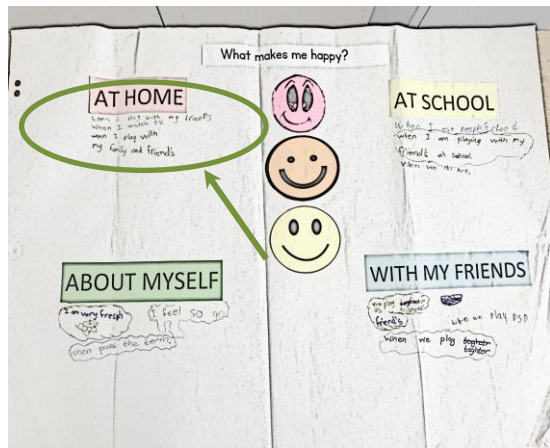
The sub-theme elaborates on the role of the media by relating to the influence of television and gaming as perceived by participants. The period preceding the PRA-based workshop was known for municipal power shortages in South Africa. The lack of electricity had an impact on the availability of media. Some participants described not having electricity as a negative experience and a challenge affecting their psychosocial well-being. One participant from School B elaborated by saying: *“When the electricity is off”* (PRA-B-8-164). In terms of power shortages, two participants mentioned: *“Load shedding”* (PRA-B-8-165;166) as specific challenges. I noted the following in my research diary: *“Community context and country-wide events will always impact field research in some way or the other. Participants report their expression and awareness of details related to circumstances of the study, which I value as precious and meaningful. Health promotion programmes focusing on comprehensive system-based background information may develop innovative and sustainable solutions to support the healthy development of the community”* (Research diary, 29 June 2018). Photograph 4.21 shows participants' visual posters, indicating that power shortages were perceived as influencing their routines and circumstances.



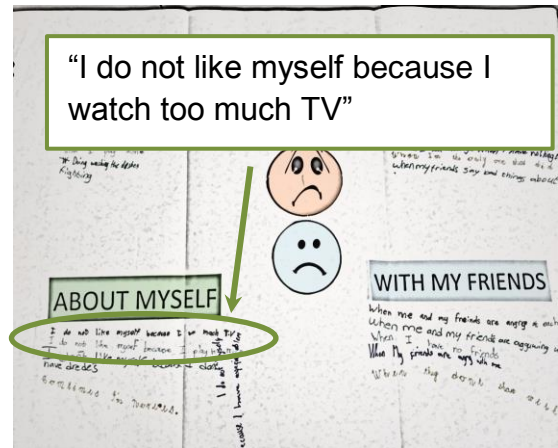
4.6.1 SUB-THEME 4.1: INFLUENCE OF TELEVISION

The first sub-theme focuses on the influence of television on participants' lives. Spending screen time in front of the television as a form of entertainment is often engaged with individually or is enjoyed as a social activity.

The data suggests that television has a significant influence in their lives. A participant from School A observed: *"When I am with my friends. Playing with my friends. Looking at the TV"* (PRA-A-16-113). Similarly, a participant from School B said: *"When I play with my friends. When I watch TV."* (PRA-B-2-147). Two participants from School B confirmed that: *"Watching television"* (PRA-B-6-170), as well as: *"Watching TV with my sister"* (PRA-B-16-224) as a positive leisure activity. Confirming this statement, a participant from School A added: *"I love to watch TV at home"* (PRA-A-9-61). Photographs 4.22 and 4.23 show participants' visual posters, indicating that they are exposed to televisions and might even watch television in excess.



Photograph 4.22: Engagement with the material shown on television is stated by participants



Photograph 4.23: Excessive time spent watching television is perceived as a personal area of growth, which influences participants' intrapersonal relationships

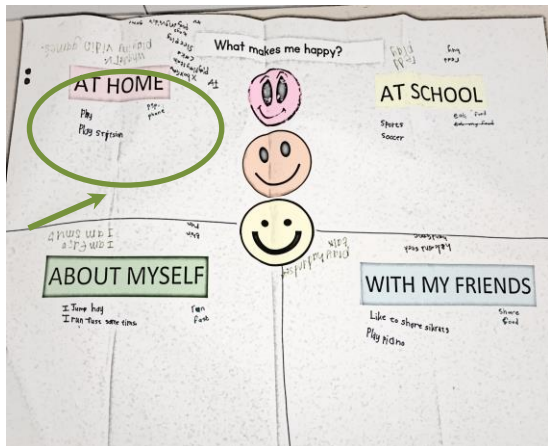
On the other hand, two participants from School B wrote the following on the PRA-based posters: *"When I do not watch television"* (PRA-B-15-204), while another participant noted: *"Not watching TV"* (PRA-B-26-256) has a negative impact on their lives. Offering a reflecting contribution, one participant from School B explained: *"I do not like myself because I watch too much television"* (PRA-B-19-230). I noted the following in my research diary: *It is noteworthy that even a passive activity is perceived as social in the eyes of these learners. During middle childhood, it is perceived as a supportive factor to engage in group-, peer-based interactions."* (Research diary, 10 June 2018).

4.6.2 SUB-THEME 4.2: INFLUENCE OF GAMING

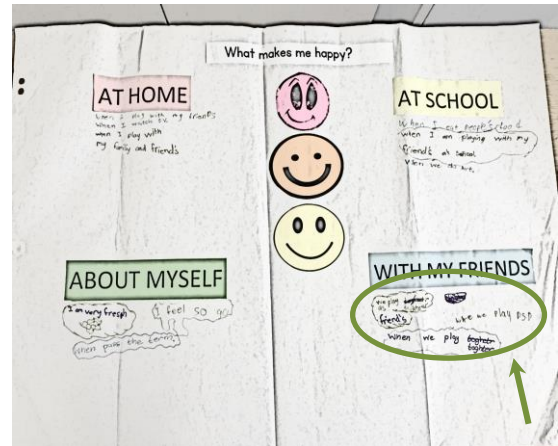
The second sub-theme focuses on the influence of gaming on participants' lives. Playing games using electronic devices is done either individually or interactively with other learners, and is also associated with learners' perceptions of psychosocial well-being.

Participants' opinion of the positive aspects of gaming and the use of cell phones, computers and tablets for the purpose of entertainment was reflected through their written contributions. A participant explained as follows: *"Play with friends, to do party at home, I play Play Station"* (PRA-B-26-291). In terms of video games, two participants from School B mentioned their preference: *"X-box games, playing Play Station,... playing video games"* (PRA-B-24-278), while another added: *"Playing video games"* (PRA-B-24-279) as enjoyable. A participant from School B added the following: *"Play with my X-box"* (PRA-B-3-156).

According to the data analysis, gaming often takes place with friends or with others, as confirmed by two participants from School B who noted: *“When we play PSP”* (PRA-B-2-150), and also confirmed: *“When we play together”* (PRA-B-2-151). Photographs 4.24 and 4.25 shows participants’ visual posters, indicating the devices with which they practice gaming.



Photograph 4.24: Participants enjoy playing games with their X-box and Play Station



Photograph 4.25: Some participants view playing with their Play Station with friends as their preferred source of gaming participants

Participants also indicated during the PRA-based workshops, that other forms of technology are utilised for play and entertainment purposes. Some participants from School A stated: *“I play with my sister’s phone”* (PRA-A-11-77), as well as: *“I like to play with my phone”* (PRA-A-17-120). One participant from School B specified the use of a cell phone for play by mentioning: *“I play with my iPhone”* (PRA-B-13-211).

The data referred to computer-based technology with one participant observing: *“I play with my computer”* (PRA-B-26-290), while another preferred their *“Laptop”* (PRA-B-22-271). One participant from School A expressed his/her engagement with: *“Computers”* (PRA-A-97-97). Another participant from School A confirmed the use of modern technology: *“I play with my tablet”* (PRA-A-13-69).

The loss of technological devices for the purpose of gaming seems to be associated with feelings of sadness. A participant from School A confirmed this: *“When I lose my phone”* (PRA-A-14-62). I noted the following in my research diary: *“The participants are technologically attuned and have developed an identity concept that is inseparable from technological devices. I noticed that no negative aspects of gaming were mentioned by any of the participants. A risk to early exposure could be that the*

skill of developing and maintaining socialisation techniques” (Research diary, 22 May 2018).

4.7 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In this section, I relate the identified themes and sub-themes to existing literature. I emphasise prominent correlations and contradictions between existing literature and the results as discussed in the previous section.

4.7.1 UNDERSTANDING THE SELF

4.7.1.1 Self-concept

Overall, I found that participants provided positive and negative descriptions of their physical traits, unique characteristics, personal attributes and values, along with psychological qualities regarding self-concept. This finding is consistent with the work of Louw and Louw (2007), as learners increasingly begin to describe themselves on the basis of their unique characteristics and psychological traits during middle childhood. In addition, the SEM of McLeroy et al. (1988) indicates that intrapersonal development considers the importance of idiosyncratic characteristics of individuals in order to promote human functioning. Studies by Ferreira et al. (2018) and UNICEF (2009) support that thoughts, emotions, behaviour, relationships, tradition and culture influence how learners cope with daily stressors and whether or not they reach their potential.

Participants related self-concept to their developing abilities and noted an increased expression and awareness of their peers' perceptions. Literature of Ryff and Singer (1996) and Thomson et al. (2004) elaborate that basic psychological needs are required for overall well-being and personal growth. In terms of making sense of new experiences, research conducted by Snowman and McCown (2013) indicate that experiences are accommodated and adapted into the self-concept. Participants still had the view that societal values shaped self-concept. Participants professedly confirmed that Grades 1 to 3 learners judge their self-worth in comparison with their peers. Furthermore, the SEM (McLeroy et al., 1988) indicates that the ability to cope with changes in social judgement might add to participants' level of resilience on the intrapersonal level. In terms of comparison, Casale et al. (2015) mention that positive psychosocial health increases when a broad network of familial and social support from family, community, social, peer and caregivers is present.

I found that rapid personality development is evident during middle childhood. This finding is echoed in a study by Erikson (1986)⁴, indicating that learners' personalities develop from the effective management of psychosocial crises. In line with existing literature, this finding is reflected in research compiled by Chen et al. (2015), who refer to learners' meaning-making in life and the search for psychosocial support, as opposed to mere physical or material wealth.

Regarding middle childhood, demonstrating industry becomes critical; the experience of inferiority has a negative influence on personality maturation (Snowman & McCown, 2013). It was noted that participants expressed enthusiasm in demonstrating the mastery of more novel skills. In terms of competency, this finding aligns the contributions of Lightfoot et al. (2009), as well as Tuckman and Monetti (2011), as reflected through the desire of learners to demonstrate responsibility, work cooperatively, and emphasising equality and mutuality. Supporting this finding, the SEM (McLeroy et al., 1988) elaborates that problem-solving skills and cognitive development form a part of the intrapersonal level in terms of healthy functioning.

4.7.1.2 Self-esteem

The participants in the PRA-based workshop communicated both positive and negative perceptions of self-esteem, as influenced by the role players around them. Participants supposedly grounded their perceptions of self-esteem on more realistic evaluations of personal worth (Louw & Louw, 2007). This finding is aligned with the SEM (McLeroy et al., 1988) in that knowledge, attitudes, behaviour and self-concept are evaluated at the intrapersonal level. In terms of these evaluations, the work of Louw and Louw (2007) reports that feelings are dependent on physical appearance and academic-, social- and athletic competence. Similarly, a study by Snowman and McCown (2013) emphasises that individualistic competencies, qualities, resources and views on general self-esteem have an impact on learners' coping abilities.

Participants seemed to align themselves with the judgements of others. In contrast to current literature, participants' self-esteem is evidently not influenced by the support of role players in their lives. I found that participants did mention family or peer support as a contributing factor in terms of their perceptions regarding self-esteem. However, their level of competency had an effect on their self-esteem. This finding is evident in literature by Van der Merwe (2006), who states that the involvement of human agency might influence learners' self-confidence, creativity and self-

⁴ I make use of Erikson's theory as it serves as a evidence based theory explaining human development.

determination. To this end, participants confirmed the desire to conform to social influences. To this end, the SEM (McLeroy et al., 1988) emphasises that contextual factors, culture and social systems on the interpersonal level could potentially improve participant well-being. Consistent with literature, a research study by Maslanyj et al. (2010) confirms the finding that peers play an increasingly important role at this stage, as exposure to a diversity of individuals shape the identities of learners in Grades 1 to 3.

The perception of learner psychosocial well-being is related to thinking patterns, social interactions, moral development and maturity. This finding is echoed by some of the findings of Houben et al. (2015), who indicate that patterns of emotional variability and instability guide interactional dynamics. I found that participants who had negative views about relationships and life events, had a lower perception of their self-worth. This finding is confirmed by the work of Barry and Friedli (2008), interpretations of global and specified life satisfaction relates to general happiness and self-esteem. My study has unearthed another gap in literature that might be addressed by future studies regarding learners' reflections on their quality of life and overall life satisfaction.

4.7.1.3 Emotional expression and awareness

Overall, I found that participants mostly shared contributions referring to their expression and awareness of personal emotions. Participants displayed an expression and awareness of their emotional status at the time of the PRA-based workshop. I identified new knowledge regarding the emotional processing and expression and awareness of Grades 1 to 3 learners.

Generally, happiness and sadness were reflected through participant contributions. In terms of personal emotional expression and awareness, participants clarified which emotions they were feeling and some participants could link these perceptions with events that took place in their lives. Participants from School B were more expressive than those of School A. Furthermore, there were more contributions regarding perceptions of negative affect from School B than from School A.

I furthermore found that the participants from School B did not hesitate to elaborate on the negative feelings they were experiencing, while the participants from School A did not elaborate as much on negative perceptions. In support of this finding, Davies and Spencer (2010), Offord Centre for Child Studies (2009), as well as Thomson et al. (2004), confirm that articulating and classifying emotional experiences from a

young age may promote higher levels of resilience in contexts of challenge. The SEM (McLeroy et al., 1988) affirms that high levels of empathy, emotional intelligence and self-awareness on the intrapersonal level may improve overall participant health in communities characterised by risk.

Participants furthermore seemed to confirm an increased empathic understanding of the emotional experiences of significant people and events in their lives. Thus, some participants displayed insight for the circumstances and emotional experiences of other people. This finding is echoed by research conducted by Charlesworth et al. (2008), as well as Harold and Hay (2003), namely that during middle childhood the development of more advanced coping skills and emotional functioning takes place, especially when faced with stressors.

Some participants illustrated greater intrapersonal and interpersonal competency, than other participants, who did not appear to reflect these. Research completed by Swart and Pettipher (2011) supports this finding; they elaborate that socio-economic inequalities in learners' lives complicate their age-appropriate development and in turn may negatively influence emotional processing. Closely related, the development of cognitive sophistication enhances interpersonal and social reasoning skills, which allow learners to gain a better understanding of the affective experiences of others (Snowman & McCown, 2013).

Next, I found that the quality of attachment and relationship that learners have with other people, influence their emotional understanding of those role players. This finding is confirmed by Theron and Theron (2013), who point out that learners and families could prevent dysfunctional patterns of interactions through individual positive psychosocial development. Similarly, this finding resonates in the research of Charlesworth et al. (2008), as well as the Offord Centre for Child Studies (2009), observing that interacting biopsychosocial influences contribute to the level of vulnerability of learners, at the intrapersonal, interpersonal, community or policy level of the SEM.

Finally, I found that participants seemed to display the expression and awareness that the verbalisations and actions of other people could reflect their inner life-worlds. The participants from School B were more aware of the emotions of other people as they were able to express their own sadness. The participants from School A were less aware of the emotions of other people. Research done by Snowman and

McCown (2013) echoes that socialisation might explore the inner life-world, reflecting the rawness of human emotion.

4.7.2 RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILY

4.7.2.1 Parent-learner relationship

Overall, I found that participants integrated family history and culture into their self-concept. To this end, participants mentioned that the relationship between parents and learners was mainly characterised by the affective experiences of love and contentment. This finding is confirmed by Ungar (2014), who states that relationships between learners and parents from at-risk families need to be harmonious in order to reinforce learners' potential, thus acting as a protective factor. Supporting this finding, McLeroy et al. (1988)'s framework of the SEM, points out that good family management, quality time and mature communication acts as protective factors on the interpersonal level of participants' psychosocial well-being.

On the other end of the spectrum, perceptions of sadness and abandonment were also shared. The findings of this study are confirmed through research done by Weinstein et al. (2016). Learners mainly learn and develop interaction with parents and family during the period of middle childhood. Consistent with existing literature, participants mentioned being deprived of adequate parental care (Snowman & McCown, 2013). Unfortunately, participants indicated that they were regularly beaten and reprimanded, which could respectively be considered as physical and verbal abuse by Nel et al. (2016), Louw and Louw (2007), as well as Walsh (2012).

It can therefore be suggested that the parent-child interaction declines in overt affection during the middle childhood phase compared to that of early childhood. Consistent with research conducted by Louw and Louw (2007), less time is spent with parents during the years between Grades 1 to 3 as learners become more independent due to an increased cognitive capacity and more advanced decision-making skills. Participants regarded association, time and play with friends more important than with parents. However, participants confirmed that greater understanding of the feelings of parents, caregivers and family members took place during Grades 1 to 3. I found that the development of learners' interpersonal reasoning skills allowed their relationship with parents to improve in terms of reciprocity (Snowman & McCown, 2013).

Closely related, the work of Charlesworth et al. (2008), supports that secure attachment and stable involvement of immediate and extended family is positively emphasised as contributing to learners' psychosocial well-being. In addition, the participants in this study similarly indicated the importance of parents' modelling competence and positive coping skills. On the other hand, inter-parental conflict and a lack of support from parents were noted by participants as factors leading to perceptions of sadness.

Furthermore, I found that the involvement of parents in learners' lives seems to affect motivation for achieving better scholastically and assist in the development of hobbies. This finding is supported by the research of Louw and Louw (2007), who imply that direct and indirect levels of motivation is affected by parental involvement. Charlesworth et al. (2008), support this view indicating that the role of parental involvement furthermore confirms that this finding is associated with improved school achievement.

4.7.2.2 Sibling relationships

Participants indicated that their core form of interaction with siblings was play-based and that the relational bonds between siblings were strong. The work of Landsberg et al. (2016) clarifies that within the sibling and family relationship, the initial understanding of the relational identity is crafted. I found it meaningful that most of the contributions related to siblings were positive, with only a few participants mentioning incidences of sibling rivalry. This finding is confirmed by Louw and Louw (2007); who state that discussion styles are interpreted and pro-social behaviours are incorporated into the sibling relationship.

Empathy for the emotions and hurt of a sibling seemingly had a direct impact on participants. The findings of Temane and Wissing (2008) indicate that interaction between individuals and their environment or support systems, influence psychosocial well-being. Consistent with existing literature, daily interactions with siblings contribute to, or diminish feelings of, self-competence and industry (Charlesworth et al., 2008).

Participants confirmed that siblings can be a source of support for learners and a study by Swart and Pettipher (2011) emphasises that various types of supportive relationships meet different aspects of learners' psychosocial needs. In addition, within the sibling relationship, participants mention that they act as caregivers,

buddies or rivals and influence each other through social learning (Snowman & McCown, 2013).

4.7.3 PEER INTERACTION

4.7.3.1 Positive Peer Interaction

Overall, the finding of this study suggests that learner identity is shaped through more time spent with peers. Participants specifically referred to friendships that are characterised by loyalty, faithfulness and generosity. In addition, according to research by Snowman and McCown (2013), as well as Weinstein et al. (2016), the virtue of cooperation, sensitivity and mutual respect are reflected through learners' increasing expression and awareness of mutuality.

Participant contributions indicate that a sense of belonging among peers should be established during middle childhood. This finding seems to be confirmed by Charlesworth et al. (2008), as participants' responses indicated that they regarded isolation or exclusion from peers as diminishing their social and cultural identity. Furthermore, the desire to be likeable was expressed by various participants. Similarly, Louw and Louw (2007) point out that to be regarded as a socially worthy comrade in the context of friendship, is highly valued.

According to participants' responses, peer interaction supports social and emotional development through social learning. This finding supports literature by Charlesworth et al. (2008), as well as Thomson et al. (2004), who indicate that the delay of impulses, regulating emotions, empathising, hoping, and motivating oneself in a challenge, is incorporated as emotional intelligence celebrated in positive peer interaction. This finding is reflected in the research of Snowman and McCown (2013), who state that Grades 1 to 3 learners generally tend to have a permanent friend that is assigned selectively.

Positive peer interaction is often set in play-based interactions such as physical activity or sport. In addition, the SEM (McLeroy et al., 1988) notes that genetic disposition, chronic illness, developmental delays and challenges with behaviour on the intrapersonal level impacts participants' level of well-being. This finding is reflected in contributions of Sarvimäki (2006), who points out that well-being is associated with quality of life marked by physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being. Similarly, Charlesworth et al. (2008) as well as Weinstein et al. (2016) indicate

that physical activity encourages a healthy self-image, cooperation, sharing and creativity among peer groups.

To this end, Snowman and McCown (2013) emphasise that friendly and organised rule-based team play in small groups evokes perspective-taking and gender-roles during sport and other physical activity. Participants mentioned running, swimming, jumping rope, riding a bike and skipping, as well as playing soccer, netball, basketball and many other sport activities. The findings support that participation in activities of play is governed by a logical set of rules and that it should be organised, as well as reality-based (Snowman & McCown, 2013).

4.7.3.2 Negative peer interaction

The influence of the peer group is not stated as merely positive. Participants seem to have confirmed that learners are socialised in complex social relationships. A contribution by Halfon and Hochstein (2002) emphasise that physical capacity, as well as personal and social resources contribute to perceptions of well-being, for better or for worse.

Similarly, the research conducted by Charlesworth et al. (2008), indicate that peer interaction does not always mimic trust, intimacy and mutual respect. It can be suggested from participant responses, that negative peer interaction has an impact on the physical, mental and social spheres of learners' lives with physical pain, a decline in self-esteem and peer rejection being a common phenomenon. Snowman and McCown (2013) indicate that psychosocial well-being consists of behavioural, emotional, intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects of social health status.

Participants expressed that bullying behaviour, such as hitting, beating, swearing and stealing, influences their psychosocial well-being. They specifically also add that peer rejection, exclusion and teasing take place. Closely related, the compilations of Snowman and McCown (2013), and Harold and Hay (2003), indicate that males are often involved in physical quarrels during middle childhood, while females engage in verbal disagreements, thus using words to hurt. Participants admitted to taking part in negative peer interactions, such as stealing and engaging in physical fights with their peers.

Consistent with literature, Louw and Louw (2007) explores relational, verbal and non-verbal bullying behaviour among learners. The results of the study indicate that physical, verbal or other types of abuse characterised by peer victimisation is the

deliberate intention to hurt or threaten others. Participants mention victims and bystanders involved in this type of negative peer interaction. Physical, educational and psychosocial well-being may suffer as a result of this, because developmental regression, absenteeism, social withdrawal and depression are frequently the result of this type of negative peer interaction (Landsberg et al., 2016).

The desire to behave according to the group norm and peer pressure for acceptance, often increases learners' vulnerability to bullying behaviour, manipulation and exploitation (Weinstein et al., 2016). As such, McLeroy et al. (1988)'s SEM highlights that the quality of relationships and belonging to a network significantly supports psychosocial well-being at the intrapersonal level. In addition, Louw and Louw (2007) agree that peer victimisation might infringe upon learners' basic human rights of privacy and dignity.

The participants furthermore confirmed being classified among themselves as being popular, rejected, neglected or controversial through reinforcement, direct pressure or modelling, which has an impact on their social status (Chief Medical Officer of Health, 2011; Nel et al., 2016). Savahl et al. (2015) points out that personal safety, infrastructural deficiencies and psychosocial functioning is related to subjective evaluations of health. To this end, Snowman & McCown (2013) observe that learners are more aware of, and sensitive to, their peers' emotional experiences, since it allows learners to hurt others' feelings more easily.

4.7.4 ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

4.7.4.1 Food-related needs

Grades 1 to 3 learners grow, develop and learn at a rapid rate during middle childhood (Michigan Department of Community Health, 2003; Snowman & McCown, 2013). Research by Weinstein et al. (2016), confirms that sufficient nutrition is required for learners to achieve their optimum growth phases and to develop healthily with the ability to resist illness. I found that many participants from these two at-risk school communities lived in contexts of poverty and did not have access to nutrition. According to McLeroy et al. (1988) stable family income and food-related provision could counteract the effect of such financial risk. In addition, social, economic and environmental changes have a ripple effect on multiple levels and may expose participants to higher levels of risk or promotion of psychosocial well-being.

The participants who did have access to nutrition were proud of access to this resource and would often report sharing with friends. The work of Nel et al. (2016) echo that socio-economic resources have an impact on learners' achievements and development in school. This finding is consistent with literature, as Landsberg et al. (2016) indicate that not having access to healthy food or to be able to enjoy nutrition on a daily basis, can be considered to be a risk to physical- and psychosocial well-being. This finding is supported by Louw and Louw (2007), who point out that development and learning might be stunted and a feeling of helplessness reinforced in these learners' minds. Furthermore, the work of Merrel (2008) and the Offord Centre for Child Studies (2009) as well as the United Nations Children's Fund (2017), supports that a lack of proper nutrition can be viewed as a threat to well-being.

Studies by McWhirter et al. (2013) and the Michigan Department of Community Health (2003) emphasise the impact of poverty on the vulnerability of learners, and state that negative developmental outcomes such as low body mass, serious illness, low nutrition value of food and chronic health problems might face learners who live in a context of poverty. Finally, the work of Charlesworth et al. (2008) reflects that higher levels of child abuse, violence and crime are related to individuals and families living in poverty-stricken communities.

Many participants mentioned that they enjoyed attending school, because they received food there and unfortunately not at home. For many participants, the prospective five meals per week motivate them to spend time at school. Contributions by UNICEF (2009) support that school-related policies, interventions and legislation are aimed at improving quality nutrition, health care and child care at schools.

4.7.4.2 Opportunities for learning

Consistent with literature, participants reported that they spend most of their waking hours at schools as formal institutions of learning. According to the research collaboration of Pillay and Munongi (2018), the classroom is a strategic and critical platform for learning while respecting the rights of the learner. To this end, the SEM (McLeroy et al., 1988) points out that school communities' relationships with institutions could either act as protective or risk factor at the community level. At the policy level, health promotion programmes are to be implemented by institutions such as schools to enrich participants' health. In the case of the participants in this study

from School A and School B, the school setting plays a significant role in learners' lives.

This finding is confirmed by the Chief Medical Officer of Health (2011), Michigan Department of Community Health (2003), as well as Semrud-Clikeman and Ellison (2009), substantiating that schools are indicative resources to learner development and well-being. Similarly, the work of Crivello et al. (2009), Bartlett (2011), Bergen (2002) and Berk et al. (2006), indicate that learners' resourcefulness, optimism and sense of agency allow them to adapt from adversity to learn and develop.

In line with existing literature, learners are expected to navigate opportunities for learning in which performance and success in tasks are evaluated; thus, shaping learners' views and aspirations of what learning entails (Bartlett, 2011; Bergen, 2002; Berk et al., 2006; Charlesworth et al., 2008; Offord Centre for Child Studies, 2009).

I found that the value of play is emphasised as an important part of learners' health and learning in social contexts. This finding is echoed through research of Berk et al. (2006), Humphrey et al. (2010) as well as Nel et al. (2013), namely that learning can be optimised through utilising multi-component and multi-disciplinary interventions to develop self-expression and awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. The authors specifically mention that social, emotional and behavioural difficulties can be addressed simultaneously (Humphrey et al., 2010). Additionally, research by Bartlett (2011) and Landsberg et al. (2016) emphasise that mental health can be promoted by learning to identify, assess and intervene early to improve learners' social relation and emotional expression and awareness.

To this end, I found that participants' self-concept is mediated through feedback received from peers and educators about learners' competencies and areas of growth. This finding is confirmed and supported by Weinstein et al. (2016), as well as Van den Berg (2018), who state that education within and outside the school should integrate the process of learning as part of daily life, aligned with learners' contexts, personalities and learning styles, within the nature of context. In terms of applying knowledge of psychosocial well-being, learners want to be given a voice as their own health experts, instead of being mere receivers of health education (Weinstein et al., 2016, p. 154).

4.7.4.3 Teachers as role models

Consistent with existing literature, participants were clearly eager to please their educators and expressed love for their teachers. Research by Hen and Goroshit (2016), Theron (2016) as well as Theron and Engelbrecht (2012), indicate that the role of teachers is instrumental in enhancing the resilience of learners as a protective resource in poverty-stricken environments. I also found that teachers are depicted as mediators of learning, supporters of emotional health and that they fulfil a pastoral role in the lives of Grades 1 to 3 learners (Landsberg et al., 2016). When relating this finding to the SEM (McLeroy et al., 1988), participants' level of adversity could be reduced through teachers' interventions of social care and sustainable change. A study by Moosa (2018) echoes that the demonstration of specific skills and mastery of new tasks are mediated through teachers' observations. However, it is evident that participants regard their teachers as both positive and negative role models.

This finding correlates with a study by Ebersöhn (2014), who points out that an expression and awareness of learners' psychological and social needs could lead to teachers being perceived as positive role models. Additionally, this finding corresponds with the research by UNICEF (2009), namely that the role of teachers as health educators should be promoted and that a healthy example should be set by these pastoral caregivers.

It is not clear whether teachers are collaborating with parents at School A or School B to support the optimal learning and development of these 330 participants. Weinstein et al. (2016) explored the role of the schools in enhancing the ability of parents, teachers and community members to take co-responsibility in support of learners' holistic development.

Some participants however refer to a negative classroom climate and structure of discipline that is not always conducive to effective learning. A negative perception of learning is enforced through the utilisation of corporal punishment in classrooms, coupled with verbal abuse. This type of physical abuse along with the distribution of verbal insults has a negative impact on learners' relationship with teachers.

Research by Snowman and McCown (2013) echoes this finding, stating that learners experience difficulties in adjusting to criticism and failure at school during Grades 1 to 3. However, the contributions of Landsberg et al. (2016) and Hlongwane (2018) suggests that learners who drop out of the education system may struggle to function effectively on a psychological level, as sustainable quality of life may deteriorate.

I identified new information regarding learners' perception of teachers, namely ambiguous responses to learners' attachment to, and perceptions of, their teachers. Many participants have a strong attachment to and admiration for their teachers, but just as many participants note their fear of physically or verbally abusive educators.

4.7.4.4 Role of media

(a) The influence of television

I found that the prevailing influence of television is evident through learners' personal attachment to technology and as their dependence on it as medium of entertainment. Media exposure can be mapped as a community level influence of the SEM (McLeroy et al., 1988), leading participants to adapt to the culture and underlying messages conveyed through advertisements and production companies. In line with current literature, research by Snowman and McCown (2013) indicate that learner behaviour is shaped by exposure to themes, actions and attitudes reflected in television programmes. Participants indicated that exposure to television is seen as a pleasurable activity, and that not being able to watch television evidently cause significant distress. Although participants stated that they also watch television with family members or friends, this trend is not popular.

This finding is confirmed by UNICEF (2009), stating that childhood development may be influenced by exposure to cyber technology, but that this factor may also serve as a challenge in their lives. This finding is further strengthened by the work of McWhirter et al. (2013), who suggest that learner interaction with media, transforms their adaptation to society. Finally, this finding relates to research by the Chief Medical Officer of Health (2011) as well as Louw and Louw (2007), namely that a disregard for authority figures, an incline in aggressive tendencies and shorter attention spans result from the influence of television. They specifically point out that a decline in pro-social behaviour and increasing reports of childhood obesity have been reported to be partly attributed to learners' long hours of passive screen time (Louw & Louw, 2007).

(b) The influence of gaming

Participants officially perceive entertainment in the form of technological devices and expressed an attachment to these devices. They specifically mention Play Station Portables, X-Boxes, cell phones, laptops and tablets. I found that gaming can take place either on an individual basis or in the presence of other learners or family

members. According to McLeroy et al. (1988)'s SEM, unhealthy or excessive amounts of screen time could affect participants' physical health, cognitive development and affective responsiveness, while stimulating participants to become consumers of a digital society.

This finding correlates with a study by Snowman & McCown (2013), indicating that social competence, interpersonal skills and poise are altered by the influence of electronic interaction and friendships, for better or for worse. In this regard, participants mentioned that constant interaction and communication may be achieved through the use of gaming devices. However, studies by the Chief Medical Officer of Health (2011) as well as Louw & Louw (2007) question whether the quality of these virtual relationships and interactions with the physical people around these child-gamers may deteriorate. I found that the danger exists that gamers become desensitised to violence and lose the ability to empathise with or relate to other people.

4.8 CONCLUSION

In Chapter 4, I presented the results of the research study based on three central themes I identified. I assigned themes with sub-themes and categories that emerged. In discussing the results, I included extracts from the data in support of those. Furthermore, I contextualised the results against existing literature, emphasising correlations and inconsistencies between the results I gathered, and those reflected in existing literature.

I conclude this study in Chapter 5 by addressing the research questions I formulated in Chapter 1. I contemplate the potential value of, and reflect on, the limitations of the study. Lastly, I offer recommendations for further training, practice and research.

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5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this final chapter, I provide an overview of chapters 1 to 4, and then provide answers to the primary and secondary research questions, as formulated in Chapter 1. I identify potential limitations of the study and indicate the contributions of this research. Finally, I conclude with recommendations for future training, practice and research.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS

In Chapter 1, I presented an overview of this study of limited scope. I provided an outline of the rationale for undertaking this study, explained the purpose of the study and provided the research questions I formulated to guide the study. I then introduced my selected epistemology, methodological approach and theoretical framework and briefly stated the methodological strategies I employed. I concluded the chapter with a brief overview of the quality criteria and ethical consideration adhered to throughout this study of limited scope.

In Chapter 2, I discussed literature relevant to the global impact of poverty, the prevalence of poverty in at-risk South African school communities and the importance of understanding well-being in at-risk school communities. I also discussed Grades 1 to 3 learners' developmental phase of middle childhood in relation to psychosocial well-being, and contemplated interventions promoting psychosocial well-being. I concluded the chapter with a discussion of McLeroy et al.'s Social Ecological Model (SEM), as a theoretical framework of this study.

In Chapter 3, I described the research process followed in terms of the selected epistemology, methodological paradigm, research design, datasets and data resources, as well as the primary inductive thematic analysis and interpretation I followed. I concluded the chapter by discussing the ethical considerations and quality criteria I adhered to throughout this study of limited scope.

In Chapter 4, I presented the results of this study of limited scope in terms of the themes and subthemes that emerged following the primary inductive thematic data

analysis of existing datasets and data resources. I subsequently positioned the results in terms of existing literature, with the aim of presenting findings.

5.3 DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this section, I discuss the primary and secondary research questions drawing on the findings of the study. I first address the secondary research questions and then attend to the primary research question that guided the study, as formulated in Chapter 1.

5.3.1 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 1

Which risk factors do Grades 1 to 3 learners identify that may inhibit their psychosocial well-being in at-risk school communities?

Based on the findings of the study, it was evident that participants often held negative perceptions of their physical and psychological traits. In this regard, a lack of psychosocial support contributed to undesirable evaluations of themselves and was strongly associated with lower levels of learners' self-confidence. Amato and Zuo (1992) confirm that a sense of self-esteem is often affected by exposure to chronic stressors. When relating these findings to my theoretical framework of the SEM, learners reflected on their perceptions of idiosyncratic characteristics, attitudes, behaviour, self-image and skills on the intrapersonal level (McLeroy et al., 1988).

In terms of significant relationships in learners' lives, violent or abusive parenting styles were considered to add to the level of psychosocial risk. On the other hand, the Michigan Department of Community Health (2003) and Ungar (2014) validate that harmonious relations between children and parents from at-risk families improve resilience in at-risk communities. Learners explored the qualities of their social networks and support systems which involve the family, work groups and a network of friendships, as part of the interpersonal level of the SEM (McLeroy et al., 1988; McLeroy et al., 2003).

As such, teacher abandonment, corporal punishment and inconsistencies as positive role models were described as contributing to an increased risk. In addition, participants also regarded sibling rivalry as being influential in terms of emotional experiences and understanding. Maslanyj et al. (2010) also indicate that socialisation, playful experiences and rivalry between siblings enhance the development of mental health. Furthermore, peer victimisation and social isolation were mentioned as threats in the lives of Grades 1 to 3 learners.

Research findings indicated that a lack of resources could potentially be another risk factor in participants' lives. In this regard, the lack of nutritional provision at home was related to a decline in physical, cognitive and psychosocial well-being. As such, learners were evidently unhappier at schools where food-related needs were not met as their learning potential was negatively influenced due to physical exhaustion. The UNCEF (2017), Merrel (2008) and Weinstein et al. (2016) affirm that learner vulnerability is heightened when food security is inconsistent and often leads to developmental delays.

In this regard, the influence of the media was emphasised in research findings, as participants expressed that the absence of access to television and gaming devices, added to lower levels of psychosocial well-being and enhanced the experience of sadness. McWhirter et al. (2013), Louw and Louw (2007) and UNICEF (2009) substantiate that exposure to cyber technology and media has a deteriorating effect on the quality of interpersonal communication between individuals. The influence of media is illustrated at community level of the SEM through participant contributions of their attachment to technological devices.

When synthesising my findings, it became clear that Grades 1 to 3 learners' psychosocial well-being was mainly inhibited by a sense of inferiority in terms of their self-belief, emotional awareness and interpersonal relationships, as well as the school and media.

5.3.2 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION 2

Which protective resources do Grades 1 to 3 learners identify that may promote their psychosocial well-being in at-risk school communities?

Based on the findings of this study, it was evident that Grades 1 to 3 learners who had higher levels of self-belief in their individual abilities, talents and characteristics, were more aware of their emotional experiences. In this regard, an increase in learners' ability to express and understand their emotional experiences was strongly associated with more compassion for other people in their community. Thomson et al. (2004) support that gradual maturation of learners in terms of interpretation of the world and emotional awareness, take place during middle childhood. Furthermore, participants' expression of self-awareness, as well as the ability to effectively cope with changes in their relationships and environment is reiterated at the intrapersonal level of my theoretical framework (McLeroy et al., 1988).

Participants who indicated a strong attachment to a parent, caregiver and/or sibling, described that this relationship served as a protective resource and promoted psychosocial well-being. The Offord Centre for Child Studies (2009) and the Michigan Department of Community Health (2003) affirm that consistency; responsiveness and comfort in terms of parent-learner attachment may improve learners' self-confidence and enthusiasm.

Research findings indicate that a sense of belonging to a peer group was strongly associated with higher levels of psychosocial well-being. Charlesworth et al. (2008), as well as Temane and Wissing (2008) validate that relational identity is shaped through concepts of belonging. In addition, the ability to trust a peer or a peer group promoted learner exploration and an increase in the experience of positive emotions. Furthermore, a loving and protective relationship between teachers and participants, influenced learner perceptions about school, learning and authority figures for the better. Learners' dependence on role players in their school communities, are considered to be aligned with outcomes of improved resilience, as supported by the SEM (McLeroy et al., 1988).

Findings reflected that some participants were able to describe their enjoyment of physical activities and/or engagement during learning activities. Learners' holistic development is supported through physical activity and group-based socialisation with peers, as supported by McLeroy et al. (1988). As such, physical activity promotes healthy development, coordination and strength during middle childhood. Snowman and McCown (2013) and Offord Centre for Child Studies (2009) support that rule-based sport and play develop physical coordination, a healthy self-esteem and encourage perspective-taking.

To this end, neuroplasticity, curiosity and a thirst for knowledge served as a protective resource in Grades 1 to 3 learners' lives as development is supported by the striving for increased competency and maturation. The lifelong development of learners may be enhanced when they engage with formal and informal resources in communities; thus, improving their overall life satisfaction and intrapersonal level of functioning as based on my theoretical framework (McLeroy et al., 1988).

In addition, participants considered the educational environment as promoting psychosocial well-being due to the meeting of food-related needs and the exposure to the media (such as television). The Offord Centre for Child Studies (2009) confirms that neurological development could be enriched through strong interpersonal

relationships and a resourceful environment. Research findings indicated that for learners to grow and learn, they required sufficient basic resources and environmental stimulation to optimise their development during middle childhood. The community level of the SEM restates that learners from at-risk school communities might cope better when meaningful interventions focus on feeding schemes, vegetable gardening skills and psychoeducation about health (McLeroy et al., 1988).

When synthesising my findings, it became clear that Grades 1 to 3 learners' psychosocial well-being was mainly promoted by a sense of competency in terms of their self-belief, emotional awareness and interpersonal relationships, as well as the school and media.

5.3.3 PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION

What are Grades 1 to 3 learners' perceptions of factors affecting their psychosocial well-being in at-risk school communities?

Participants perceived these school communities as those that were significantly affected by poverty on the different systemic levels (mainly the interpersonal and community level). According to McLeroy et al. (1988) and my theoretical framework of the SEM, risk or protective factors at one level of the system are interwoven and have a ripple effect on all the other levels of the system. Crivello et al. (2009) verify that well-being is linked to culture and social contexts. This influence determined learners' access to nutrition and exposure to the media. Furthermore, learners' understanding and evaluation of themselves were also affected by their living context of risk. Charleswood et al. (2008) confirm that communities with a high prevalence of abuse, crime and violence, have increased exposure to risk factors that often lead to a decrease in psychosocial well-being.

In addition, the lack of basic resources had an impact on middle childhood development, strongly associated with an increase in negative self-evaluations and unsatisfactory emotional expression. My theoretical model suggests that vulnerable learners are more prone to physical and mental illness when fewer interpersonal, community and policy level resources are available (McLeroy et al., 1988). These challenges influenced learners' relationships with their parents, siblings and peers.

The Michigan Department of Community Health (2003) validates that learners' judgement, emotional intelligence and motivation is developed through a social

learning and environmental interaction. As such, I could deduce that a community characterised by poverty would have a detrimental effect on the nutritional, developmental and psychosocial needs of Grades 1 to 3 learners.

It was clear that the participants required a platform to voice their emotional, relational and situational experiences. As a result of the expression of participants' perceptions, as well as their baseline functioning and needs, the opportunity for community and policy level change is supported through the use of the SEM as theoretical model (McLeroy et al., 1988).

5.4 POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

The study provides a detailed description of Grades 1 to 3 learners' perceptions of their psychosocial well-being in two at-risk school communities in South Africa. Furthermore, the factors affecting their perceptions in terms of risk factors that inhibit, and protective influences that promote psychosocial well-being were uncovered. Furthermore, this study provides insight into the views of participants, regarding information that could be included in potential future health interventions that may benefit at-risk school communities.

This study also adds to the knowledge base of Grades 1 to 3 South African learners' perceptions of psychosocial well-being and the factors that serve as risks or protective elements in terms of their psychosocial well-being, which is an area of knowledge that has not been explored extensively to date.

As such, this study contributes to existing knowledge on learner psychosocial well-being in the South African context, as well as the developmental and situational challenges that are prominent. For professionals involved in community-based intervention work, such as psychologists, counsellors and social workers, a well-developed exploration and in-depth understanding, can inform the way in which these role players view and approach their work in such communities, enabling them to apply their specialised knowledge and skills in a way that is applicable to the South African context.

In addition, the PRA-based workshops that were conducted may have brought about reflection or awareness among learners, parents, teachers and community members of the current perceptions of their learners' psychosocial well-being and needs. This awareness aligns with the aim of ultimately leading to some form of action or ideas to encourage and inspire participants and other supporting role players.

Within the broader research project, the findings of the study informed the development of the University of Pretoria/Fordham University collaboration project. The findings of the study can also inform follow-up studies within the broader project, as well as related future community-based interventions.

5.5 CHALLENGES AND POSSIBLE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A limitation that relates to the data from the original study, is the lack of generalisability of the findings, as contributions from only 330 learners in two at-risk communities were utilized. However, I aimed to obtain a rich understanding of the factors that affect learners' perceptions of their psychosocial well-being through inductive thematic analysis. The findings may be transferred to similar contexts based on the rich descriptions and baseline provided in this mini-dissertation of limited scope, which is in line with phenomenology, without generalising the results.

I found acting in a research-based capacity to be challenging. As a student in educational psychology with a passion for community-based interventions, I had to rely on contemplation and journal reflections in order to keep to the role of qualitative researcher. Supervision also ensured that I kept the perspective of researcher reporting on the baseline functioning of participants during data analysis and reporting.

Bearing in mind that I did not form part of the field workers of the University of Pretoria who collected the data from participants and interacted with the participants in their school communities, this serves as a potential limitation, as I could not clarify the meanings of participant contributions on the PRA-based posters. I might have drawn conclusions based on my subjective frame of reference, shaped by my own interpretation and perspective. I thus remained aware of this possibility during inductive analysis, journal contributions and continually shared these influences with my supervisor.

I finally faced the potential challenge of participants who are in Grades 1 to 3, and therefore not able to clearly or fully express themselves in written contributions. I therefore employed visual data analysing techniques as a strategy of overcoming this potential challenge. During the interpretation of participants' written contributions, I made use of the drawings on the PRA-based posters that were coupled with textual data in order to contextualise the meaning that participants assigned to these contributions.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

In the following section, I make recommendations for the training of educational psychologist, practice in educational psychology and future research, based on the findings of the study.

5.6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE TRAINING

The findings of this study emphasise that community members (learners, teachers, parents) could work in collaboration with educational psychologists, counsellors and social workers during health promotion interventions conducted in at-risk school communities. Learners, teachers and parents might increase their sense of agency by gathering information about community resources, as well as psychosocial well-being in terms of self-understanding, emotional expression, the role of relationships (parent-learner, sibling and peer) and the role of the school, as well as environmental influences, through PRA-based workshops.

The further training of helping professionals (educational psychologists, counsellors and social workers) in the implementation of regular health promotion interventions may provide a sustainable platform for improved quality of psychosocial well-being. In addition, the training of educational psychologists, counsellors and social workers in the facilitation of life skills development programmes may potentially be enriched with new knowledge relating to learners' understanding of their evaluation of themselves, as well as the significant influence that relationships, the school environment and media have on learners.

The exploration of parent-learner, sibling, teacher-learner and peer relationships might enrich these professional with insight into learners' life worlds and support interpersonal support programmes. The influence that learning opportunities, nutritional resources and media attachment have on learners' sense of mastery can be considered during training in order to evaluate the effect of policy and community-based influences in learners' lives. As such, the study provides insight into the situation in which many South African learners in at-risk school communities find themselves, thereby providing locally applicable information to practitioners working in at-risk school communities.

5.6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PRACTICE

I recommend that the findings of this study relating to learners' understanding and evaluation of themselves, the role of relationships as well as the influence of the school and media on learners' lives, be practically applied through the use of health intervention programs, in the at-risk school communities where the study was undertaken. In addition, I suggest that educational psychologists, counsellors and social workers make use of the new knowledge shared in this study to inform responsive practice when working with learners from similar school communities, in order to attune them to the particular factors of risk that learners experience. I furthermore advise that psychoeducational workshops focused on strategies to utilize intrapersonal, interpersonal, community and policy based protective factors, be implemented for learners, parents, teachers and other community members, to promote healthy functioning. Such sessions could involve the Departments of Health and Basic Education as well as the University of Pretoria, who may participate by presenting guidelines and practical skills in areas such as self-acceptance, skills development, healthy attachment to others, learning styles, play, self-regulation and screen time.

5.6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the findings of this study, I suggest future research in the following areas:

- A participatory study on the potential value of the development and implementation of psychosocial health promotion programmes in at-risk school communities.
- Participatory studies involving other grades in the exploration of learners' perceptions of their psychosocial well-being in at-risk school communities.
- Follow-up case studies to further elaborate on the role of parent-learner and teacher-learner relationship, as well as the role of the school in terms of the psychosocial well-being of Grades 1 to 3 learners in at-risk school communities.
- Follow-up case studies to further explore the impact of self-belief, emotional understanding and expression and describe the impact of peer social support among Grades 1 to 3 learners in at-risk school communities.
- Follow-up case studies to further explore Grades 1 to 3 learners' food-related needs and describe the role of media in at-risk school communities.

5.7 CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

In this study, I reported on the perceptions of Grades 1 to 3 learners in at-risk school communities about their psychosocial well-being. As such, this study provided baseline data for the broader NRF-funded research project of the University of Pretoria in collaboration with Fordham University in New York City (USA), regarding learners' perception of their psychosocial well-being in two at-risk school communities. The findings of the study emphasise the need for health promotion programmes focused on minimising the influence of risk factors in learners' lives and mobilising their protective resources in order to support their psychosocial well-being.

The findings of this study furthermore highlight that learners' perceptions and evaluation of themselves influence their level of psychosocial well-being. In addition, the role of relationships with parents and family members also has an influence of risk or protection in the lives of Grades 1 to 3 learners. Furthermore, learners from at-risk school communities indicated that the role of the school environment and the influence of media affect learners' perceptions of their psychosocial well-being. Based on the reality of the South African context, school-based initiatives of health promotion programmes may be pursued in order to promote learners' psychosocial well-being.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A:
Informed assent letters of
learners

Research assent form

Good morning everyone, we hope you are well!

Today we would like you to help us with some research we are going to do here at your school. You and your friends play a very important role in our research. Without you, we cannot do the research, because you have all the answers we are looking for.

😊 *What is research?*

Research helps us to learn new things. First a question is asked. Then we try to answer the question. Today we are also going to ask you some questions about your daily life. Remember all your answers will be correct, there are no wrong answers. You are also welcome to ask us questions any time during the activities.

😊 *Why are we doing this research?*

We are doing this research to learn more about you, how fit you are and how you feel about certain things in your life.

😊 *What would happen if I join the research?*

During the activities we are going to ask you to tell us what makes you happy and what makes you sad at home, in the school, about yourself and when you are with your friends. *We are also going to do some outdoor exercises, which are going to be a lot of fun! Some of the students will also ask you if they can take your blood pressure, weigh you and measure how tall you are, but you really don't need to be afraid of anything. It will not hurt you and they will also first show you how they are going to do it. They are also very friendly and love working with children! In addition we are going to complete three questionnaires, which will keep us busy for 40 minutes. All of us will be available to help you with the completion of these questionnaires.*

😊 *Could bad things happen if I join the research?*

We will try our best to make sure that no bad things happen to you.

😊 *Could the research help me?*

We think the research may help you to learn more about being healthy and making healthier choices.

😊 *Important things you need to remember*

You can decide if you want to take part in the activities

You can say 'yes' or 'no'

No one will be upset or angry if you say 'no'

You can say 'no' at any time

We would still take good care of you no matter what you decide

We also brought you something to eat and to drink. Thank you for listening to me, while I talked to you about our research.

If you want to be part of the research we talked about, please write your name below. This is just to show that we talked about the research and that you want to take part in the activities.

Name of participant:

.....

Grade of participant:

.....

Researcher:

.....

Witness:

.....

Appendix B:

*Informed consent letters of
parents*

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION AND INFORMED CONSENT

PARENTS / *LEGAL GUARDIANS*

Dear Sir/Madam

We are conducting a research project titled *Supporting primary school children's holistic well-being by means of a multi-disciplinary health promoting intervention*. This involves presentation of a programme to Grade 1 to 3 learners, focusing on their general health and well-being. We will include topics like physical fitness, healthy eating, a healthy lifestyle and feeling good about oneself, when presenting information and activities on these topics to the learners in the third school term. Our project involves a partnership between the University of Pretoria, South Africa and Fordham University, New York City, and is undertaken in schools in the Pretoria area (South Africa) and the Bronx (New York City, United States of America).

For us to be able to plan the programme that we will present to the learners, we first require some input from the learners, as well as their parents and teachers. With this letter we would like to obtain your permission (1) for your child to participate in the project, and (2) for your participation. *Both you and your child/ren will be requested to complete respectfully two (20 minutes to complete) and three questionnaires (40 minutes to complete). We furthermore request your participation in two, two hour workshop sessions (one before and one after the programme we present), which will be recorded in the form of posters, photographs and audio recordings.* During the first workshop with you as parents we will specifically ask you to tell us about your child's eating patterns (for example: what do your children eat on a daily basis during breakfast, lunch and dinner?) and to complete two questionnaires regarding your child's physical and emotional well-being. *When we conduct the workshop with the children, we will focus on their daily life and possible influences. They will also be asked to complete three questionnaires regarding their physical and emotional well-being. We will furthermore ask your child if we can take their blood pressure, weigh them and measure how tall they are, but you really don't need to be concerned about anything. It will not hurt your child and we will also first show them how we are going to do it. All these activities will be regarded as indoor activities. In addition, we are*

also going to do some outdoor exercises, which are going to be a lot of fun for the children!

Your participation in the project is voluntary and you may thus withdraw from the project at any time if you wish to do so. All information you provide will be treated confidentially and your name, or that of your child, will not be made public to anyone or when we present the findings of the project. We will use pseudonyms to protect your and your child's identity, as well as that of the school. You will also not be asked to provide any information that could result in your identity being made public. Participants will have full access to any of the collected data during their involvement, as well as to the final results of the project. The collected data will be stored in an Open Access repository at the University of Pretoria and Fordham University for 15 years.

The overarching benefit of this study will be to enhance the holistic well-being among participating primary school learners who face vulnerability due to poverty and related risk factors. As such, a secondary benefit of the study, based on the selected approach of Participatory Reflection and Action (PRA), will be the facilitation of changed lifestyle patterns amongst the participating learners that would positively impact on their health and well-being as adults, thereby facilitating social change in the broader community and combating the detrimental effect of poverty on lifestyle patterns. In addition resource constrained communities might take ownership in looking after their own health. Such ownership may in turn result in sustained adjusted healthful consumer and lifestyle patterns, which could for example be demonstrated in the consumption of healthful diets that are affordable and culturally acceptable. Subsequently, improved levels of nutrition, food security and well-being may be detected. No risks are foreseen at this stage.

As such, we will at all times respect your dignity and promote the well-being of all participants. Participants will not be harmed in any way and may benefit from gaining knowledge and skills on a healthy lifestyle, making the right choices and looking after their own well-being. Individual debriefing by a trained educational psychologist will be incorporated in the event of an emotional response from any participant. These participants will also be referred for follow-up counselling sessions.

If you are willing to participate and/or agree that your child may participate in this project, please sign the attached page to indicate your consent, i.e. that you agree to participate willingly and that you understand that you may withdraw from the project at any time. Please return the signed page to school as soon as possible, as we will not be able to involve your child in any session if we have not received your signed form. If you are of the opinion that your child has a physical disability or medical condition and might be at risk of harm, please feel free to indicate to us that you are not comfortable with their participation in the project. If learners with physical disabilities choose to participate with their parents' consent, they will be allowed to do so, but the data will not be included for analysis.

If you give permission for participation, your child will be involved in workshop sessions on Monday 20 July 2015. In addition, we will conduct a session with all parents on Monday 20 June at 17:00 at Westerlig primary school. Your participation will be highly appreciated!

Warm wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ronel Ferreira', written in a cursive style.

Prof Ronel Ferreira

Dear Ronél

Please see my decisions below.

	YES	NO
My child may participate in the project		
You may take photographs of my child while he/she is involved in workshop activities, without publishing his/her face at any stage		
I will participate and attend the session on the 1 st of June 2015 at 17:00 at [REDACTED]		

Child's name and surname

Grade of child Home language

Parent/*legal guardian* signature

Date

Researcher

Date

Witness

Date

Appendix C:

Ethics clearance certificate



For administrative use:
Reference no. D2016 / 399 A
Enquiries: Diane Bunting 011 843 6503

GAUTENG PROVINCE

EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

GDE AMENDED RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	19 February 2016
Validity of Research Approval:	19 February 2016 to 30 September 2016
Previous GDE Research Approval letter reference number	D2015 / 375 A dated 13 January 2015 D2014 / 309 A dated 27 November 2013 and D2013 / 223 dated 29 October 2012
Name of Researcher:	Professor C.J. Botha
Address of Researcher:	526 Suider Street; Pretoria North; 0182
Telephone / Fax Number/s:	082 074 9611; 012 420 5511
Email address:	karien.botha@up.ac.za
Research Topic:	Schools as sites for social change: Facilitating adjusted behaviour in resource-constrained communities by empowering children
Number and type of schools:	THREE Primary Schools
District/s/HO	Gauteng North

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to the Principal, SGB and the relevant District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted. However participation is VOLUNTARY.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher has agreed to and may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

CONDITIONS FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN GDE

1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned, the Principal/s and the chairperson/s of the School Governing Body (SGB.) must be presented with a copy of this letter.

*filed
2016/02/22*

1

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management ER&KM)

9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
T: 011 843 6503 F: 011 843 6504

Appendix D:

*Samples of transcriptions and
analysis of visual data*

(Schools A and B)

Transcriptions of posters				
What makes me happy?				
School	Poster	Participant	Category	Verbatim responses
A	7	48	At school	Playing Teacher Playing with friends Playing To work My teacher and friends
	8	52	At home	Playing with my puppy Play soccer Music Ride my bike Play with dog Play with toys Pictures
	8	58		Eat Karate Rugby Play race with friends
	8	59	About myself	Practice soccer Like to buy food for myself I am relaxed I am good at playing I like to eat Rugby Ballet
	8	60		Pictures
	9	61	At home	Playing I love to watch TV at home I love reading I love homework
	9	62	At school	I love work to do
	9	63		Work
	9	64		I love to play
	9	65		I love my friends that's why
	9	64	With my friends	I feel su so safe [<i>I feel so so safe</i>]
	10	67	At home	Spending time with my family Playing with my XBOX To play with Play Station

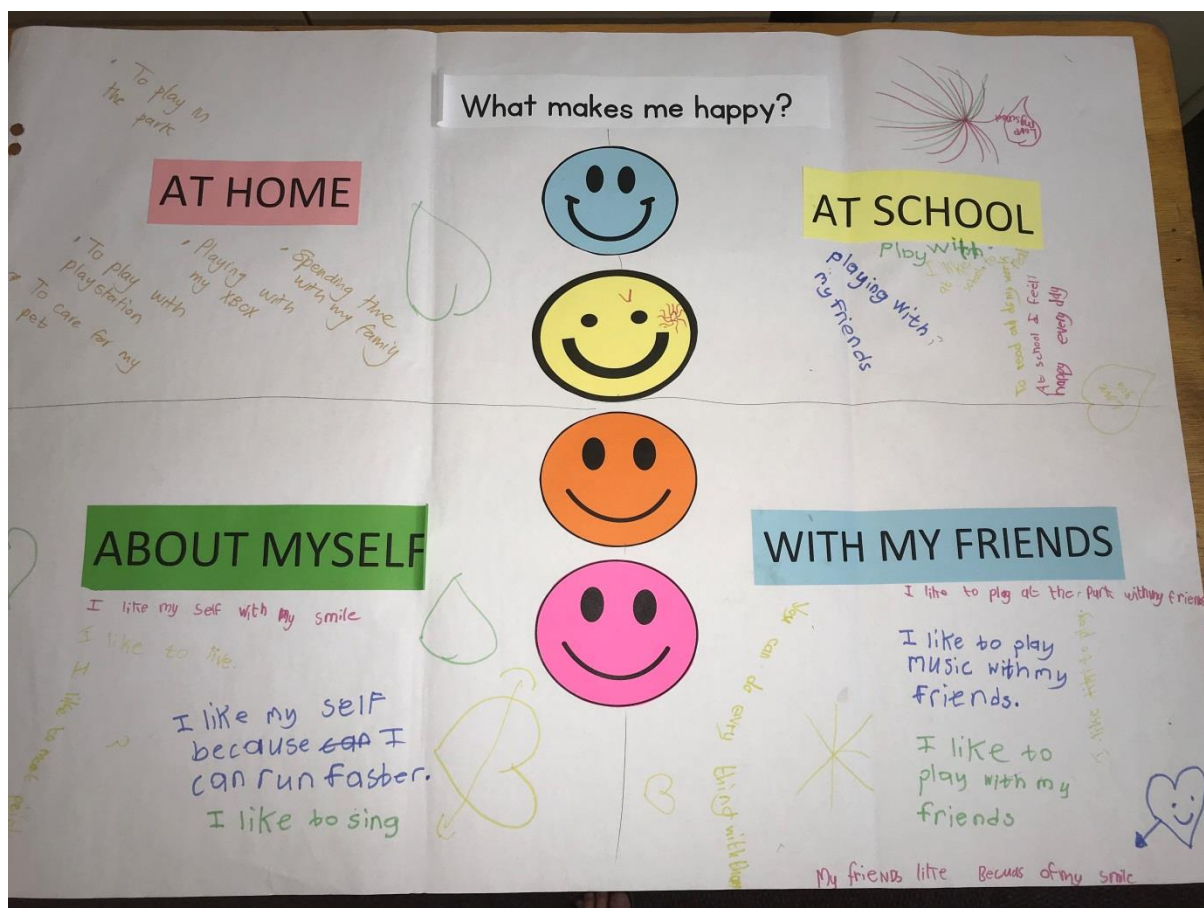
				To care for my pet Picture of heart
	10	70		To read and do my work
	10	76		You can do every thing with them [<i>You can do everything with them</i>] Picture
B	2	150		When pass the term [<i>When I pass the school term</i>]
	2	149		I feel so go [<i>I feel so good</i>]
	4	159		I play with Baby sister [<i>I play with my baby sister</i>]
	4	160		I play with my Dogs [<i>I play with my dogs</i>]
	4	162		I love to play with family Picture of a woman
	4	163		My dad like me [<i>My dad likes me</i>] My mom like me [<i>My mom likes me</i>] I like to bake I play with my friends
	4	154		My cat makes me laf [<i>My cat makes me laugh</i>]
	4	158	At school	I love to work at school
	4	154		Wen I playng [<i>When I am playing</i>]
	4	158		I am happy at school I eat with my friend I play with my friend at school
	4	159		I like to wright at school [<i>I like to write at school</i>] I like to play with my friends I like to reid at school [<i>I like to read at school</i>]
	16	225		Do work and fun things
	16	229		Writing, Maths and role playing
	16	224		Writing and playing
	16	228	With my friends	When we are playing together
	16	225		We share together [<i>We share with each other</i>]
	16	224		When we read together
	16	227		When we share, care and help

	16	223		Playing with my friends
	16	223	About myself	I love the way I am happy and funny
	16	224		The way I sing and my talents
	16	225		I love myself because I listen in class
	16	226		I love myself because I write nice in class
	16	227		I love the way I look
	20	251	About myself	I love my self because I am overjoy [<i>I love myself because I am overjoyed</i>]
	20	252		I love my body

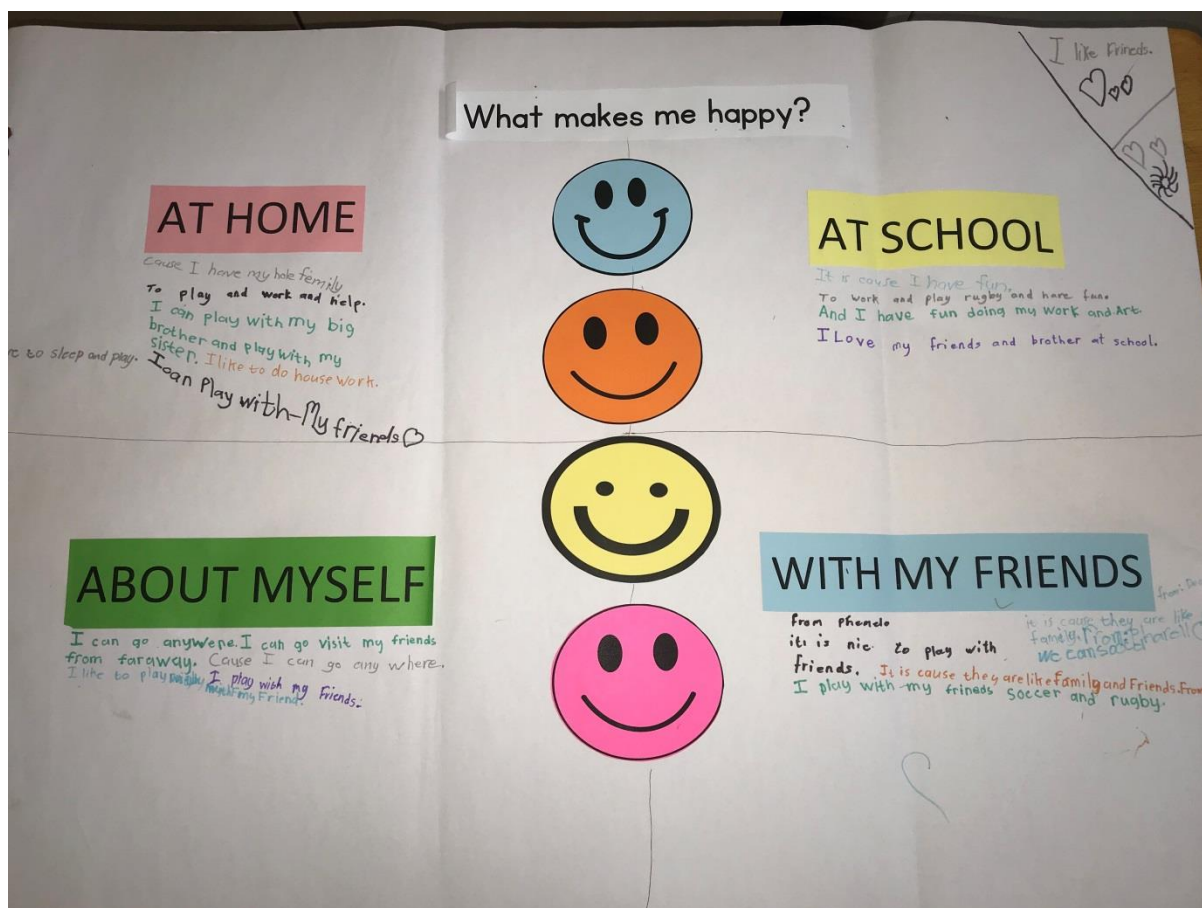
Transcriptions of posters				
What makes me sad?				
School	Poster	Participant	Category	Verbatim responses
S A	2	8	At school	Bullying Fighting Nothing
	3	13	With my friends	Beat me Pushing me Taking My food
	3	17		Picture
	3	18		Pictures
	4	19	At home	Wen my mom give's me a hiding [<i>When my mom gives me a hiding</i>]
	4	20		And when my father shout and hit me Im sad [<i>And when my father shouts and hltz me, I get sad</i>]
	4	21		My sisters
	4	23		Somtimes peole say I ugly these makes me sad [<i>Sometimes people say I am ugly. This makes me sad. </i>]
	4	24		When they steal from me house [<i>When they steal from my house</i>]
	4	25	At school	I am sad at school I am loney [<i>I am sad at school, I am lonely</i>]

	4	20		When I fight at school
	4	23	With my friends	If they don't want to play with me
	4	24		Sometimes they don't want When I loose to play with me [Sometimes they don't want to play with me when I lose]
	4	24	About myself	I feel sad sometime
	4	19		I look ugly
	4	20		I fell sad when I get my self hurt [I feel sad when I get myself hurt]
	6	26	At school	Gating hurt at school [Getting hurt at school]
	6	28		I feel sad at school of school [I feel sad at school because of school]
	6	29		Not geting lunch [Not getting lunch]
S B	1	108		Kinders maak my seer [Children hurt me]
	1	109		My maat maak my seer [My friend hurts me]
	2	120		I bon got poket manl [I don't have pocket money]
	2	119	With my friends	I don't like them fighting
	2	123		Hating
	2	121		To swer [To swear]
	2	124	About myself	I dnt like to swer [I do not like to swear]
	4	142		As hulle my spot As hulle my slaan [When they make fun of me When they hit me]
	4	143		As my juffrou met my raas. As my juffrou my slaan. En as ek in die straf kas sit. [When my teacher reprimands me. When my teacher hits me. When I sit in the naughty corner.]
	4	143		As hulle my drop. As hulle my slaan. As hulle my spot. [When they drop me/ let me down. When they hit me. When

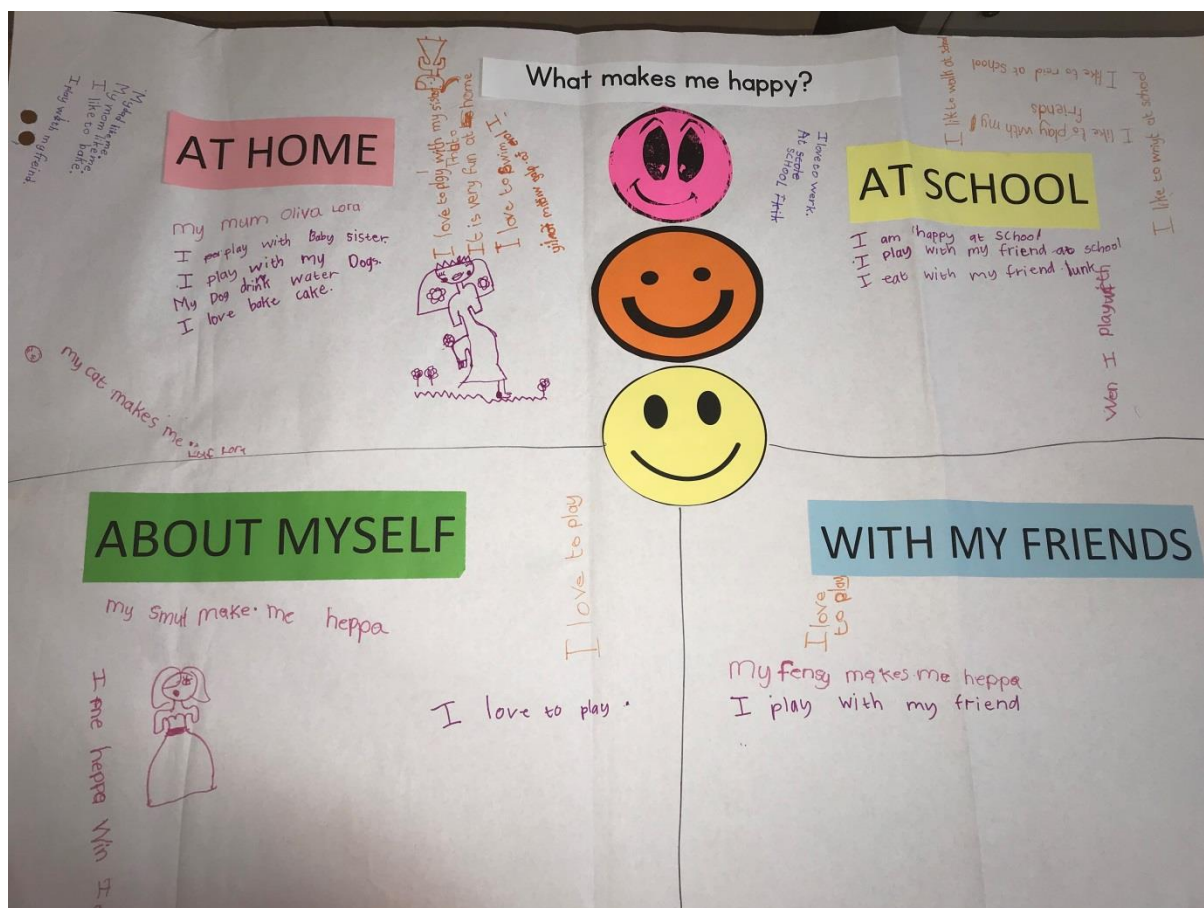
				<i>they make fun of me.]</i>
	5	146	At home	When I don't have no one at home [<i>When I do not have anyone at home</i>]
	5	148		I am sad because I don't have a friends at home [<i>I am sad because I don't have a friend/ friends At home</i>]
	5	154	About myself	I am sad that my mom said that she is fired
	6	156		As my ma of pa of een van my sus dood gaan [<i>When my mom or dad or one of my sisters die</i>]
	6	155	At school	My maats maak my seer by die skool [<i>My friends hurt me at school</i>]
	6	156	About myself	Want ek is lelik. As ek jonk. As ek alleen speel. [<i>Because I am ugly.</i> <i>When I lie.</i> <i>When I play on my own.]</i>



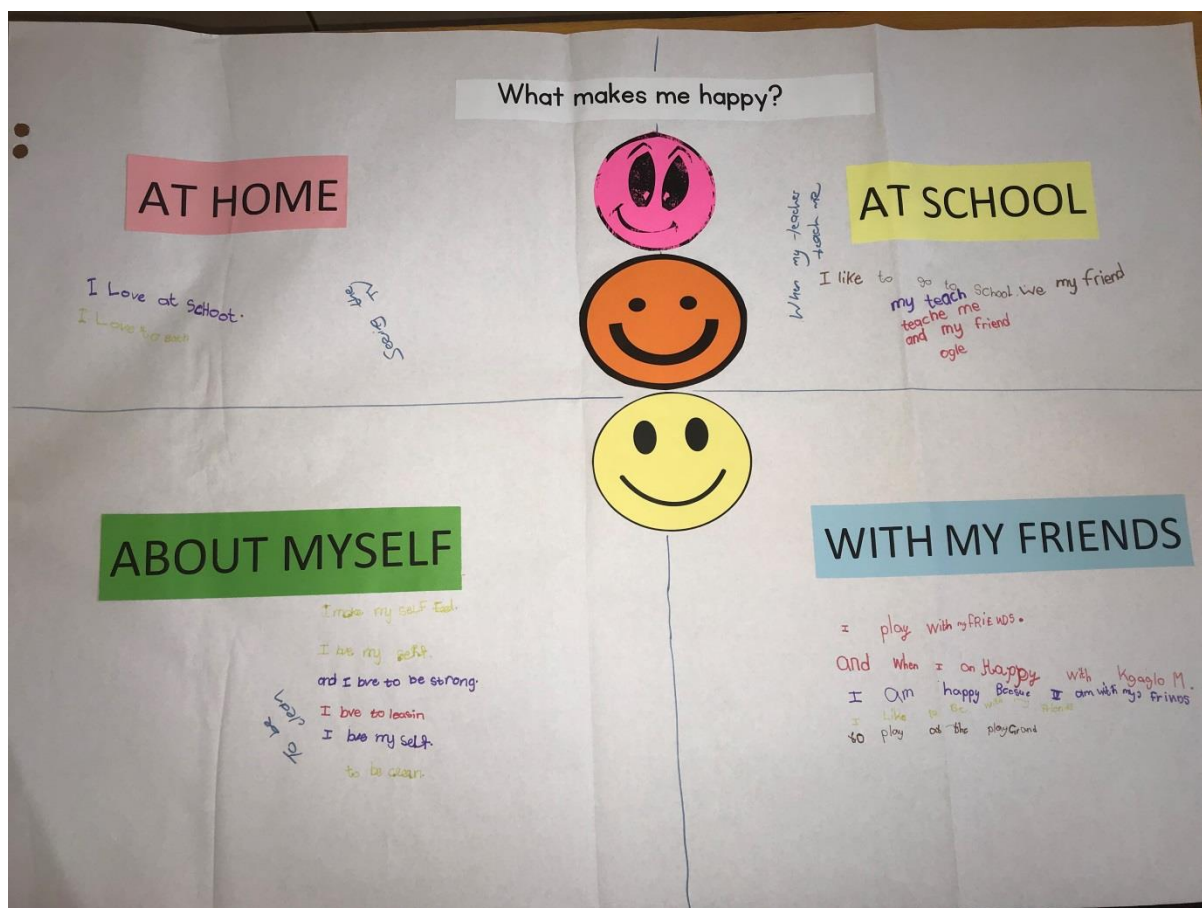
Theme 2:
Role of relationships
School A



Theme 1:
Learners' understanding
and evaluation of
themselves

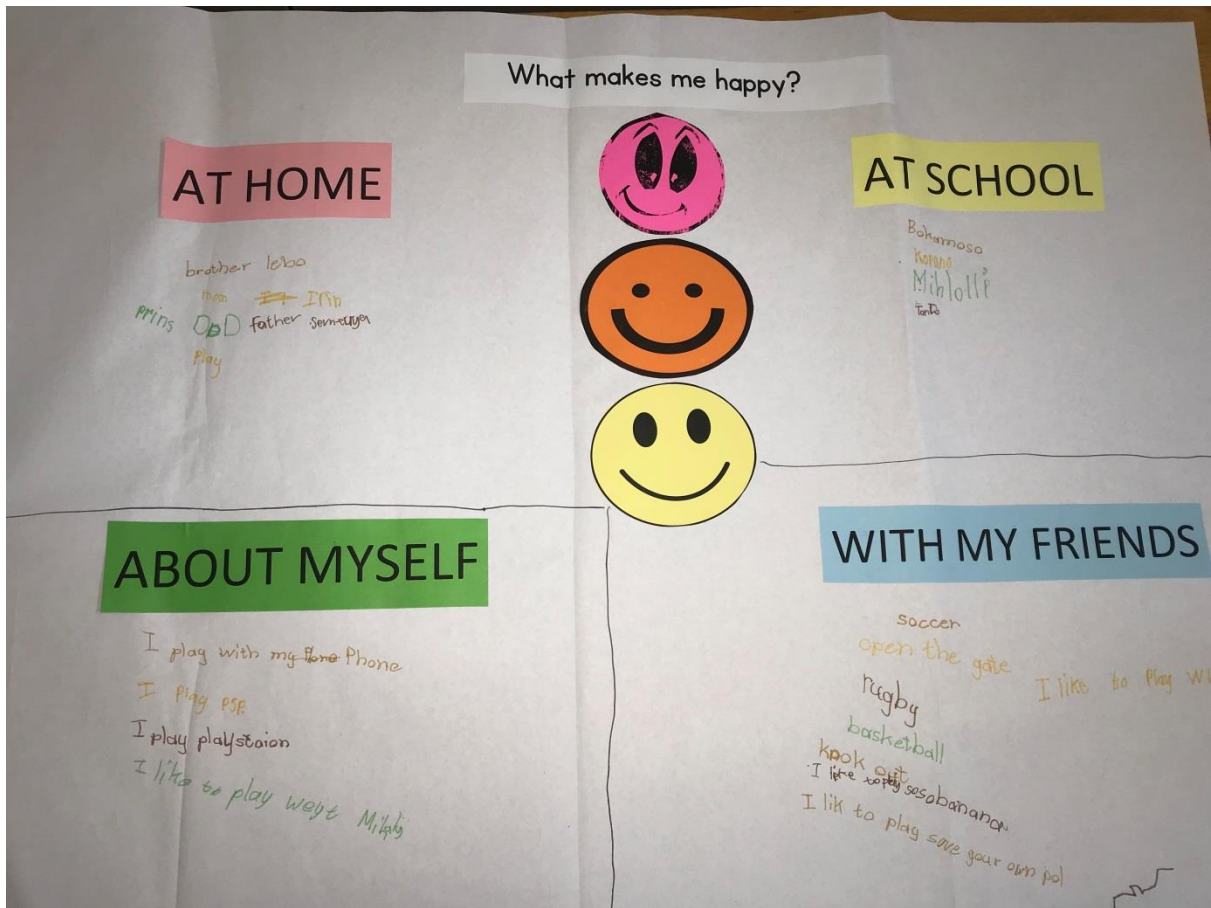


Theme 2:
Role of relationships
School B

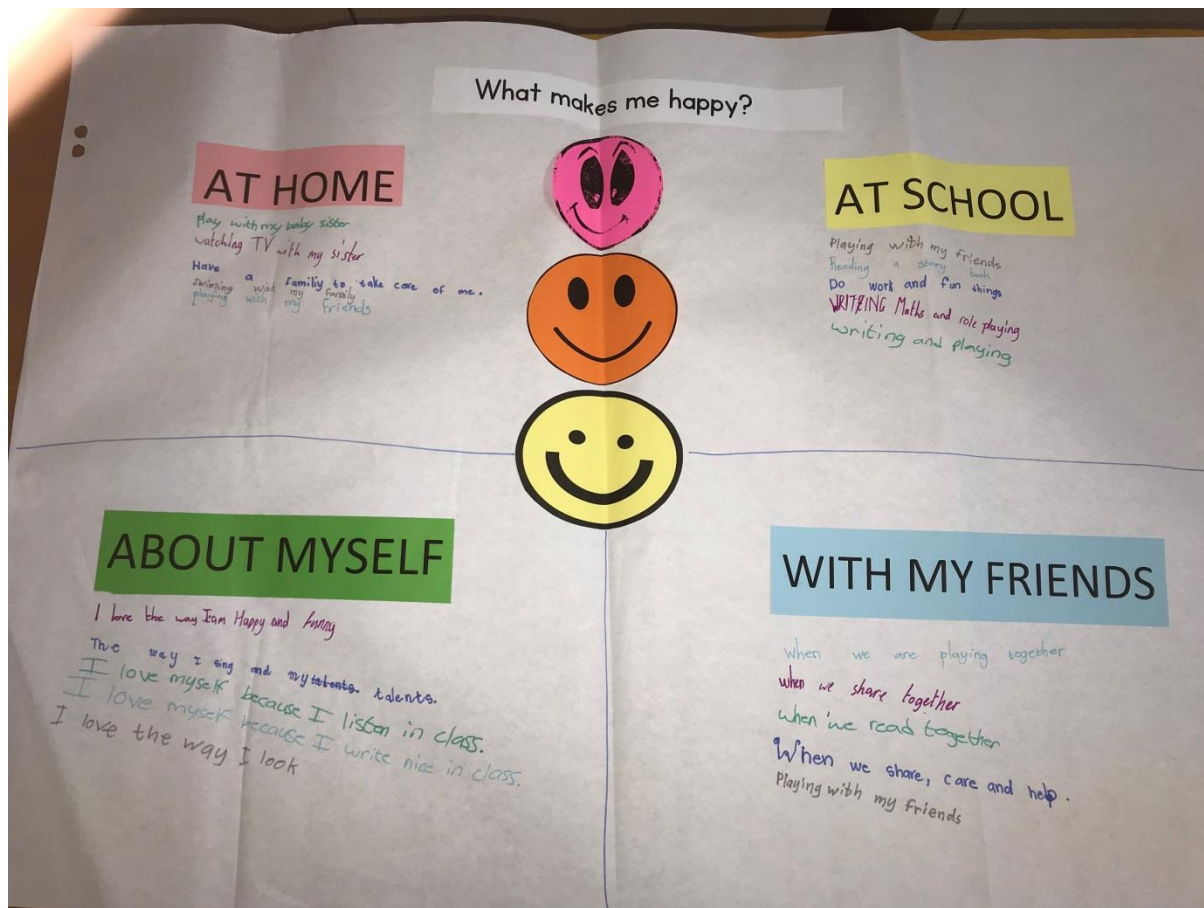


Theme 1:

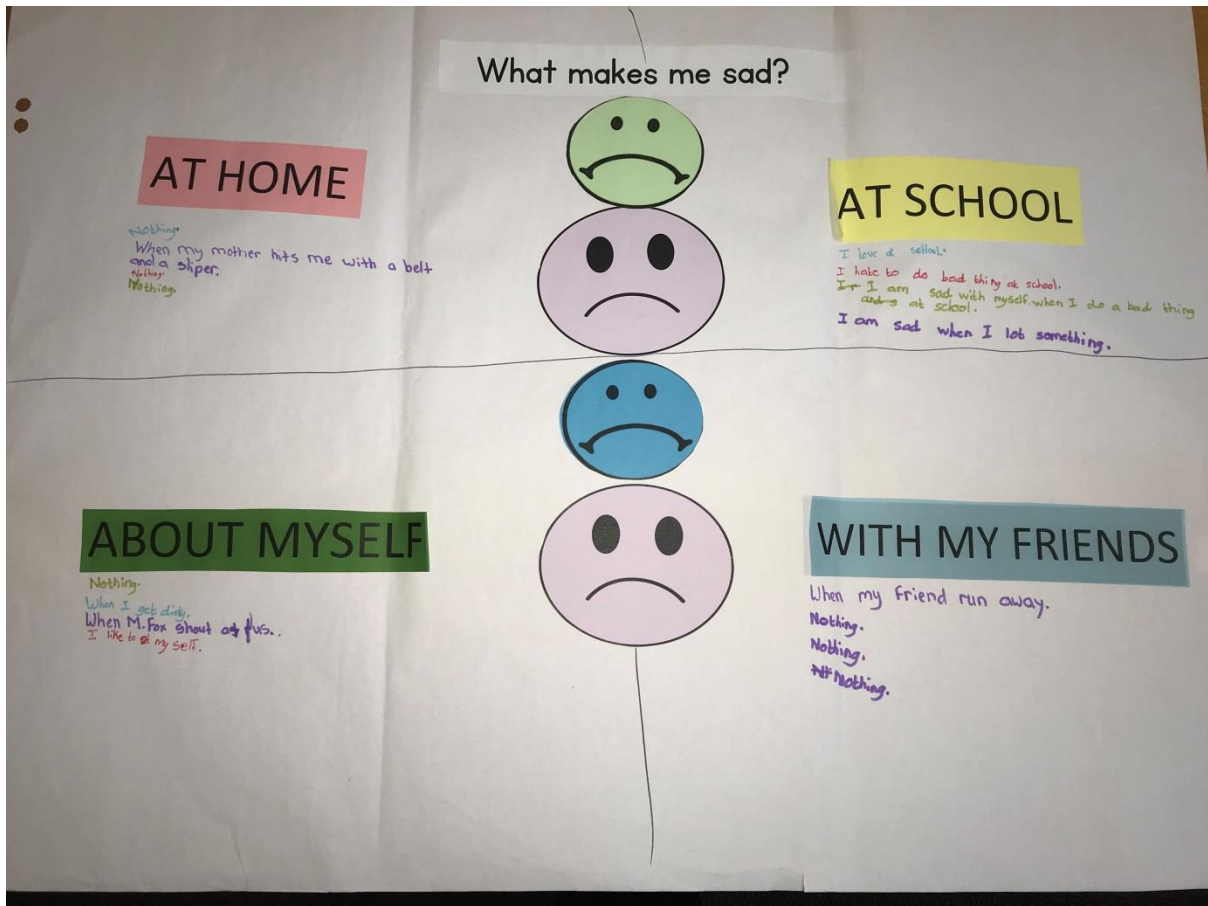
Learners' understanding and evaluation of themselves



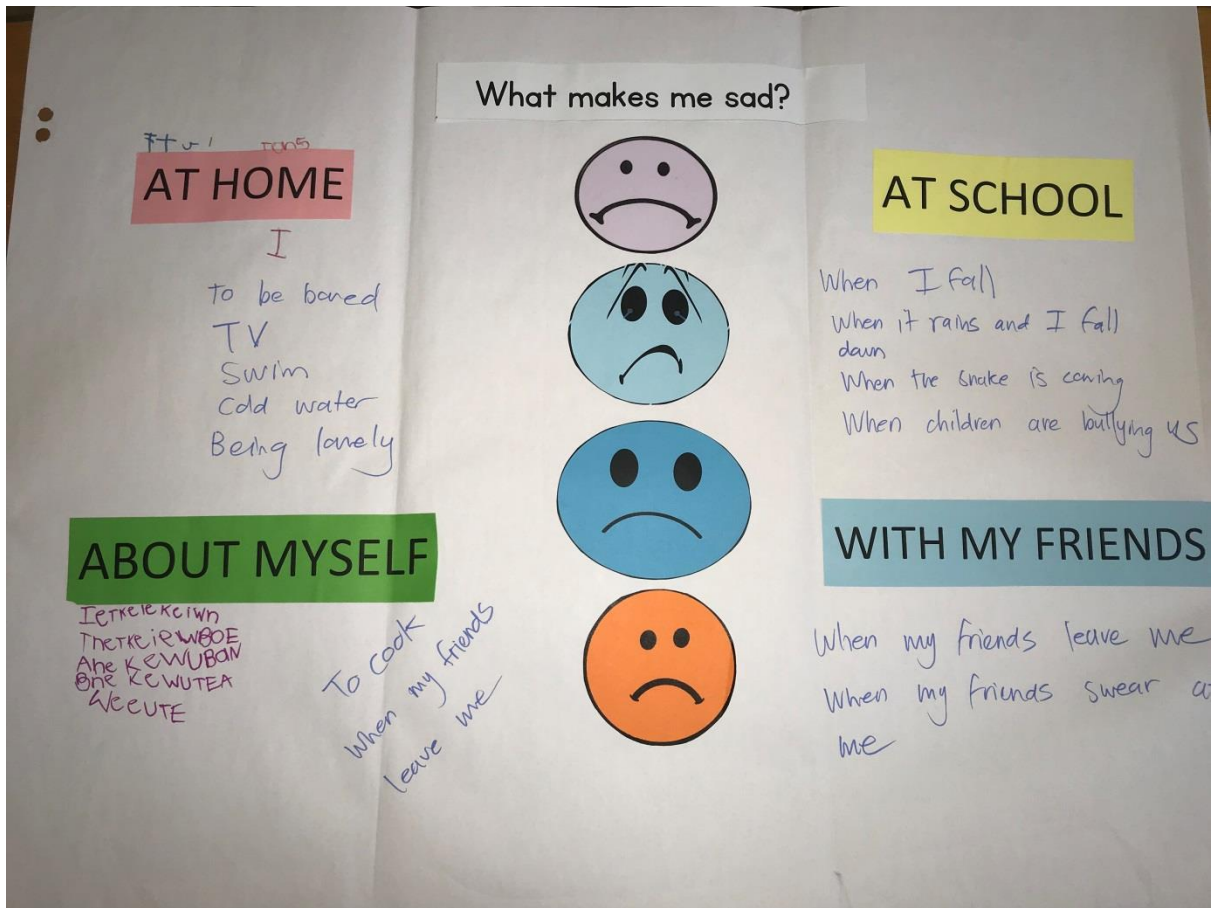
Theme 4:
Role of media
School B



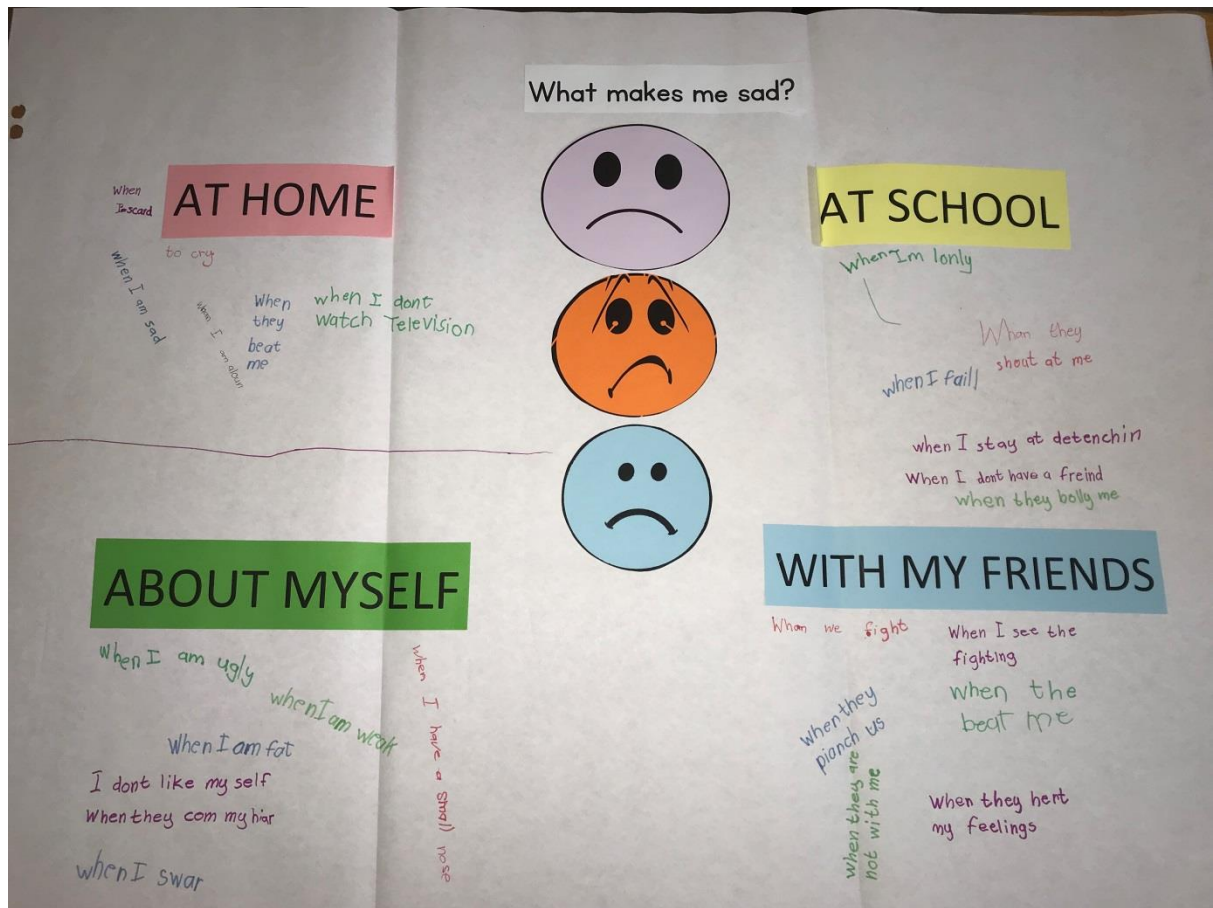
Theme 1:
**Learners' understandings
and evaluations of
themselves**



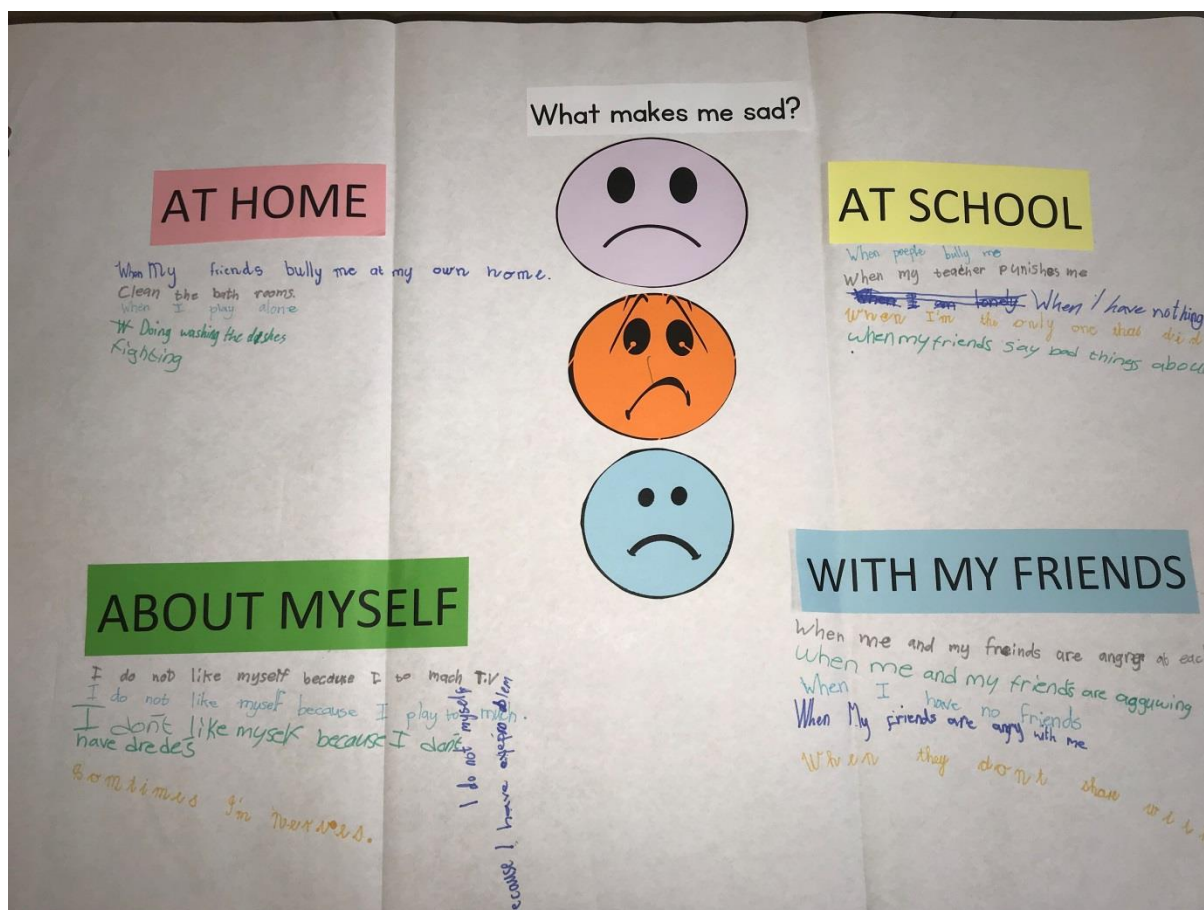
Theme 3:
Role of school
School A



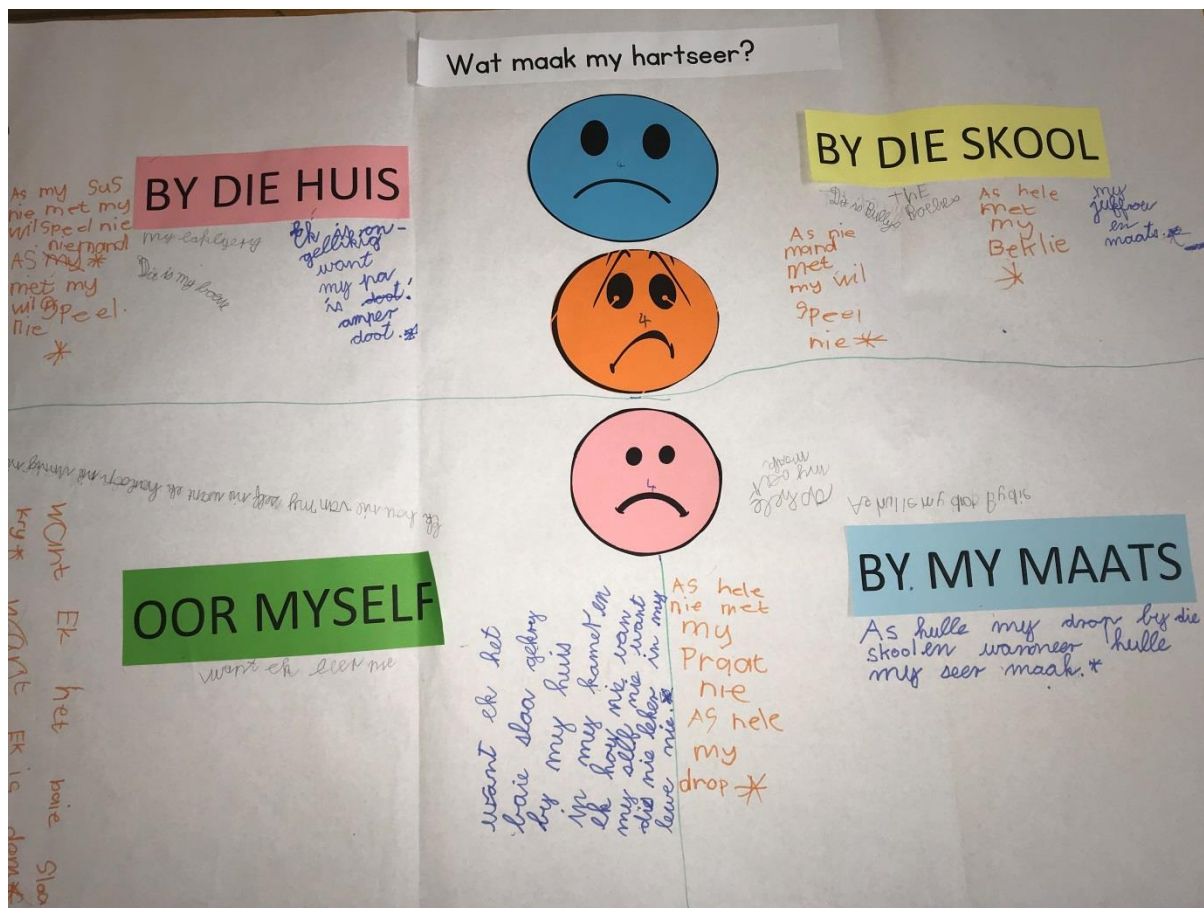
Theme 4:
Role of media
School A



Theme 4:
Role of media
School B



Theme 3:
Role of school
School B



Theme 2:

Role of relationships

School B

Appendix E:

Samples from research diary

Research diary entries

“Participants seem to be quite aware and proud of their talents, characteristics and personalities, as well as their strengths. Positive perceptions of individual character traits draw learners closer to the people around them, which might serve as a protective factor” (Research diary, 15 May 2018).

“Disapprovals of unique physical qualities might contribute toward a lower self-esteem and a decrease in self-confidence. Lower levels of self-confidence and self-esteem may be associated with lower levels of psychosocial well-being” (Research diary, 2 June 2018).

“I notice that the participants are aware of positive emotions and that they are able to express it with ease. This skill of verbalising positive affect supports individual well-being and the act of processing these positive experiences or perceptions increases personal levels of gratitude” (Research diary, 3 May 2018).

“The compassion reflected in learner participant responses relate to an increase of emotional awareness for the needs of significant role players in their lives. Insight into the emotions of people in learners’ lives reflects an increased focus on altruism. Outward perspective taking served as a protective factor in learners’ lives” (Research diary, 28 May 2018).

“Some participant contributions are underpinned by physical or psychological trauma and abandonment. Not having secure attachment to parents or caregivers has detrimental effects of children’s courage, curiosity, exploration and industry” (Research diary, 20 June 2018).

“The love for and appreciation of family was refreshing” (Research diary, 15 June 2018).

“Parents seem to be viewed as caregivers, but also as quite violent disciplinarians. Parenting styles impact upon how learners make sense of rules and interpret relationships with authority figures, which could be a factor of risk in their lives” (Research diary, 30 June 2018).

“Close bonds of trust and safety are revealed through participant comments. A feeling of belonging might support psychosocial well-being and influence more

positive perceptions of daily events” (Research diary, 6 May 2018).

“More contributions are shared about the negative impact of being isolated, than being abused. Neglect is considered to be the worst form of trauma and greatest risk to well-being when considering interpersonal relationships” (Research diary, 18 May 2018).

“It seems that bullying behaviour has become normalised in the primary school setting. When learners observe bullying so frequently, this behaviour almost becomes acceptable as a form of self-defence, sacrificing the psychosocial well-being of all parties involved” (Research diary, 24 June 2018).

“Literature seldom notes that learners enjoy the school environment because they receive food at school. Not being properly nourished may negatively impact physical, cognitive, emotional and social development” (Research diary, 30 April 2018).

“Overall, I gathered the general impression that the curiosity and love of learning triumphs over negative perceptions of school” (Research diary, 25 April 2018).

“Literature seldom notes the loving relationship between learners and teachers from the perspective of the learner. Respecting the voice of learners might improve teacher-learner interactions, which may support overall learner well-being” (Research diary, 30 April 2018).

“Learners do elaborate on the reasons why teachers could be considered to be negative role models, but their positive perceptions of teachers still triumph over the negative. As caregivers, teachers can nourish positive foundations to further their learners’ learning and development, as learning and development may serve as a supportive factor in learners’ lives” (Research diary, 5 June 2018).

“Community context and country-wide events will always impact field research in some way or the other. Participants report their expression and awareness of details related to circumstances of the study, which I value as precious and meaningful. Health promotion programmes focusing on comprehensive system-based background information may develop innovative and sustainable solutions to support the healthy development of the community” (Research diary, 29 June 2018).

It is noteworthy that even a passive activity is perceived as social in the eyes of these learners. During middle childhood, it is perceived as a supportive factor to engage in

group-, peer-based interactions.” (Research diary, 10 June 2018).

“The participants are technologically attuned and have developed an identity concept that is inseparable from technological devices. I noticed that no negative aspects of gaming were mentioned by any of the participants. A risk to early exposure could be that the skill of developing and maintaining socialisation techniques” (Research diary, 22 May 2018).