

# **The wellbeing of families in a South African resource-constrained community**

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

**MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS  
(Educational Psychology)**

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July 2018

THIS MINI-DISSERTATION IS DEDICATED TO  
SOUTH AFRICAN FAMILIES WHO SHOW  
RESILIENCE, RESOLVE AND JOY IN THE MIDST  
OF THE MOST INCREDIBLE HARDSHIPS.

## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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I declare that this mini-dissertation titled “**The wellbeing of families in a South African resource-constrained community**” which I hereby submit for the degree Masters in Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

.....  
**Hester Barnard**

July 2018

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APPROVAL TO COMMENCE STUDY	17 October 2017
DATE OF CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	28 June 2018

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**The wellbeing of families in a South African resource-constrained community**

by

**Hester Barnard**

As a professional editor with an English major obtained from the University of Pretoria in 2003, I am also a Full Member of the Professional Editors' Guild and a member of the South African Translators' Institute (membership number 1002503).

Yours sincerely

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Mrs Lené Kraft

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- ❖ To my supervisor, Professor Salomé Human-Vogel, thank you for walking the extra mile with me and for your valuable feedback throughout.
- ❖ To my co-supervisor, Professor Ruth Mampane, thank you for being encouraging and making those around you feel safe and heard. You are ubuntu personified!
- ❖ To the families who indirectly shared their laughs, strengths and values with me through the secondary data, it was a honor to get a small glimpse of your characters and the meaningful lives that you live daily.
- ❖ To my husband, Simon Phillips, you deserve this Master's degree just as much as I do. Thank you for your endless support and incredible resilience! You are my happy place.
- ❖ To my family, thank you for living significant lives, for always seeking out opportunities to help others and for not being gatherers of earthly treasures. Heaven has a special place for you!
- ❖ To my grandmother, ouma Esther. Dankie dat ouma my geleer het om na alles in die skepping te kyk en die fynste besonderhede raak te sien!
- ❖ To my internship supervisor, Doctor Lorraine Du Toit, thank you for your patience and understanding while I finished this marathon. Our Father sent me to you to receive a very valuable key to unlock my destiny. Thank you for being such a faith-filled and fearless warrior!
- ❖ Above all, thank you my heavenly Father, for qualifying the unqualified. You chose this journey for me years ago and you have never ever let me down. May my life always glorify you!

# ABSTRACT

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Wellbeing Theory, also known as the positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and achievements (PERMA) model (Seligman, 2011), proposes that there are five pillars or pathways by which people can pursue wellbeing; all of which are definable and measurable constructs (Adler & Seligman, 2016). The PERMA model incorporates a number of wellbeing theories from both subjective and objective points of view which, according to Kern, Waters, Adler, and White (2014), makes it a multidimensional measure for wellbeing that looks at both wellbeing feelings as well as functioning well in various life domains (Huppert & So, 2013).

While there is a fair amount of research within the field of Positive Psychology on wellbeing conceptualisations and the applicability of the PERMA model within individualistic societies, the applicability thereof in more collectivistic societies such as the peri-urban resource-constrained community of Diepsloot South Africa, is yet an area to be further researched. The present study involved a secondary data analysis of existing data that were collected during an EAP (Equine-Assisted Psychotherapeutic) positive parent workshop with a group of parents from the Diepsloot settlement in Johannesburg, South Africa. The aim of the present study was to determine whether descriptions of family life and wellbeing in Diepsloot provided by these families align with the PERMA model pathways. The findings showed that the wellbeing conceptualisations of the Diepsloot families overlapped with the PERMA pathways in culturally consistent ways and further showed that the PERMA model holds relevance for the South African context and that it is a valuable model to be used in the identification of family assets and strengths.

**Keywords:** Wellbeing; Wellbeing Theory, PERMA model, Positive Psychology, Collectivistic, South African, resource-constrained

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# CHAPTER 1

## OVERVIEW AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

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### 1.1 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

South Africa is known as a country with a widely spread and sizeable population living within resource-constrained bounds (Dass-Brailsford, 2005). Family life in South Africa is therefore greatly affected by adversities and many families have to cope with challenges such as poverty (De Wet, Patel, Korth, & Forrester, 2008), inequality (Møller, 2007), destitution, unemployment (Devey & Møller, 2002), crime (Carter & May, 2001), the HIV/AIDS epidemic (Schneider, 2016), immigration, violence and limited resources (Alexander, 2010 Dass-Brailsford, 2005). The surprising reality, however, is that not all families who face these difficulties suffer from mental illness or pathologies (Møller, 2007), and some do in fact experience wellbeing and show resilience<sup>1</sup> regardless of contextual adversity (Rothmann & Veenhoven, 2015). According to Gruber and Haldeman (2009), healthy family functioning stands central to community health and it is therefore important to explore how South African families define their own wellbeing to know how to promote and enhance a healthy society.

The present study was inspired by the University of Pretoria Department of Educational Psychology's partnership with Shumbashaba Community Trust and their involvement in Diepsloot, an informal settlement characterised by poverty and resource constraints (Mahajan, 2014). In August 2014, an Equine-Assisted Psychotherapeutic<sup>2</sup> (EAP) family intervention programme, also referred to as a positive parent workshop, was launched by Shumbashaba and the Department of Educational Psychology to assist the Diepsloot

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<sup>1</sup>Resilience, a term also closely related to 'salutogenesis', is defined as having the ability to stay competent in managing one's life despite experiencing adverse life circumstances (Dageid & Grønlie, 2015; Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Le Roux, 2009). It is conceptually closely related to wellbeing as it involves focusing on the use of available resources, strengths, competence, mastery and pro-social behaviour as mechanisms to 'bounce back' (Seligman, 2006) from difficult challenges or setbacks in life. For the present study, resilience is defined as the mental toughness of individuals to cope with significant difficulties.

<sup>2</sup>Equine-Assisted Psychotherapeutic (EAP) intervention is a goal-directed, specialised form of therapy that uses horses as therapeutic tools (Frewin & Gardiner, 2005). The process of an EAP family intervention programme involves contact between the client family and a horse or a group of horses within an arena. The family then interacts with the horses and reflects on their personal experiences and revelations – mostly what is learned about their own family dynamics (Kirby, 2010).

families and to provide practical training opportunities in family-oriented intervention for Masters students. Equine-assisted support programmes to the Diepsloot community have been offered by the Shumbashaba Community Trust for over 20 years, which include life skills programmes, programmes focused on the girl population of Diepsloot, leadership programmes, therapeutic riding programmes for children with disabilities and family-oriented intervention programmes. In 2015, another positive parent workshop was launched to provide Diepsloot parents with opportunities to gain insight into their children's aspirations and to learn about family wellbeing. A more comprehensive description of the programme is provided in section 1.6.

From my personal interaction with the Diepsloot families during my postgraduate studies in educational psychology in 2014, I was surprised to find that many of my own assumptions regarding wellbeing were challenged. Some of these assumptions included believing that financial stability and employment are requirements of wellbeing and that wellbeing could not be achieved without them. Furthermore, I assumed that because of poverty and significant resource constraints within this community, there would be a high prevalence of mental illness and an overall sense of hopelessness amongst the families in Diepsloot. What I learned from the families instead was that although contextual circumstances were adverse, most of the families who participated in the positive parent workshop seemed to live meaningful lives characterised by kindness towards others, gratitude for what they have and hope and optimism towards what is to come. This surprising phenomenon supported what is believed within the field of cultural psychology (Berry, Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2002), namely that the process of defining and understanding wellbeing ultimately depends on cross-cultural beliefs and practices and can therefore not be limited to a single perspective (Khaw & Kern, 2014; D'raven & Pasha-Zaidi, 2015).

While conducting a literature review on wellbeing, it was evident that there are multiple views and definitions of wellbeing (Adler & Seligman, 2016). Some of these definitions are from a subjective point of view and some from an objective one, while others are of an eclectic nature (Dodge, Daly, Huyton, & Sanders, 2012). Although I acknowledge that there is a variety of theories on wellbeing that may have informed the present study, I



chose to select Seligman's (2011) Wellbeing Theory, also known as the positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and achievements (PERMA) model, as my scaffolding framework for this study (Seligman, 2013). Seligman's PERMA model (2011) proposes that there are five pillars or pathways by which people can pursue wellbeing; all of which are definable and measurable constructs (Adler & Seligman, 2016; Butler & Kern, 2016). The PERMA model is appropriate as it incorporates a number of wellbeing theories from both subjective and objective points of view which, according to Kern, Waters, Adler, and White (2014), makes this a multidimensional measure for wellbeing that looks at both wellbeing feelings as well as functioning well in various life domains (Huppert & So, 2013). The PERMA model is further an appropriate framework to use as it revolves around the promotion of individual wellbeing and accomplishments, while also fostering love and care for others and the capacity to take part in civic responsibilities (Waters, 2011). The PERMA model is therefore applicable to both individualistic and collectivistic societies.<sup>3</sup>

The present study involved an analysis of secondary data obtained from the EAP positive parent workshop conducted on 14 March 2015 at Shumbashaba Community Trust in the form of a secondary data analysis (fully discussed in section 1.6).

The structure of this mini-dissertation involves the following: Chapter 1 will be devoted to a discussion of the design and execution of the present study; Chapter 2 is a review on existing literature to provide a background to the present study; Chapter 3 reports on the research findings and a discussion of the relevant quotations and literature, and Chapter 4 provides a summary of findings, limitations and possible contributions of the study. In the following section I will discuss the purpose, problem statement, working assumptions and key concepts before moving on to the research design and methodology of the present study.

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<sup>3</sup>Because the term *culture* is a fuzzy and loaded concept (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988), various operational pathways have been developed to give meaning to this term. Within cultural psychology, one such pathway is the collectivism and individualism pathway that is often used in research about cultural differences between individuals and societies (Triandis, 2001). This operationalism refers to the way in which different cultures make meaning of their realities in varying ways (Oyserman & Lee, 2008). Collectivistic societies, for example, value interdependence within groups, pursue group goals and are behaviourally regulated by the group norms (Triandis, 2001). Social harmony and group cohesion are important. Although South Africa comprises various racial and cultural groups, many of its black African peri-rural communities are known to be more collectivistic in nature (Pflug, 2009), where the importance of the community's identity as a whole instead of pure individualistic pursuits is emphasised (Vogt & Laher, 2009).

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Many South African families live in peri-urban<sup>4</sup> communities characterised by resource constraints. The purpose of the present study is to explore family wellbeing in a community characterised by resource constraints such as insufficiencies in sanitation, ventilation, water, electricity, proper housing, food preparation, storage (Richards, O'Leary, & Mutsonziwa, 2007) and multiple contextual and socio-economic challenges (Møller, 2007). The purpose is to explore and understand how families manage to live full lives despite facing significant adversity. I specifically focused on identifying the assets, values and strengths that reside within the different systems (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem) of this community.

With the findings of this study, I hope to contribute to existing literature on wellbeing and hopefully inspire further research in South African resource-constrained communities to gain a greater understanding of these contexts. Additionally, within the field of educational psychology, I seek to identify opportunities and conditions for wellbeing and to identify character strengths, virtues and assets amongst these families. I also wish to highlight factors that play a part in the adversity experienced by these families in order to provide effective support.

With this study, I hope to make a small yet significant contribution to shedding light on the cross-cultural relevance of the PERMA model and to add to the body of knowledge on wellbeing in a unique South African collectivistic society.

## **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The present study was guided by research on wellbeing within our unique South African context (resource-constrained and collectivistic), a review which indicated that literature

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<sup>4</sup>Peri-urban settlement development has its roots of origin in Apartheid's Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923, when the white government required the non-white labour force to live close enough to white towns and cities so that non-whites would be available for cheap labour, but far enough so that whites and non-whites would not share the same living space (Aliber, 2003). Since the end of Apartheid, these areas have continued to be the primary residential areas of non-white residents, and are characterised as areas that are not rural, but also not yet fully urban. These areas are described as peri-urban settlements (Mahajan, 2014), although they are interspersed throughout the urban framework of Apartheid cities.

on the topic is rather limited (Møller, 2007; Pflug, 2009). This posed various challenges. First, the lack of a clear understanding of family functioning in this context characterised by collectivism and poverty and, second, the efficacy of the governmental and mental health support provided to these families may therefore be limited due to this lack of insight. Furthermore, although Seligman (2011) considered diverse sources in the creation of his theory (Filep & Deery, 2010), the relevance thereof to a more collectivistic context such as South Africa is yet to be empirically proven.

#### **1.4 WORKING ASSUMPTIONS**

I approached the analysis of the data in the present study with the following working assumptions:

- ❖ Based on my reading of the literature, I expected that the Diepsloot families described in the present study would experience some degree of wellbeing, regardless of living within resource-constrained bounds.
- ❖ I expected to find that I would be able to identify indicators of all the pathways from the PERMA model in the secondary data.
- ❖ Pflug (2009), in a cross-cultural study of wellbeing, found that the levels of optimism amongst black South Africans are high regardless of living within difficult circumstances. My anticipation was therefore that optimism would be identified as an important character strength in the data.
- ❖ From insight provided in the literature (De Wet et al., 2008; Lu & Gilmour, 2006), I further anticipated that family wellbeing within this community would be defined by trust, tight family relationships, strong community bonds and concern for others.
- ❖ I expected to find that although the community's contextual difficulties displayed in the data do not primarily define family wellbeing, it does have a significant influence on quality of life.

It is important to mention that some of the mentioned personal assumptions have been influenced by my personal interaction with families who attended the EAP positive parent

workshop during my postgraduate studies. Furthermore, some of my theoretical assumptions have been influenced by my review of literature and for those assumptions, I have added references.

## **1.5 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

### **1.5.1 Wellbeing**

Agreeing on a universal definition of wellbeing has been a topic of great contention for scholars, philosophers and researchers alike and remains unresolved (Forgeard, Jayawickreme, Kern, & Seligman, 2011). Wellbeing, as I conceptualise it in the current study, is defined by the measure to which individuals experience positive emotions, engage in activities and utilise their character strengths in doing so, have positive relationships with others, live meaningful and virtuous lives and experience achievements or reach goals. The measure to which a person can be defined as living a full and flourishing life is dependent on the measure to which a person has the aforementioned aspects in their life (Seligman, 2013). To gain a comprehensive overview of family wellbeing within a resource-constrained community, I furthermore conceptualise wellbeing in terms of its embeddedness within an ecological system. In so doing, I identified the various assets, strengths of character, virtues and accomplishments that reside on various levels within individuals, families and in the wider context of the community that allow for families to flourish, despite the challenges they may experience at any given time.

### **1.5.2 Happiness**

Within literature on wellbeing, the term *happiness* is used interchangeably with *wellbeing*, although the term has been criticised for being vague in notion and unwieldy as a construct (Forgeard et al., 2011). Within the field of positive psychology, Seligman (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013) has made a clear distinction between the term *happiness* and *wellbeing* and equates happiness more to a subjective notion of wellbeing that involves feelings of satisfaction, while describing wellbeing as being a significantly more complex dimension due to its inclusion of developing human potential and community contribution

(Shah & Marks, as cited in Dodge et. al., 2012). The term 'happiness' will subsequently not be used in reference to wellbeing and will be replaced with the term 'flourishing' as a reference to the experience of high levels of wellbeing amongst people (Hone, Jarden, Schofield, & Duncan, 2014).

### **1.5.3 Flourishing**

Keyes (2002) was the first scholar to use the term 'flourishing' as a scientific concept (Dodge et al., 2012). Similar to the challenge of confirming a universal definition for wellbeing (Forgeard et al., 2011), the term 'flourishing' is conceptualised and operationalised differently by researchers (Hone et al., 2014). Huppert and So (2013) define it as the experience of life going well, involving a combination of feeling good and functioning effectively. It is synonymous with high levels of wellbeing and mental health and is the epitome of mental wellbeing. Adler and Seligman (2016) define flourishing as the absence of crippling elements of the human experience such as depression, anxiety, anger and fear and the simultaneous presence of enabling elements such as positive emotions, meaning, healthy relationships, environmental mastery, engagement and self-actualisation. Within positive psychology, Seligman (2011) explains that the gold standard for measuring wellbeing is flourishing, and that human beings flourish when they have adequate amounts of PERMA constructs in their lives (Park, 2015). As this study wishes to inform the literature on wellbeing within resource-constrained communities, the PERMA constructs will be identified and explored in order to indicate a possibility that families might flourish despite their contextual challenges.

### **1.5.4 Resource-constrained community**

A resource-constrained community can be defined as a community lacking in resources due to factors such as financial constraints or poor service delivery (Acosta, 2011; Aliber, 2003; Carter & May, 2001). Examples of resources that are often lacking in many poor areas such as the informal settlements in South Africa include water, sanitation, ventilation, electricity, food preparation, storage and proper housing (Richards et al., 2007). According to Devey and Møller (2002) and Dageid and Grønlie (2015), South Africa is one of the countries with the highest Gini-coefficient amongst middle-income

countries, indicating significant discrepancies in living conditions and availability of resources amongst its citizens. This was common practice due to and in conjunction with South Africa's Apartheid history where socio-political life was racially segregated within state-defined groups and unequal distribution of resources (Eloff, 2015; Huchzermeyer, 2004). It therefore paved the way for the reality that 10 percent of the white population in South Africa control 80 per cent of the economy (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Mabin, 2005). Today many – mostly black – African families live in informal settlements characterised by poverty and a lack of resources; Diepsloot is one example of such a community (De Wet et al., 2008).

### **1.5.5 Family**

According to Hanson (2005) the term *family* has various definitions as a multitude of well-recognised family forms exist, each with their own unique values, qualities and characteristics. According to Hanson (cited in Von Backström 2015), family is a self-defined system that comprises two or more individuals who depend on one another for support (e.g. physical, emotional, economic). Families have been identified as key mechanisms of influence in eliciting community change (Gruber & Haldeman, 2009) and that is why the focus of the current study is on family. For the purpose of the current study, I will refer to a family system as a system where there are parents, extended family, children or caregivers who have an independent relationship with one another.

## **1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

The research context, design and methodology that I adopted in addressing the research questions are provided in the following section.

### **1.6.1 Introduction**

The present study involved a secondary data analysis of existing data that were collected during an EAP positive parent workshop, conducted on 14 March 2015 at Shumbashaba Community Trust (See Annexure I and II for the programme- and activity planning). The primary aim of the workshop was to assist the Diepsloot families and to provide training

opportunities to the Master's degree students of the University of Pretoria while data were also collected for research purposes during the process. On the day of the workshop, data in the form of videos of semi-structured interviews, videos of focus group discussions and reflections, videos of arena activities, photos, questionnaire data, collage data and participatory and non-participatory observational notes were generated while the families participated in workshop activities. During the workshop, various discussions were facilitated between the facilitators and the families involved with the goal of exploring family life in Diepsloot.

In the next sections, I will discuss the research setting of the original study where data were generated during the parent workshop activities.

### **1.6.2 Research setting**

#### ***Ethical considerations***

The families that took part in the workshop were formally asked if the data that were collected during the course of the workshop could be used for research purposes. Informed consent forms were provided to the participating families to sign and all the participants were afforded the opportunity to indicate their willingness or lack thereof to have their reflections recorded and their photos taken (see Annexure III for an example of the consent form). Permission to use the data for research purposes was formally obtained during a permission programme that was launched with the participating families on 28 March 2015 at the University of Pretoria Groenkloof campus (see Annexure IV for the permission programme planning).

#### ***Participants***

The participating families who attended the workshop consisted of four family groups – that is, four male youths and seven adults. The participating families were invited by a local community leader who is also a soccer coach of a group of youth who had previously attended a six-week life skills programme at Shumbashaba Community Trust. The composition of each participating family who attended the workshop included one male

youth and his uncle; one male youth and both his grandparents; one male youth, his father and older sister; and a family consisting of a male youth and his mother and father.

At this juncture, it is important to mention that the composition of the family structure in this context is a complex one in the sense that it is not necessarily a traditional family structure comprised of a mother, father and child, for instance. As is explained in section 1.5.5, the term *family* has various definitions due to a variety of well-recognised family forms that exist, each with their own unique values, qualities and characteristics. Families in the context where the data were generated are therefore not always determined by legal or blood ties and may, for example, be comprised of parents, extended family, caregivers, neighbours or friends.

### ***Workshop activities that generated data for the present study***

The EAP positive parent workshop was facilitated by an equine specialist and a licensed mental health professional, while a research team and youth team (consisting of members of the Diepsloot community) were responsible for facilitating focus group discussions and for making observational notes and recordings of the various activities that took place on the day. The workshop activities during which data were generated are summarised in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1:** Positive parent workshop planning and data sources

<b>Time</b>	<b>Programme</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Data source</b>
08h30 - 09h00	Registration	Informed consent	
09h00 - 09h45	Introduction	What is it like to be a family in Diepsloot?	Video-recording (VR) Non-participant observation (NPO)
09h45 - 10h15	ARENA: Meet the horses	Introduce your family to the horse. Pick a horse and take it for a walk.	VR NPO Photo data (PD)
10h15 - 11h30	FOCUS GROUP – PARENTS		Collage* VR PD



10h15 - 11h30	FOCUS GROUP – YOUTH		Video-recording (VR) PD
11h30 - 12h30	ARENA: Learning with the horses	Family task linked by arms Family move the horse from one area to another	VR NPO PD
12h30 - 13h00	Conclusion	Reflection	Questionnaire data* VR
13h00 – 14h00	LUNCH		

\* Not included as a data source in the current study

From Table 1.1 it should be evident that a variety of data sources were generated that consisted of transcribed interviews, clinical observations and photo and video data. The structure of the positive parent workshop and the nature of each activity are explained in greater depth in Annexure I and II.

### ***Data sources***

In choosing the data sources to analyse for the present study, I focused on the video recordings (VR), while the photo data (PD) were utilised only for illustrative purposes of positive emotions. Observational notes (NPO) by a University of Pretoria honours student (see Annexure V) were used for data triangulation purposes. Videos of the workshop activities were taken, which involved individual and group discussions (formal and informal), arena activities, focus group discussions and researcher reflections. A total of 114 video clips were then transcribed, thematically analysed and interpreted (an example of the transcriptions of video data are provided in Annexure VI) and three illustrative photos selected from 254 photos to showcase positive emotions. It is, however, important to mention that there are limitations involved in analysing the video data such as that, due to practical and logistical constraints, not all the emotions, activities and conversations amongst the families and facilitators could be captured on the photos and video recordings. Some of the arena activities, for example, allowed for photos and videos to be taken only from a distance, which prevented the recording of all conversational data amongst the participating families during activities. However, this limitation was offset by

the recording of group reflections amongst participants after they had participated in the activities.

### **1.6.3 Research paradigm**

The analysis of the data sources was guided by an interpretivist paradigm as the lens through which I made sense of the data. Paradigmatic perspectives provide a frame of reference or a lens through which people view and interpret information and the world around them (Hitge, 2015; Schneider, 2016). Interpretivism is embedded in the postmodern tradition, which argues that there is no universal or objective truth and that reality is socially constructed (Groenewald, 2004; Ponterotto, 2005). I therefore anticipated that my findings would reflect one of many possible realities.

### **1.6.4 Research design**

Researchers use a number of different data collection strategies that can be categorised as being either primary or secondary in nature (Hox & Boejie, 2005). Each data source has its own advantages and limitations that are important to take note of when one plans to analyse and interpret research results. For this study, I analysed secondary data. Heaton (2003) defines secondary data as data that were collected for previous research studies that could be based on original data, such as field notes, research diaries, interviews or responses to questionnaires, to name a few. Secondary data can also be based on already published data (Church, 2002). Johnston (2014) describes secondary data analysis as a flexible approach in which data can be used in various ways, but it is also an empirical method with fixed procedural steps as it pertains to the analysis of primary data. An advantage of using secondary data is that an opportunity is created to analyse and interpret existing data from another perspective as well as to explore new theories and test hypotheses within the data (Boslaugh, 2007; Hox & Boejie, 2005). The advantage of using secondary data for my study is that I was able to analyse and re-interpret existing data to bring a new perspective to the data that were already collected, as well as to determine resonance between the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011) and the existing data (Boslaugh, 2007).

## **1.6.5 Research questions**

### **1.6.5.1 Primary research question**

The analysis of the secondary data was guided by the following primary research question:

- ❖ How can insight into the wellbeing of families in a resource-constrained community contribute to the knowledge and understanding of family wellbeing in a South African peri-urban community?

### **1.6.5.2 Secondary research questions**

To address the primary research question, the following secondary research questions were formulated to provide further clarification of the primary question:

- ❖ What are the indicators of family wellbeing in terms of character strengths and virtues of families in a high-risk community?
- ❖ How do the indicators of family wellbeing support resilience in the micro-context of the family?
- ❖ How do cultural factors support family wellbeing?

The formulation of my research questions was guided by my immersion in the secondary data.

## **1.6.6 Data analysis**

Boslaugh (2007) states that secondary data analysis is a valuable data inquiry process when a structured and systematic process is followed. The validity and reliability of the results from a secondary data analysis study depends greatly on the quality of the data preparation, analysis and interpretation (Boslaugh, 2007). According to Dey (2003), the first step in the secondary data analysis process involves immersing oneself in the data and becoming completely familiar with it. Contextual information of the research setting, population and data collection procedures was obtained (Rew, Koniak-Griffin, Lewis,

Miles, & O'Sullivan, 2000). Aspects such as the dates and times at which data were collected, methods of data collection, research protocols, the purpose and structure of the workshop and the questions that were asked as well as the individuals responsible for collecting data are essential information (Boslaugh, 2007; Rew et al., 2000). This was achieved by gaining access to all the resources and documentation that formed part of the data set, such as the raw data, videos, photos, observation notes, researcher schedules, programme planning and informed consent forms. Furthermore, it is important to ensure that there is congruence between the population from whom the data were collected and the population to whom the present research question applies (Rew et al., 2000). The population consisted of families from Diepsloot, which holds relevance to the population at which the present study is aimed, namely families in a resource-constrained community. Following my immersion in the data and deeming the research set to be appropriate for the purpose of the present study, the research questions (discussed in section 1.6.5) were formulated (Johnston, 2014). Theoretical knowledge of the topic under study was obtained through a thorough literature review (see Chapter 2), which provided a sound conceptual framework and theoretical basis to guide the research process (Boslaugh, 2007).

In qualitative research, the use of analytical categories to describe and explain social phenomena and capture essential aspects in relation to the research questions can be derived through inductive or 'bottom-up' and deductive or 'top-down' analysis processes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Pope, Ziebland, & Mays, 2000). For the present study, both an inductive thematic analysis and a deductive thematic analysis approach were taken in the analysis of the data set. This was done in order to conduct an in-depth exploration of contextually embedded meaning within the data (Bernard & Ryan as cited in D'raven & Pasha-Zaidi, 2015). One of the major benefits of thematic analysis within qualitative research is that it can be used flexibly, especially when an interpretive approach is followed (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, Shope, Plano Clark, & Green, 2006).

For this study, I sought to find descriptive themes from the transcribed data that would provide insight into the subjective experiences of the Diepsloot families. By exploring the richness, depth and complexity of these verbalisations, a sense of understanding of the

families' meaning-making within their social context was obtained (Creswell, 2014). In analysing the data from this perspective, I hoped to explore whether the Diepsloot families do indeed experience wellbeing, and furthermore hoped to shed light on the most important wellbeing constructs that define family life in Diepsloot.

### 1.6.6.1 Deductive analysis process

According to Hitge (2015), the deductive research approach involves the use of existing theory to verify a hypothesis or theory. This process entailed that I conduct a thorough review on existing literature relating to Seligman's (2011) Wellbeing Theory, where after the data were thoroughly and repeatedly read through and a systematic deduction of the specific themes that correspond with the PERMA framework was done (Rice & Ezzy, 2000; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). The themes of positive emotions, engagement, character strengths, a state of flow, relationships, meaning, values in action (VIA) / virtues, and achievements were identified. These were defined within specific inclusion and exclusion parameters based on the literature on Seligman's (2011) Wellbeing Theory.

**Table 1.2:** Theme 1 - Positive Emotions

<b>Theme 1: Positive Emotions</b>	
<b>Inclusion criteria</b>	<b>Exclusion criteria</b>
References to hedonic feelings such as happiness, pleasure and comfort (Khaw & Kern, 2014), as well as observations of positive emotions displayed during the data collection process and a sense of humour. Furthermore, any indicators of amusement, awe, compassion, contentment, gratitude, hope, interest, joy, laughter, cheer, love and pride are also included (Seligman, 2012).	References to a depressed mood, sadness, heartache, hostility, discomfort, discontent or nervous laughter.

**Table 1.3:** Theme 2 – Engagement

<b>Theme 2: Engagement</b>	
<b>Inclusion criteria</b>	<b>Exclusion criteria</b>
References to being interested, engaged and absorbed in an activity, organisation or cause (Khaw & Kern, 2014), as well as instances of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Also, references to character strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), displayed through the reflections of participants. The 24 character strengths are each identified by their definition, as provided below (Table 1.3.1).	References to engagement in activities that participants are not interested in or to which they are not committed. This also includes strengths displayed that do not form part of Peterson and Seligman’s (2004) 24 identified character strengths.

**Table 1.3.1:** Definition of character strengths (adapted from Peterson & Seligman as cited in Coetzee and Schreuder (2013))

<b>CHARACTER STRENGTHS</b>	<b>DEFINITION OF STRENGTHS</b>
1. Creativity	References to finding novel and productive ways to doing tasks.
2. Curiosity	References to taking a keen interest in ongoing experience, exploring and discovering.
3. Open-mindedness	References to thinking aspects through and viewing it from all sides. Not jumping to conclusions.
4. Love of learning	References to mastering new skills and gaining new bodies of knowledge.
5. Perspective	References to provision of wise counsel to others. A view of the world that makes sense to self and others.
6. Bravery	References to doing what needs to be done in spite of fear, threat or difficulty.
7. Perseverance	References to finishing what has been started and staying on the task, despite obstacles.
8. Integrity/Authenticity	References to an authentic presentation of oneself to others, taking responsibility for one’s feelings and actions.
9. Vitality/Zest	References to a feeling of being alive, vigorous and energetic.
10. Intimacy/Love	References to valuing closeness to others.
11. Kindness/Altruism	References to helping, supporting and caring (doing favours and good deeds) for others without being forced / pressured to do so.
12. Social intelligence	References to the awareness of the feelings and emotions of others. Understanding how to approach different social situations.

13. Citizenship	References to working well as a member of a group or team. Doing one's share.
14. Fairness	References to treating all people the same. Not letting personal feelings bias decisions about others and giving all a fair chance.
15. Leadership	References to encouraging and organising a group and maintaining good relationships within the group.
16. Forgiveness	References to forgiving those who did wrong and giving people a second chance.
17. Modesty	References to allowing accomplishments to speak for itself and not seeking the spotlight.
18. Prudence/Caution	References to making well thought-through choices that will not be regretted later, not taking unnecessary risks.
19. Self-regulation	References to controlling and regulating emotions and actions.
20. Appreciation of beauty and excellence	References to noticing and appreciating excellence, beauty and skilled performance in all life domains.
21. Gratitude	References to the awareness of and appreciation for good things that have happened. Expressing thanks.
22. Hope/Optimism	References to expecting the best in the future and working to obtain it.
23. Humour	References to the enjoyment of laughter and tease. Making others smile.
24. Spirituality	References to beliefs about a higher purpose and meaning to life. Knowing where one fits within a higher scheme.

**Table 1.4:** Theme 3 – Relationships

<b>Theme 3: Relationships</b>	
<b>Inclusion criteria</b>	<b>Exclusion criteria</b>
References to psychological or genetic connections between individuals, families or within the community that are perceived as being important or meaningful. Also, references to positive relationships that are characterised by care, compassion, support, forgiveness and respect (Kern et al., 2014).	References to psychological or genetic connections amongst individuals, families and the community that are not characterised by care, compassion, support, forgiveness or respect and/or are perceived as being insignificant.

**Table 1.5:** Theme 4 – Meaning

<b>Theme 4: Meaning</b>	
<b>Inclusion criteria</b>	<b>Exclusion criteria</b>
References to a life lived beyond the self towards the greater good of others (e.g. family, friends or community) or a higher purpose (e.g. God) (Park, 2015). Also references to VIA (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) being used in service of a higher calling or for a greater good (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2012). The six VIA are each identified by their definitions as provided below (Table 1.5.1).	References to selfish deeds, desires and non-belief in a higher purpose. In addition, references to VIA not included in Peterson and Seligman’s (2004) identified six.

**Table 1.5.1:** Definition of Values in Action (VIA) (adapted from Dahlsgaard, Peterson & Seligman as cited in Keyes et al. (2012))

<b>Values in Action (VIA)</b>	
1. Wisdom and knowledge	References to cognitive strengths and the acquisition and use of knowledge. Character strengths associated with wisdom and knowledge include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Creativity</li> <li>➤ Curiosity</li> <li>➤ Open-mindedness</li> <li>➤ Love of learning</li> <li>➤ Perspective</li> </ul>
2. Courage	References to emotional strength and strong will to accomplish goals in the face of internal or external opposition. Character strengths associated with courage include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Bravery</li> <li>➤ Perseverance</li> <li>➤ Integrity/Authenticity</li> <li>➤ Vitality/Zest</li> </ul>
3. Humanity/Love	References to interpersonal strength that involves befriending and tending to others. Character strengths associated with humanity/love include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Intimacy/Love</li> <li>➤ Kindness/Altruism</li> <li>➤ Social intelligence</li> </ul>



4. Justice	References to civic strengths underlying healthy community life. Character strengths associated with justice include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Citizenship</li> <li>➤ Fairness</li> <li>➤ Leadership</li> </ul>
5. Temperance	References to buffers against excess. Character strengths associated with temperance include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Forgiveness</li> <li>➤ Modesty</li> <li>➤ Prudence/Caution</li> <li>➤ Self-regulation</li> </ul>
6. Transcendence	References to strengths that make a connection to a larger purpose or meaning. Character strengths associated with transcendence include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Appreciation of beauty and excellence</li> <li>➤ Gratitude</li> <li>➤ Hope/Optimism</li> <li>➤ Humour</li> <li>➤ Spirituality</li> </ul>

**Table 1.6:** Theme 5 – Achievement

<b>Theme 5: Achievement</b>	
<b>Inclusion criteria</b>	<b>Exclusion criteria</b>
References to making progress towards attaining goals and achieving outcomes. References to both objective (e.g. awards received) and subjective (personal feelings of achievement) accomplishments (Khaw & Kern, 2014). Indicators of mastery, competence, grit, self-discipline (Seligman, 2013) and the experience of self-efficacy (D'raven & Pasha-Zaidi, 2015).	References to attaining goals and achieving outcomes without the experience of accomplishment.

After the inclusion and exclusion criteria had been identified, the next step was to search systematically for the presence of each of the themes in the data. The process entailed the allocation of colour codes to each theme, followed by a thorough reading of the transcribed data where themes were identified and underlined in the corresponding colour. With a second read-through, each theme (with verbatim quotation) was tabulated

according to colour in order to sort the themes and to revisit its fit to the inclusion criteria. After extraction of verbatim quotations had taken place in the transcribed data, it was read through again to ensure that theme identification was exhausted in the data.

Each theme and the corresponding quotations were considered carefully before a final decision was made to report on it in the present study. After the transcribed data were fully analysed, the photos were then each considered and utilised to identify evidence of positive emotions, as it is a more concrete theme in relation to the other more abstract themes.

Table 1.7 provides an illustrative example taken from my full data analysis (see Annexure VII) of how the various themes were extracted and tabulated according to its fit to the inclusion criteria.

**Table 1.7:** Example of the deductive data analysis tabulation

LINE REFERENCE	THEME
VD: Page 4 lines 115–116: “I think partnering with stakeholders who are doing great things within the communities.”	Relationship with stakeholders
VD: Page 6 lines 173–175: “For the young ones. I wanted to be somebody and someone because of that, but I didn’t so I am concentrating on my children.”	Relationship between parent that forms parental identity
VD: Page 6 lines 175–178: “So I know they got some dreams and I need to motivate them then and whatever is needed I need to assist them in whatever makes them happy, aspirations is happy, whatever job he is happy, dreams he is happy, then I am happy.”	Relationship between parent and children characterised by ultimate care and support

### 1.6.6.2 Inductive analysis process

The inductive approach involved the identification of themes that were linked mostly to the data itself (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes that emerged which relate to wellbeing and based on my knowledge of other theories on wellbeing literature guided this process (Joffe, 2012). The data coding process was conducted without attempting to align it with

a pre-existing theoretical or organisational framework such as the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011). It was therefore primarily data-driven and conducted with the aim of identifying disconfirming or additional wellbeing themes that do not form part of the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011).

Table 1.8 provides an illustrative example of how the various themes were extracted and tabulated with the inductive analysis process.

**Table 1.8:** Example of the inductive data analysis tabulation

LINE REFERENCE	THEME
VD: Page 3 lines 76–78: “I regard myself as a community builder and in maybe there were awards maybe I’d be aware for the best community builder in the community.”	Self-esteem Pride
VD: Page 8 lines 234–235: “... and to learn more about how to respect your elders and how to share ubuntu with others.”	Respect Togetherness/Connectedness
VD: Page 10 lines 308–309: “We can see that in Diepsloot life is very tough, but anyway we see through that our children need to learn.”	Resilience
VD: Page 13 lines 394–395: “... have a player from this Diepsloot field playing for the big team and show that Diepsloot is growing.”	Ambition/Aspiration
VD: Page 17 lines 310–312: “It shows that in life you must compromise, and they were compromising, the thing that we said to them they don’t like it. It’s about a family you must compromise.”	Flexibility

The purpose of following both an inductive and deductive thematic analysis approach was to explore whether the data (i) confirm the PERMA pathways, (ii) to indicate its relevance to the South African context, and to (iii) identify other relevant aspects that do not form part of the PERMA pathways that have important implications for wellbeing in this context.

## **1.7 STANDARDS OF RIGOUR**

To bolster confidence in the findings of the current study, various standards of rigour were upheld throughout the research process. In qualitative research, the quality of a study's findings is labelled in terms of its trustworthiness. According to Padgett (1999), trustworthiness does not occur naturally and is mostly a result of 'rigorous scholarship' and the following through of specific procedures. To ensure that trustworthiness was achieved, certain procedures to ensure credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were incorporated.

### **1.7.1 Credibility**

Credibility in research refers to the extent to which the findings of research is in congruence with the reality of the participants' lived experiences (Schneider, 2016; Shenton, 2004). According to Hitge (2015), one of the chief aims of qualitative research should be to ensure that the results of the research reflect the true reality of the participants' lives. In other words, there should be procedures in place to ensure that researcher bias and subjectivity do not hinder the credibility of the research (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Firstly, the transcription of data was carefully conducted to ensure that all the important dialogue and comments by the participants were captured fully and accurately. I requested a peer review from a colleague to confirm that all the information from the videos was fully and accurately transcribed. Furthermore, participants' reflections and wellbeing experiences were quoted verbatim in the results section, which allowed for detailed descriptions of first-hand experiences of the participants. One of the major limitations to secondary data analysis is its openness to researcher bias and over- or under-interpretation of data (Boslaugh, 2007). Due to the fact that the researcher was not physically present when the primary data were collected, the analysis of the data is open to misinterpretation (Creswell & Miller, 2000). To address this aspect and to optimise the credibility status of the current study, peer review and peer debriefing by an educational psychology honours student, a colleague and my research supervisors were conducted to provide constructive feedback and criticism in an attempt to enhance the validity of the

findings (Schneider, 2016). Continuous peer debriefing between me and my supervisors took place throughout the research process to ensure that the study offers credible findings.

### **1.7.2 Transferability**

Transferability of research refers to the extent to which the findings can be generalised to the greater population (Tracy, 2010). One of the limitations to my study is that, due to the small population size, the findings can not necessarily be generalised to the greater Diepsloot community. This, however, does not mean that it does not hold transferable quality; one of the ways that I attempted to address this was by seeking out results from other wellbeing and livelihood studies conducted in Diepsloot (Mahajan, 2014; Møller, 2007; Richards et al, 2007) and comparing the findings from those studies with the findings of the present study. Overall, limitations to the generalisability of the present study's findings due to the small sample size will be mentioned to ensure that the reader has full grasp of this reality (Schneider, 2016).

### **1.7.3 Dependability**

Dependability refers to the measure to which research is reliable (Hitge, 2015). To enhance the dependability of the research, peer review was incorporated. Two independent peers reviewed the data and declared it dependable.

### **1.7.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the findings of the research can be confirmed by another investigator (Nel, 2016). To ensure the confirmability of the research, reflexivity on my behalf, which is the ability to self-disclose personal assumptions and biases (Creswell & Miller, 2000), was exercised as often as possible to ensure that I would be aware of my research blind spots in terms of subjectivity and bias (Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006).

Furthermore, the corpus data (e.g. observational notes and articles from the primary study) were used to compare the results of the present study and to evaluate similarities

in the findings. Also, an extensive literature review was conducted to explore similar studies and to verify the findings as well as to seek out disconfirming studies or negative cases (Mahoney & Goertz, 2004).

## **1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethical considerations taken by the researcher involves the process of doing good and avoiding harm by applying certain ethical principles (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001). Three very important ethical principles by which I aimed to conduct my research were the principles of autonomy, benevolence and justice (Orb et al., 2001). It was important to make sure that these principles were honoured when data was collected during the workshop, and that I continued to honour these principles in the analysis of the secondary data. I had access to informed consent forms, researcher protocol documentation and videoed proof of the ethical procedures that were applied and followed during the workshop.

The principle of autonomy was adhered to during the workshop, as the participating families' dignity and rights were respected. This was done by allowing all the participating families to provide informed consent (Miller & Boulton, 2007) prior to participation, and they were also made aware of the volunteering nature of participation. Each participant was given the right to withdraw or discontinue participation at any time during the research process. An overview of the purpose and aim of the workshop and all that would be involved with regard to participation was discussed with each participant beforehand.

The principle of benevolence was adhered to during the secondary data analysis process as it was my continual aim to ensure that harm and exploitation are prevented (Ellis, 2007). This was done by steering away from providing any identifiable descriptions or information of participating families. Pseudonyms or non-specific descriptions were used whenever a name or a specific person was mentioned. Furthermore, all participants were invited for a reflection session at the University of Pretoria after the workshop had been concluded in order to gain access to the data that was collected during the workshop and to view the photos and videos that had been taken of them. The participating families were granted the opportunity to request the exclusion of any part of the data at any time.

The principle of justice, which stands for equal share and fairness, was adhered to by attempting to make the participating families feel that their sharing of information is a positive experience, where no one is exploited in the process (Resnik, 2011). Because the present study involved the participation of vulnerable families, respect and equal treatment of all is essential. This was adhered to by the facilitators and research team’s respectful approach to the participants who were part of the workshop.

### 1.9 SUMMARY OF THEMES GENERATED FROM THE ANALYSIS PROCESS

Table 1.9 provides a visual summary of the finding from the deductive and inductive data analysis processes. An in-depth discussion of these findings is in Chapter 3.

**Table 1.9:** Summary of findings

Deductive analysis results: PERMA pathways		
<b>Positive emotions</b>	Laughter	
	Cheer	
	Giggles	
	Sense of humour	
	Hope	
	Optimism	
	Comfort	
	Interest	
	Gratitude	
<b>Engagement</b>	Soccer/Football	
	Church	
	School	
	Community-building initiatives	
	Work	
	Kindness/Altruism	
	Hope/Optimism	
	Gratitude	
	Love of learning	
	Perspective	
	Leadership	
	Open-mindedness	
	Intimacy/ Love	
	Spirituality	
	Citizenship	
	Humour	
	Bravery	
	Curiosity	
Perseverance		
Integrity/Authenticity		

<b>Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-regulation</li> <li>Social intelligence</li> <li>Appreciation of beauty and excellence</li> <li>Parents and children</li> <li>Individuals and elders</li> <li>Community members</li> <li>Community members and stakeholders</li> </ul>	
<b>Meaning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humanity</li> <li>Transcendence</li> <li>Wisdom and knowledge</li> <li>Justice</li> <li>Courage</li> </ul>	
<b>Achievements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subjective goal attainment</li> </ul>	

Values in Justice Action (VIA)

<b>Inductive analysis results: Resilience risk- and protective factors</b>
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<b>Risk factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unemployment</li> <li>Poverty/Lack of finances</li> <li>Resource constraints</li> <li>Restricted access to education</li> <li>Lack of safety</li> <li>Crime</li> <li>Drugs</li> </ul>
<b>Protective factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-worth/Self-appreciation</li> <li>Flexibility</li> <li>Open communication</li> <li>Collaborative problem-solving</li> <li>Connectedness</li> </ul>

### 1.10 LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES TO THE STUDY

The research design is a primary limitation to the present study because, within a secondary data analysis approach, no follow-up questions could be asked, which limited the richness and depth of the data available for analysis. Limitations in terms of not being able to record and capture all conversational data amongst participants were also a reality due to the fact that some workshop activities required participants to do tasks within a wide space and in various locations (e.g. arena activity). Furthermore, due to the secondary nature of the study, researcher bias and over- or under-interpretation of the data were a possibility, which necessitated triangulation and peer review processes to address this limitation (Seale, 1999). In addition, the participating families' first language was not English. This placed a limitation on their ease of expression and subsequently complicated the transcription and analysis process of the data; peer review was therefore



necessary to confirm the quality and accuracy of the data to address this limitation. Another limitation to the study includes the small sample size, which limits the generalisability of the research findings (Richie & Lewis, 2003). Also, the fact that the participating families all utilised the EAP family intervention programme and the Arsenal Development Club as resources to add quality to their lives might contribute to the wellbeing experience of the population, which may not be true for other members of the Diepsloot community. A way to address this limitation would be to include another sample from the community in future research to allow for variation.

## **1.11 CHAPTER OUTLINE**

In the following section I provide an outline of the chapters in this mini-dissertation.

### **CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

In the first chapter of this study I provided the introduction, rationale, purpose statement, and problem statement. I furthermore discussed the working assumptions with which the study was approached and the clarification of the key terms that will be used throughout the study. This was followed by a comprehensive discussion on the research design and methodology that were followed in conducting the study. I then devoted this chapter to a discussion on the standards of rigour that were upheld while the study was conducted as well as the ethical considerations that were taken when the workshop was conducted as well as my considerations for the present study. This chapter was then finalised with a discussion on the possible contributions and limitations of the present study.

### **CHAPTER 2: EXPLORATION OF EXISTING LITERATURE AS BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

In Chapter 2, I provide an extensive review on existing literature that informed the present study. I start with a short discussion on South African family studies and the relevance of conducting wellbeing studies in contexts such as Diepsloot, followed by an elaboration on the key aspects related to wellbeing. These include literature on the benefits of wellbeing for societies as a whole, the different approaches that exist to wellbeing conceptualisations, wellbeing as it is conceptualised within positive psychology,

Seligman's (2011) Wellbeing Theory / PERMA model and the five wellbeing pathways that contribute to a full and flourishing life, and cultural perspectives of wellbeing. I conclude the chapter with a discussion on the conceptual framework by which the current study is guided, namely a combination of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) bioecological systems model and the PERMA framework.

### CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In the third chapter, I share the findings relating to family wellbeing from both the deductive and inductive analysis processes. Verbatim quotations from the transcribed video data are provided and briefly discussed, while only selected photographs are used to support and visually illustrate the findings on positive emotions. I start the chapter with a discussion on the inclusion and exclusion criteria followed in the deductive analysis process, followed by a presentation of the findings from the deductive analysis process, while integrating a discussion on literature throughout. The chapter is then concluded with a discussion of the findings from the inductive thematic analysis process as well as relevant literature.

### CHAPTER 4: RESPONDING TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS, POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

I devote the fourth and final chapter to answering the research questions by relating the questions to the research findings of the study and existing literature on the topic. The chapter is concluded with a discussion on the possible contributions of the study, limitations to the study and recommendations for future research.

## **CHAPTER 2**

# **EXPLORATION OF EXISTING LITERATURE AS BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

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### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, I provide a short discussion on South African family studies and the relevance of wellbeing studies within a South African context such as Diepsloot, why the study of wellbeing is an important endeavour, and how increasing wellbeing levels in societies has far-reaching benefits. I go on to explain the different approaches to the conceptualisation of wellbeing, particularly within positive psychology. I then describe the PERMA model of wellbeing and discuss how each one of the wellbeing pathways is challenged within resource-constrained communities, and how different cultural perspectives influence wellbeing conceptualisation. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of my conceptual framework based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) bioecological systems model and the PERMA framework, and how it applies to the relevance of my study.

### **2.2 FAMILY WELLBEING STUDIES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The term *family* is defined in the South African White Paper on Families, as societal groups that are related by blood (kinships), foster care, adoption or marital ties, including civil marriage, customary marriage, religious marriage, and domestic partnerships, and may transcend a physical residence (Roman, Isaacs, Davids, & Sui, 2016). Families are viewed in terms of relationships, structure, practices and resources (Roman, et al., 2016). Due to South Africa's unique socio-political history, its multi-cultural composition, as well as factors such as poverty, resource-constraints, unemployment and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the South African family structure is in general not referred to as a typical nuclear family structure (Hanson, 2005; Roman, et al., 2016). Single parent households, child-headed households and children living with unemployed adults and/or extended family members, are a common appearance (Von Bachström, 2015). Thus, when the

reference is made to South African families, I refer not only to the nuclear family, but also to extended families, lone parent families, and children living with caregivers/ guardians.

Families in South Africa experience a number of unique circumstances and regardless of culture, language, or doctrine, the family stands at the core of societal wellbeing as it links directly to human beings' physical, psychosocial, and spiritual existence (Gruber & Haldeman, 2009). Understanding family dynamics is essential in understanding the quality of life in South Africa (Møller, 2007; Roman, et al., 2016).

Examples of South African family wellbeing and resilience studies that have been conducted in recent years include the following: Family resilience studies in South African township- and low-income communities by Bhana and Bachoo (2011) and Von Backström (2015). Studies on family functioning and socio-economic status by Botha, Booysen, and Wouters (2018). Studies on descriptions of family wellbeing by Roman, et al., (2016). Quality of life and wellbeing studies by Møller and Roberts (2017), and cross-cultural definitions of family wellbeing by Delle Fave, et al., (2016); Greeff and Loubser (2008) and Wissing (2014).

Some of the key family strengths that emerged from the findings of the aforementioned studies include: shared belief systems and spirituality, hope and optimism, as well as positive and harmonious family and social relations.

### **2.3 WELLBEING STUDIES WITHIN A SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT SUCH AS DIEPSLOOT**

A vast number of South African families live in poverty-ridden communities such as the peri-urban Diepsloot settlement (Møller, 2007). Diepsloot, which translates from Afrikaans to English as 'deep ditch', is a fast-growing informal or peri-urban settlement located on the northern edge of Johannesburg, South Africa (Mahajan, 2014). This community began its development in 1993, when mostly migrants built makeshift homes on unoccupied land (De Wet et al., 2008). It has grown considerably over the past few years with its population size estimated at 138 329, according to the 2011 Census (StatsSA, 2012). The community in Diepsloot consists of people from different cultures, religions and tribal backgrounds, including immigrants, homeless people and people who are

unwilling or unable to be accommodated by communities in other established settlements (Pfigu, 2014). Some of the stark realities that families in this community face daily include material deprivation, food insecurity, insecure housing tenure, safety concerns and a lack of fundamental needs, such as infrastructure and healthcare services (De Wet et al., 2008; Harber, 2011).

According to StatsSA (2012), more than 50% of South Africa's population live below the poverty line, with an income of R780 or less per month. This is a matter of great concern, as many families experience a daily battle for survival; without a healthy family life and community life, and the overall functioning of society is adversely affected (Gruber & Haldeman, 2009). Furthermore, Roth, and Becker (2011) mention that, due to South Africa's fast population growth and rising immigration trends, peri-urban settlements are rapidly expanding and becoming major residential areas in which a vast number of South African families reside. The need for studies on wellbeing within a community such as Diepsloot is therefore not only interesting, but also essential in order to gain insight into how these communities and the families within these communities function. Studies on the livelihood and wellbeing of the Diepsloot community are scarce (De Wet et al., 2008), which poses a challenge when it comes to knowing how to effectively support and aid in the building and development of this community's resources.

## **2.4 THE RELEVANCE OF WELLBEING STUDIES**

Since World War II, most psychology research has focused on curing mental illness and understanding pathology (the disease model or pathogenic approach), rather than on exploring what leads to human flourishing (Keyes, 2007; Seligman, Parks & Steen, 2004). Although this focus has resulted in breakthroughs in the mental health sciences, such as finding cures and developing comprehensive diagnostic criteria (Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) for mental illness, the greater part of society that did not suffer from mental illness or pathology were left with questions as to what could be done to increase and sustain levels of wellbeing in mentally healthy human beings (Nettle as cited in Pflug, 2009). It was from this need for a wellbeing psychology that the field of positive psychology emerged in the 1990s as a remedial action to psychology's heavy

emphasis on suffering, illness and misfortune (Baumeister, Vohs, Aaker, & Garbinsky, 2013; Dambrun, Desprès, & Lac, 2012).

Aristotle was one of the first scholars to define happiness as the 'chief and final good' of human existence (Adler & Seligman, 2016; Ayerakwa, Osei, & Osei-Akoto, 2015; Diener, Gohm, Suh, & Oishi, 2000). Human happiness and wellbeing are broadly defined by some scholars as the chief aim of human endeavour and a defining aspect of human sense of purpose (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2015; Ayerakwa et al., 2015). Within research it has been revealed that human wellbeing is associated with many social, emotional, behavioural and contextual advantages. Wellbeing promotes successful behaviour over multiple life domains. It promotes good health (Bok, 2010) and longevity (Diener & Seligman, 2004), good citizenship (Diener et al., 2010), good social relations (Kern et al., 2014), employee productivity (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005), healthy natural environments (Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009) and is known to lower morbidity rate (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Nurturing wellbeing within work environments can further prevent absenteeism and burnout (Danna & Griffin, 1999; Slavin, Schindler, Chibnall, & Shoss, 2012) and help to create desirable economic outcomes (Diener & Seligman, 2002, 2004).

The importance of studying wellbeing and understanding what contributes to people's experience of a good life cannot be overemphasized, and several scholars have explained why this is essential. Firstly, when it comes to deliberating decisions, people make these decisions based on actions they feel will promote wellbeing (Haybron, 2003). For instance, the decision of whether to go on holiday, move schools or get married depends on whether the decision would be worthwhile. Secondly, policymakers and governments use indicators of societal wellbeing to guide policy creation, assess the overall wellbeing of society, prioritise government goals and cast light on institutional changes and the effects thereof (Bok, 2010; Helliwell, Layard, & Sachs, 2015; Michaelson et al, 2009; Schwartz et al., 2013; Theodori, 2001). An example is to determine whether to lower or increase taxes (Bok, 2010). Thirdly, wellbeing is important when it comes to the evaluation of personal and other decisions. For example, when parents want to know whether their children are unwell or if there is something amiss in their marriage (Haybron,

2003). Lastly, wellbeing is vital to aid in prediction, to determine if something will be worthwhile and to provide explanation for behaviour such as someone choosing a new religion or making a career change (Haybron, 2003).

The challenge within research literature, however, is that there does not seem to be consensus with regard to the definition of wellbeing and, as Forgeard et al. (2011) mention, the multiplicity of approaches and definitions of wellbeing that exists seems to give wellbeing a very broad and blurred nature. However, to get a grasp on wellbeing in an attempt to conceptualise family wellbeing in a resource-constrained community, it is important to have knowledge of the historical background of wellbeing in order to pursue attempts in defining it (Dodge et al., 2012).

## **2.5 APPROACHES TO WELLBEING**

Traditionally, national wellbeing has been defined by means of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), designed by Simon Kuznets in 1934 as a barometer by which nations may measure prosperity (Adler & Seligman, 2016). Kuznets himself, however, later stated that income is not an effective measurement of national welfare and subsequent studies to test this relationship have been conducted. The effect of income on wellbeing has yielded mixed results; some scholars indicate that increased income has a positive influence on wellbeing, others find no relationship at all, and some describe it as curvilinear (where effect of income diminishes when saturation point is reached) (Fischer & Boer, 2011; Hagerty & Veenhoven, 2003). One such a longitudinal analysis was conducted by Easterlin (1995), who found that when people's basic needs are met, they do not necessarily become happier when their income is raised (Adler & Seligman, 2016; Devey & Møller, 2002; Diener & Oishi, 2000; Diener & Seligman, 2004; Diener, Lucas, & Scollon, 2006; Easterlin, 1995; Hagerty & Veenhoven, 2003; Lyubomirsky, 2001; Veenhoven, 2008, 2009). The same phenomenon was found with material resources, indicating that increased materialism does not necessarily raise wellbeing levels either. Some findings indicated that increased materialism and income led to a decrease in wellbeing in certain instances, for example where stress levels were increased (Frey & Stutzer, 2002; Graham, 2011). This phenomenon is also known as the Easterlin or postmodern paradox,

the 'paradox of unhappy growth' or the 'happy peasant and frustrated achiever' phenomenon (Fischer & Boer, 2011; Graham, 2011; Huang, 2008).

A model which forms part of an explanation to this phenomenon is the automatic habituation model or the hedonic treadmill (Diener et al., 2006), explaining that people tend to be relatively stable in happiness over time despite changes in income or even across circumstances (Lyubomirsky, 2001). For example, a study conducted by Brickman, Coates and Janoff-Bulman found that lottery winners were not happier than people who did not win, and non-disabled people were not happier than disabled people (Diener, Lucas, & Oishi, 2006). Findings of populations (including South Africa) not registering greater life satisfaction even when living conditions were improved confirm the finding (Devey & Møller, 2002). Various studies therefore confirm that external factors account for only 15–20% of variance in wellbeing (Ayerakwa et al., 2015; Diener, et al., 2006; Lyubomirsky, 2001; Seligman, et al., 2009), and support the Aristotelian view that wellbeing is important in its own right, not only as a means to an end (Fischer & Boer, 2011).

As a result, various avenues have emerged in response to the weakness in using traditional measures of wellbeing, where two of the most well-known avenues are the hedonic wellbeing tradition and the eudaimonic wellbeing tradition (Butler & Kern, 2016; Coetzee & Schreuder, 2013).

#### **2.4.1 Hedonic tradition**

The hedonic tradition was championed many centuries ago by Aristippus (435–366 BCE) and Epicurus (342–270 BCE) who highlighted the idea of immediate sensory gratification and pleasure as the essence to experiencing wellbeing (Peterson, Park & Seligman, 2005). The hedonic view, also referred to as the 'pleasurable life' (Seligman & Royzman, 2003), states that the goal of life is to experience optimal pleasure and positive emotions and that the successful pursuit of human appetites and sensation is the primary goal (Ayerakwa et al., 2015; Forgeard et al., 2011; Schotanus-Dijkstra et al., 2016). Examples of factors that have a significant influence on hedonic wellbeing are bottom-up processes such as contextual events, situations or demographics (e.g. income and health), and top-



down processes such as personality (e.g. genes) (Baumeister et al., 2013; Diener et al., 2009; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Lucas & Diener, 2008). It is based on the idea that individuals respond to the same circumstances in varying ways (e.g. pleasure or displeasure), and rate contextual factors based on subjective expectations, values and previous experiences (Filep & Deery, 2010; Linley, et al., 2007; Ryan & Deci, 2001). Constructs that stand central to hedonism are life satisfaction (with physical and psychological wants and needs), positive affect and low negative affect (Dodge et al., 2012). Hedonism may be narrowly focused (such as relief in finding a lost ring) or broadly focused (such as being grateful for positive life circumstances) and is presumed to be rooted in human nature (Ayerakwa et al., 2015). The term 'happiness' is used interchangeably with hedonism, as it comprises the scientific analysis of how people evaluate their lives and manifest through moods in a specific moment, but also their reactions and judgements of past experiences (Khaw & Kern, 2014).

Hedonism has its modern conceptual roots in Jeremy Bentham (1778) and David Hume's (1711–1776) utilitarianism (Peterson et al., 2005). More recently, Diener (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1984) has become one of the major scholars to elaborate on the importance and relevance of subjective wellbeing as a measure of people's personal preferences and life evaluations (Butler & Kern, 2016; Khaw & Kern, 2014; Sandvick, Diener, & Sandlitz, 1993; Seligman & Royzman, 2003). According to Diener and Oishi (2000), subjective wellbeing is an essential standard against which nations can judge their economic prosperity. It is also a democratic outcome variable, as it allows individuals to evaluate their own lives instead of comparing it against standards set by other 'experts' (Diener & Oishi, 2000). Countries such as Buthan, for example, have made subjective wellbeing central to domestic policy (Bok, 2010; Filep & Deery, 2010), and have changed GDP to Gross National Happiness (GNH) in order to determine and promote the nation's subjective wellbeing (Khaw & Kern, 2014).

Criticism against subjective wellbeing/hedonism, however, is that due to its strong emphasis on positive emotion, introverts who are not necessarily as emotionally expressive as extroverts might be discounted for happiness due to personality traits (Forgeard et al., 2011). Also, within hedonism, happiness is reduced to people's balance

between pleasure and displeasure (Haybron, 2003), which restricts it to a one-dimensional nature. Furthermore, Lyubomirsky (2001) found that demographics, events and circumstances correlate less with wellbeing than intuition. Hedonism also often revolves around short-term benefits or momentary gratification, which do not last into the future (Huta & Ryan as cited in Baumeister et al., 2013). Lastly, the 'meaningful life', which involves the principle of living a life characterised more by purpose than by pleasure, does not form part of the hedonic conceptualisation, which is found wanting this tradition (Baumeister et al., 2013).

#### **2.4.2 Eudaimonic perspective**

The ancient Greek of Aristotle and Plato introduced the concept of eudaimonism as the concept of living a life of contemplation and virtue in accordance with one's authenticity/true self or 'daimon' (Norton as cited in Adler & Seligman, 2016). The eudaimonic view of wellbeing is the opposite of hedonism; instead of focusing on subjective desires that are momentarily felt, eudaimonism is all about subjective desires rooted in human nature that contribute to growth or reaching one's potential (Forgeard et al., 2011; Ryan & Deci, 2001). Eudaimonia, also referred to as the 'good life', resonates closely with the 'meaningful life', as it seeks to cultivate fulfilment through virtue, meaning, self-actualisation and using one's strengths in service of something good or greater than the self (Baumeister et al., 2013; Filep & Deery, 2010; Huppert & So, 2013). It combines both subjective elements (experiences of feelings of personal expressiveness) and objective elements (behaviour related to goal pursuit) (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2013). The six dimensions of eudaimonic wellbeing are self-discovery, development of best potentials, sense of meaning and purpose, pursuit of excellence, involvement in activities and enjoyment of activities as personally expressive (Adler & Seligman, 2016; Coetzee & Schreuder, 2013). Approaches that are concerned with the eudaimonic view of wellbeing include Roger's (Rogers & Carmichael, 1951) concept of the fully functioning person, Maslow's (Maslow & Lewis, 1987) idea of self-actualisation, Ryff and Singer's (1996) psychological wellbeing, and Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory (Peterson et al., 2005).

According to Keyes and Annas (2009), feeling good (hedonistic) and functioning well (eudaimonic) are two essential components of wellbeing. Both avenues can be experienced at once and, when combined, can contribute to a flourishing life (Hitge, 2015). However, one aspect which is amiss within the hedonistic and eudaimonic view of wellbeing is the concept of engagement ('engaged life') and, more specifically, the idea of flow that was originally introduced by Csikszentmihalyi (Peterson et al., 2005). Flow is the overall feeling of 'being in the zone' or the experience of gratification in what we are engaged in doing (Huang, 2008). Flow is a definite contributor to wellbeing, although it is neither solely eudaimonic nor hedonistic but is instead termed an 'amalgam' of both features, as it is non-emotional and non-conscious (Waterman, 2007). It involves being engaged in an activity that is valued, regardless of the experience of subjective emotions and requires the use of character strengths to bring about gratification (Keyes, Fredrickson, & Park, 2011).

A wellbeing theory recently developed by Seligman (2011) which uses a dashboard approach to wellbeing measurement is the Wellbeing Theory. The Wellbeing Theory defines wellbeing in terms of five constructs, namely positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and achievements (PERMA).

## **2.5 WELLBEING THEORY: THE PERMA MODEL**

Wellbeing Theory is an expanded version of Seligman's Authentic Happiness Theory which was brought to life in 2000 (Seligman, 2010). In 2011, Seligman published his book '*Flourish*' (2011) where he introduced his new 'dashboard' approach to wellbeing measurement, called Wellbeing Theory or the PERMA model (Forgeard et al., 2011). This theory proposed three pathways to wellbeing, namely pleasure ('pleasurable life'), meaning ('meaningful life') and engagement ('good life'), which all contributed to the 'full life'. These form a depiction of life satisfaction beyond the sum of these parts, when experienced concurrently (D'raven & Pasha-Zaidi, 2015; Peterson et al., 2005). Seligman (2010), however, in 2006 contemplated refocusing the target of positive psychology as not being a 'happiology' but rather a science of wellbeing and flourishing (Dodge et al., 2012; Hone et al., 2014; Seligman, 2010). The reason for this departure was to stress the

multifaceted nature of human flourishing and to draw a clear distinction between happiness (now wellbeing) and 'cheerfulness' (Forgeard et al., 2011). It was then that Seligman (2011) added the two pathways of positive relationships and achievements to his initial theory, renaming it Wellbeing Theory. This theory posits that wellbeing consists of nurturing one of five pathways that people pursue for their own sake, illustrated by the acronym PERMA (Forgeard et al., 2011; Huppert & So, 2013; Seligman, 2010).

Seligman's (2011) Wellbeing Theory is a relatively new theory, and there are no validated instruments yet that specifically evaluate the PERMA constructs, apart from a recently newly developed measure called the PERMA-Profilier that was in the process of validation at the time of this study (Butler & Kern, 2016; Forgeard et al., 2011; Kern et al., 2014; Soleimani, Rezaei, Kianersi, Hojabrian, & Khalili Paji, 2015). Due to a lack of differentiation in existing literature, the unique contribution of each PERMA component is therefore still unknown (Kern et al., 2014). An overlap exists between the five pathways in terms of differentiation (Park, 2015). Although Seligman's theory has been criticised for not being cross-culturally applicable, it does not lack complete cross-cultural consideration as it was developed after considering research in psychology, the social sciences, self-help interventions to wellbeing, as well as by exploring non-western philosophers' interpretations (D'raven & Pasha-Zaidi, 2015; Lee Duckworth, Steen, & Seligman, 2005; Filep & Deery, 2010; Khaw & Kern, 2014). In the following section, the five pathways of the PERMA model will receive elaboration.

### **2.5.1 Positive emotions (P)**

Positive emotions can be classified as hedonic feelings, with both valence (positive or negative) and activation (low arousal to high arousal) dimensions (Butler & Kern, 2016; Kern et al., 2014). Due to their high face validity, positive emotions are one of the most studied facets of wellbeing and there subsequently exists several instruments to measure them (Butler & Kern, 2016; Forgeard et al., 2011). Positive emotions include feelings such as pleasure, ecstasy, warmth, comfort, pride, interest, awe, amusement, gratitude, hope, joy, rapture and contentment (Park, 2015; Seligman, 2013). Serotonin levels as well as temperament traits such as extraversion, which are genetically linked, play a role when it

comes to one's ability to experience positive affect (Inglehart & Klingemann, 2000; Filep & Deery, 2010; Seligman, 2013). According to Csikszentmihalyi and Hunter (2003), genetics have a 44–50% influence on variance in happiness and can be increased by only 15 per cent. Of all the positive emotions, gratitude plays an important role when it comes to increasing positive emotion, as it allows people to focus on the positive rather than on what lacks in life (Slavin et al., 2012). Fredrickson (1998), who formulated the 'broaden-and-build' theory, explains positive emotions as short-lived and momentary feelings that can alter our thinking, feelings and actions in a specific moment and which can, in time, change us (Keyes et al., 2012; Seligman, 2013). It has the ability to broaden people's thought-action strategies, build resources, broaden attention, undo negative emotions, fuel resilience and set the stage for a greater wellbeing experience in the future (Le Roux, 2009). It correlates with success behaviour and health and serves as a marker to flourishing (Khaw & Kern, 2014).

Within the South African context, cultural beliefs and practices play a significant role when it comes to the experience of pleasure. Uchida, Norasakkunkit, & Kitayama (2013) mention that cultural psychologists have in recent years highlighted the role of public meanings (folk theories and common sense) and practices (routines and scripts) in shaping emotions; the authors emphasised that emotions are embedded in cultural meaning. Therefore, the meaning of happiness and the expression of positive emotion may vary across cultures.

Furthermore, research on wellbeing in collectivistic societies indicates that the 'self' stands between culture and subjective wellbeing as self-gratification is often overshadowed by the needs of the community (Diener & Suh, 2000; Filep & Deery, 2010; Pfigu, 2014). Studies by Mahajan (2014), Møller (2007) and Richards et al. (2007) indicate that positive emotions directed at the future in the form of hope and optimism are high amongst South Africans. Furthermore, Rothmann and Veenhoven (2015) conducted a life satisfaction study in South Africa and found that the overall happiness levels have increased over the past ten years. Results further showed that South Africans tend to score higher on the affective component of happiness and lower with regard to contentment, resulting in a pattern of 'cheerful discontent' which seems to characterise

the happiness pattern (which the researchers deem functional) in South Africa (Rothmann & Veenhoven, 2015).

### **2.5.2 Engagement (E)**

Engagement is understood to be the construct that defines the state in which a person is fully engaged or absorbed in a task, which is the antithesis to burnout (Butler & Kern, 2016; Coetzee & Schreuder, 2013; Kern et al., 2014). Complete levels of engagement are achieved when someone is intrinsically motivated (internal locus of control) and single-mindedly immersed in a task or experiencing what is termed 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Flow is the state in which high skill and high challenge interact and a person feels completely engaged (Seligman, 2010). The two conditions for experiencing flow are that the perceived challenge should stretch one's skill level and immediate feedback on progress must be provided (Seligman, 2013).

In essence, flow involves using one's character strengths in order to create opportunities for flow (Seligman, 2011; Shimai, Otake, Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2006). Philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato, Socrates and Confucius were some of the first academics to emphasise good character and virtue as essential contributors to societal wellbeing (Keyes et al., 2012). In positive psychology, good character and virtues (core characteristics valued by moral philosophers and religious thinkers) have in recent years become a central topic of discussion as the core traits that exist in varying degrees in people's thoughts, feelings and behaviours (Park et al., 2006). Character strengths are identified as a group of psychological ingredients that define virtues. Peterson and Seligman (2004) identified a group of 24 character strengths and six core virtues, also known as values in action (VIA) (Keyes et al., 2012; Park et al., 2006). These exist in degrees and the higher a given character strength, the more life satisfaction is reported (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). See section 1.6.1, Table 1.3.1 for a list of these strengths and virtues as they are included in the VIA classification.

Character strengths are not talents or skills, but rather reflections of one's personality, which are nurtured within families, communities, religions and activities (e.g. sport or hobbies) (Seligman, 2002; Seligman as cited in D'raven & Pasha-Zaidi, 2015). A study

by Peterson and Seligman (2004) found that some of the character strengths commonly known to be associated with life satisfaction are hope, zest, intimacy/love, gratitude and curiosity. Engagement and flow are furthermore known to be the PERMA constructs that are the most difficult to measure and no validated brief measure to indicate engagement has yet been developed (Butler & Kern, 2016).

Communities with high rates of volunteering initiative, church and club membership and social engagement (all important aspects of social capital) tend to experience high levels of wellbeing (Diener & Suh, 2000). Within the South African context, engagement in church and community initiatives is common practice amongst collectivistic communities (Pflug, 2009).

### **2.5.3 Relationships (R)**

Relationships are defined as the connection between people and are measured by the extent to which these relationships allow us to feel that we belong and that we can share experiences (Slavin et al., 2012). These are meaningful relationships where mutual support, care and positivity characterise the bonds between people (Seligman, 2013; Khaw & Kern, 2014). The language used between people is essential when it comes to the establishment and maintenance of relationships. Seligman (2013) speaks of the importance of the ratio of positive words to negative words (Losada Ratio) between people. Relationship sub-domains that exist include social ties (group of people), social networks (number of quality ties), support received (objective resource attainment), perceived support (subjective resource obtainment), satisfaction with support and giving to others (Taga as cited in Butler & Kern, 2016). Social support and the belief that one is cared for, valued and esteemed is known to be the most essential contributor to wellbeing amongst all cultures (Forgeard et al., 2011; McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005). Helliwell et al. (2015) found that communities with high social capital (social connectedness) tend to maintain or even grow stronger in wellbeing during economic and natural disasters, as these difficulties provide the opportunities to forge even stronger bonds between people. Social connectedness, defined by interpersonal trust,

volunteering groups and membership, has also been linked to positive health outcomes and reduced mortality (Miller & Buys, 2008).

People tend to prosper in neighbourhoods and communities where social capital is high, where trust is common amongst citizens, and where people care for and support one another (Putman as cited in Diener & Oishi, 2000). In countries where wellbeing seems to correlate with old age, such countries are characterised by high levels of social support (Helliwell et al., 2015). Within the South African context, happiness is very strongly associated with close family bonds, social harmony and stable community relations (Pflug, 2009). The importance of extended family within the South African context is crucial, as child rearing, for example, is often the responsibility of the whole community (through kinship bonds) (Dass-Brailsford, 2005). The principle of *'ubuntu'* (I am because we are) stands central to the pathway of positive relationships in South Africa, as wellbeing is strongly defined by these community bonds.

#### **2.5.4 Meaning (M)**

Meaning involves using one's strengths and virtues in service of something greater than the self (e.g. helping other people or believing in a higher power) (Lee Duckworth, et al., 2005). Human beings are altruistic in nature, which means that we seek to be part of a group and mean something to others (Seligman, 2013). Meaning is focused on the idea that one has a purpose or calling to go beyond present discomfort or even unhappiness to pursue something meaningful and great (Khaw & Kern, 2014). In contrast to other living creatures in the natural world who seek to instantly gratify their natural needs (often associated with the notion of subjective wellbeing/happiness), meaningfulness depends on culture and language (Baumeister et al., 2013). Many psychologists believe that meaning in life is central to flourishing as it ensures a life lived with quality and purpose (Park, 2015). Meaning makes people feel that their lives matter and that they have transcendent purpose even in the midst of difficult circumstances, which in turn leads to resilience and resolve (Kern et al., 2014).

Meaning includes judgements about the purpose in life, which is heavily influenced by cultural beliefs and social customs (D'raven & Pasha-Zaidi, 2015). In South Africa, the



primary philosophical school of thought is Christianity, which is firmly rooted in a dialectical worldview which states that happiness and unhappiness are not direct opposites of one another, but rather dependent on one another (Pflug, 2014; Pflug, 2009). This is in contrast with the linear worldview, mostly held by individualistic societies, that happiness and unhappiness are two complete opposites and that they cannot and should not exist together (Pflug, 2009). When it comes to living a meaningful life, spirituality often has a strong influence on one's willingness to persevere and stay hopeful through difficult situations. For example, Dass-Brailsford (2008) found that spirituality was one of the most important factors that helped hurricane survivors stay hopeful and positive in the aftermath of the disaster. In South Africa, a very strong sense of spirituality, belief in God, and belief in ancestral guidance is characteristic of many African communities, which adds a strongly meaningful dimension to their lives (Dass-Brailsford, 2005).

### **2.5.5 Achievements (A)**

Making progress towards goals and achieving success is highly revered cross-culturally and may be achieved through objective/external recognition or a subjective/internal sense of accomplishment (Khaw & Kern, 2014). Ryan and Deci's (2000) Self-Determination Theory states that competence stands central to basic human needs (Butler & Kern, 2016). It revolves around self-discipline, mastery and grit (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2013) and is all about making progress towards achieving goals. These goals may be for personal gain or may be set on behalf of a larger group or community. Accomplishments are usually pursued for their own sake and require the application of self-discipline in seeing that it comes to fruition. Lee Duckworth, et al., (2005) found that self-discipline is roughly twice as important as IQ in predicting academic success (Seligman, 2011, 2013).

To illustrate the difference between objective and subjective achievements, the following examples are provided. Within the South African context, regardless of its shortcomings, South Africa has a number of objective achievements under its belt. To name a few, South Africa is one of few nations in the world who disarmed its nuclear deal, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is a world-renowned model of restoring relationships within conflict-ridden countries and the banning of public smoking has become an overnight

success in South Africa. Also, the implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) to provide free public housing to the poor is another example of these South African achievements (Mahajan, 2014; Møller, 2007).

Subjective achievements may include a mother's feeling of success in raising healthy, well-functioning children or a father's promotion at work (Butler & Kern, 2016; Khaw & Kern, 2014). Views on achievements may vary considerably across cultures as some cultures may view achievements as events to be shared to enhance collective pride, while other achievements are valued more individually (Lu as cited in Khaw & Kern, 2014).

## **2.6 THE ROLE OF CULTURE**

In most cultures examined by researchers, the pursuit of happiness is seen to be a primary goal (Inglehart & Klingemann, 2000; Lyubomirsky, 2001). Cross-cultural psychology has, however, challenged the validity and applicability of existing wellbeing measures. As such, a considerable variance in wellbeing conceptualisations exists (Diener & Oishi, 2000; Khaw & Kern, 2014; Wong, 2011). There is also a significant dearth of cross-cultural studies on wellbeing (Suh, 2002) as well as a lack of awareness of which wellbeing constructs are universal and which are culturally specific. Questions as to why certain wellbeing constructs are more important in one culture than in another, and why religiosity, for example, has an effect on certain societies are yet to be fully explored (Diener & Suh, 2000). Furthermore, a great variance in terms of wellbeing indicators within cultures has been found as some cultures such as the Latin Americans, Chileans and Brazilians achieved significantly high life satisfaction levels, despite having low income rates (Abdallah, Thompson, Michaelson, & Steuer, 2009; Khaw & Kern, 2014; Sepulveda, 2013). On the other hand, countries such as Japan and France that have relatively high incomes scored low on life satisfaction (Huppert & So, 2013; Khaw & Kern, 2014; Pflug, 2009).

The meaning of wellbeing varies considerably from culture to culture (Uchida et al., 2013) and multiple realms of meaning may exist cross-culturally. In some collectivistic societies, the self is not separate from the social context, whereas in more individualistic societies, the self (e.g. self-enhancement and self-consistence) stands as central to wellbeing (Filep

& Deery, 2010; Pflug, 2009; Suh, 2000). A number of wellbeing studies have been conducted in order to find the most common wellbeing constructs and some found education, race, genetics, religion, marriage, health, employment and income (Bok, 2010; Graham & Markovitz, 2011) to be the most essential, while other results indicated a very strong emphasis on social capital (Diener & Seligman, 2002; Helliwell et al., 2015; Umberson, Chen, House, Hopkins, & Slaten, 1996).

The important role of social capital is especially highlighted in collectivistic cultures (Uchida et al., 2013). The Happy Planet Index 2.0, conducted in 2006, found that the two essential features characterising countries with low income but high life satisfaction are that they have unmaterialistic aspirations and high social capital with an active civil society (religious groups and strong family ties) (Abdallah et al., 2009). Similarly, results from studies on 268 male Harvard University students in 1930, the Gallup wellbeing studies, the World Happiness Report and the World Database of Happiness Studies (Bok, 2010; Fischer & Boer, 2011; Helliwell et al., 2015; Seligman, 2013) showed that countries that are high in social capital characterised by trust, support, freedom and generosity are the happiest. Diener et al. (1985) further elaborate on this finding by explaining that ultimately the impact of income, resources and contextual circumstances on wellbeing depends on changeable aspects such as expectations, habituation levels and social comparisons.

## **2.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

When exploring family wellbeing within a community such as Diepsloot, it is important to understand the full context in which individuals and families reside. According to Helliwell et al. (2015), wellbeing is influenced by the quality of surrounding social norms and institutions. This includes family relationships at individual level, trust and empathy at community and neighbourhood level and power and quality of overarching social norms, which all determine quality of life within communities (Helliwell et al., 2015). For the purpose of this study and making sense of the data, I combined the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and the PERMA framework (Seligman, 2001) as my conceptual framework to explain the interrelatedness and interdependence between systems within their social context (Coffey, 2004; Donald, Lazarus, & Lolwana, 2010; Ryan, 2001; Stead

& Watson, 2006). While the bioecological systems model guided my view of the nature of the interrelationships in the data that I analysed, the PERMA framework guided the analysis process and the formulation of themes (Discussed in Chapter 3).

Thus, I moved beyond focusing on what happens within a system only to what is happening between different systems, to reflect development as consistent adaptation and accommodation amongst systems (Waller, 2001). Therefore, nothing happens in isolation but is rather in constant interaction with the social and cultural domains in which they grow. The bioecological systems model describes the various systems (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem) and their interactions with one another. These interactions involve personal factors (behavioural reactions, beliefs, habits and ideas), proximal factors (interaction patterns and rituals), contextual factors (family, community) and time (maturation and growth changes over time). It is within understanding the different systems that various resilience and wellbeing factors can be understood (Donald et al., 2010).

The microsystem represents the immediate family environment where interactions take place and in which wellbeing factors reside. The mesosystem represents the interaction between the various microsystems within this environment. This includes family contact with other families, the family's work environment, church life, the Arsenal Soccer Club, Shumbashaba Community Trust and school. The exosystem represents systems with which the families do not have direct contact, but who play a role with regard to the experience of families' wellbeing, such as the government and the Diepsloot township governing council. Finally, the macrosystem is a wide system that includes the socio-economic circumstances in which the families reside, such as the resource-constrained community and an impoverished peri-rural settlement. The chronosystem represents the changes that occur over time that have an effect on the system interactions (Donald et al., 2010).

## **2.8 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I provided an overview of literature that informed the research questions and analysis of the secondary data in the present study. I provided a short description on

South African family studies and discussed the background to South African communities such as Diepsloot, why wellbeing studies are important and what the benefits of human wellbeing are to society. Next, the different approaches to wellbeing were given, followed by a discussion of the PERMA model and how the five pathways are challenged in a South African collectivistic context. I then went on to discuss the role of culture and how cultural psychology plays a role with regard to our understanding of wellbeing, culminating in an outline of the conceptual framework of a combination of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems model and the PERMA framework.

In the next chapter I will discuss the findings from the deductive and inductive analysis processes of the secondary data, as well as discuss the relevant literature.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

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#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I report on the findings of the study by starting off with a presentation of all the PERMA themes from the deductive thematic analysis. This is followed by a presentation of the findings from the inductive data analysis process (data analysis processes discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.6.6). For each theme, reference to relevant literature is made in order to add background to the discussion. The discussion of themes supporting the PERMA framework is enriched by verbatim statements from the video transcriptions, while selected photographs are used to support and visually illustrate the results on positive emotions. For the inductive analysis process, themes that do not fit within the PERMA framework (disconfirming or additional) were identified (refer to Annexure VII for the full data analysis). The chapter concludes with a brief summary.

#### 3.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS: DEDUCTIVE ANALYSIS

As discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.1, the PERMA model was used as a framework to analyse the data deductively in the study. In the following section, I will discuss my findings and relevant quotations and photographs are added to the discussion to support the findings. As the data were considerable, only significant quotes are used to illustrate the range of examples given. Park (2015) explains that the five PERMA pathways have a conceptual and operational overlap, which may complicate the task of exploring each pathway's individual contribution to flourishing. It is therefore important to mention that some phrases or quotations apply to more than one PERMA construct and are repeatedly used as a result.

In the sections that follow, I will discuss each of the PERMA pathways (positive emotions, engagement, values in action, relationships, meaning and achievements) by selecting the relevant quotations from the data and discussing them in relation to the relevant literature

### 3.2.1 Theme 1: Positive Emotions (P)

By means of the deductive analysis, references to and indicators of positive emotions were identified. Professor Barbara Fredrickson, a leading researcher in the field of positive emotions, describes positive emotions as being momentary, fleeting and short-lived experiences that can be life-altering (Seligman, 2013). Positive emotions include a range of emotions such as amusement, awe, gratitude, joy, interest, pride, love, compassion, cheer, laughter, giggles and contentment (Seligman, 2013). The broaden-and-build theory (Keyes et al., 2012) indicates that positive emotions broaden the thought and action repertoire (e.g. play and exploration behaviour) of people. Laughter, cheer and giggles were a recurring theme throughout the data. While interacting with one another and engaging in activities, the family members would often display spontaneous and audible laughter. There were 15 observations in the data of instances where participants displayed laughter, cheer and giggles (see Annexure VI).

Family members would often laugh and giggle to express their **gratitude** for their present engagement and the opportunities at their disposal. The emotional state of gratitude which has its early roots in theology is an attitude towards life which is a source of human strength (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000). Killen and Macaskill (2015) state that there is a consensus amongst the world's ethical and religious writers that gratitude towards received benefits is an essential part of human existence and that a grateful response benefits both the individual as well as the wider community. The following phrases capture the overall sense of gratitude expressed by the families in the data: *'So this is very nice'* (VR p.7 line 198), *'... so I'm happy to be here'* (VR p.6 line 172), *'... but what I'm happy is to meet you'* (VR p.11 line 318). Gratitude towards Shumbashaba and the Arsenal Football Club is a strong theme which points to the important role that these two community-building institutions play in terms of their contribution to family wellbeing in Diepsloot. The families' expressed gratitude towards these institutions is reflected in the following statements: *'I'm very happy for that because it keeps them away from the streets. I like it therefore Shumbashaba is really very nice'* (VR p.12 lines 341–342), *'I am very happy for what is happening between Ngoako [soccer coach] and Shumbashaba'* (VR p.12 lines 347–348), and *'I am happy with the Arsenal Diepsloot'* (VR p.13 line 392). Over the last 5–10 years, gratitude has taken the spotlight as a significant predictor of life

satisfaction and wellbeing (Tudder, Buettner, & Brelsford, 2017) and has been found to contribute significantly to aspects such as peace of mind, physical health and relationship satisfaction (Titus, 2010).

Photograph PD 1 shows the smile on the father and son's faces as the family walks together hand-in-hand.



Photograph PD 1

What stood out from the group discussions before and after the families had engaged in activities was the **sense of humour** and the **light-heartedness** many of the participants displayed. Empirical research has demonstrated that there is a strong link between humour and high-hope individuals (Vilaythong, Arnau, Rosen, & Mascaro, 2003). Humour and light-heartedness can reduce anxiety associated with stressful events (Ford, Lappi, O'Connor, & Banos, 2017). One example was when a participant reflected on his experience with the horses in the arena and said: '*... but they can see that I am not a horse ...*' (VR p.15 lines 447–448), which was then followed by a burst of laughter from the rest of the group. Another example earlier on when the participants introduced themselves at the advent of the intervention programme was when a male participant humorously referred to his wife as '*my first lady*' (VR p.6 line 168), which also resulted in laughter all around.



Positive emotions centring on the **future**, in which participants expressed **hope**, **optimism**, **comfort** and **interest** for what is to come, further added to the positive emotion pathway to wellbeing displayed by the families. Examples of these future-oriented statements include: *'... then we build, we change the life or the lifestyle of the community of Diepsloot ...'* (VR p.4 lines 116–118), *'... so I know they got some dreams and I need to motivate them ...'* (VR p.6 line 175), *'I need to assist them in whatever makes them happy. Aspirations is happy, whatever job he is happy, dreams he is happy, then I am happy, happy ...'* (VR p.6 lines 176–178), *'so as a football team, we are still comfortable when they go to play soccer, you know that they are somewhere and we know that they are with someone who is keeping them safe'* (VR p.10 lines 301–303), *'... and later Shumbashaba because actually they are gonna help us through lot of things ...'* (VR p.13 lines 369–370), *'so you yourself must encourage yourself to do what you want to be tomorrow'* (VR p.29 lines 210–211). A definite theme of hope and optimism towards the attainment of future goals and dreams stands out from these reflections.

Furthermore, a positive emotional statement that refers to the **past** in which a grandmother showed **gratitude** and **appreciation** for what has passed was evident in her reflection of the positive contribution that Shumbashaba made to her granddaughter's life: *'... since I came with Lebo\* I find that things have changed'* (VR p.11 lines 319–320).

Photographs PD 2 and PD 3 are examples of positive emotions experienced by two male participants. From an observational point of view (deducted from the photo data), it appeared that there was an overall sense of happiness, cheer and optimism amongst the participating families.



Photograph PD 2



Photograph PD 3

### 3.2.2 Theme 2: Engagement (E)

Csikszentmihalyi (1990), as cited in Butler and Kern, (2016), describes engagement as concentration, absorption and focus in a specific activity where one or more character strength is utilised to promote the ‘flow’ experience. It involves active participation and/ or involvement in an organisation or sport, for example (Seligman, 2013). Deci and Ryan (1985) refer to intrinsic motivation, which is engagement in an activity for the satisfaction and pleasure of the activity itself, as being associated with the most positive human outcomes and experiences. Phrases suggesting involvement in **(i) soccer or football** and the **Arsenal Football Club** were identified several times throughout the data. Examples of this include: *‘Play for Arsenal ...’* (VR p.7 line 197), *‘you are now allowed to give kids the ball, the football. So I have taken the kids for the football’* (VR p.11 lines 320–322), *‘... he is playing soccer ...’* (VR p.12 line 364), *‘... from football ...’* (VR p.13 line 390), *‘... and soccer player.’* (VR p.22 line 648). Involvement in soccer/football is an important source of engagement for the participating families – especially for the children. It provides parents with a sense of comfort and peace of mind that their children are constructively being kept busy and out of harm’s way when they are under supervision at soccer practice. Furthermore, engagement with soccer creates hope for the possibility of future achievement within the sport.

Another area of engagement includes **(ii) church engagement**: *‘the first thing, I take my son to church. I think the church is an umbrella for every sort of life you can come across. You can encounter problems, you can help people, but all those things eh ... in church when we preach there are some chapters where Jesus was teaching or where he was helping people’* (VR p.21 lines 626–630). Engagement with church activities is a strong theme that characterises community engagement in Diepsloot. Church is viewed as both a place where divine guidance can be received and where members of the community can feel unified in supporting one another and pursuing a common goal (helping others). Diener et. al. (2010) state that church engagement can provide people with a support structure where the purpose and meaning of life can be further explored. Some of the beliefs, values and practices involved in church engagement also have significant parallels with the promotion of health and wellbeing of communities (Ayton, Carey, Keleher & Smith, 2012).

Furthermore, **(iii) school attendance** is viewed as an important engagement activity, as illustrated by the following statement: *'so I am inviting those school boys and girls to concentrate at school because the difference comes from both sides. From football and from education. If they learn more at education they will be themselves'* (VR p.13 lines 387–391). Purdie and Buckley (2010) mention that school engagement affects the life chances of individuals. It improves employment opportunities, promotes participation in societal activities and is associated with higher income. The data show that education is overall highly valued in this community and viewed as an important building block to personal and community development.

Engagement in **(iv) community-building initiatives** is another theme that emerged from the data, as was illustrated by the following statements: *'I regard myself as a community builder and if maybe there were awards I'd be awarded for the best community builder in the community. That is what I regard myself as'* (VR p.3 lines 76–79), and *'I think partnering with stakeholders who are doing great things within the communities, then we build, we change the life or the lifestyle of the community of Diepsloot'* (VR p.4 lines 115–118). Hopkins, Thomas, Meredyth, and Ewing (2004) are of the opinion that there is a strong link between community involvement in community- building initiatives and positive health and wellbeing outcomes. Statements such as the aforementioned example illustrate that the community displays the willingness and motivation to engage with volunteering initiatives to improve community life in Diepsloot.

A further source of engagement that could be identified in the data was **(v) work engagement** characterised by a desire to support and help others, as was illustrated by the following statement: *'because what I realise at the hospitals, they, people are falling on ... queues suffering; some of them, they've got sugar diabetes which are not allowed to stand for a long time without eating something. Me also working with these people and community as well, so it's what I want him in life, so he must ... the people'* [all sic] (VR p.21 lines 618–623). This statement was made by a parent who explained that he works at a hospital where he sees people faint in the queues due to diabetes. He goes on to explain his involvement in supporting these people and the hope he has for his son to also help people one day. Engaged employees are viewed as individuals with a sense of

energetic and effective connection within their work activities who may display vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli, Taris, & Van Rhenen, 2008). Absorption is what has been referred to as 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), or a short-lived peak experience.

Of the 24 character strengths, 18 could be identified in the secondary data, of which **kindness/altruism**, **hope/optimism** and **gratitude** were the strongest identified themes. In the section to follow, each of the 18 identified character strengths will be elaborated on as they emerged from the data. The character strengths will be reported on in order of ascension with the strongest identified strengths first to the least common identified ones last.

### 3.2.2.1 Kindness/Altruism

The character strength of altruism, which translates from the French phrase *'le bien d'autrui'* meaning 'for the good of others' (Habito & Inaba, 2006), was reflected in the data through the willingness to do favours and good deeds for others, as well as being helpful and caring. Kind emotions and helpful behaviour are associated with health, longevity and wellbeing (Post, 2005). A strong sense of intergenerational care and kindness was evident in the data, such as in the following: *'so that we can help our parents when they are old and do some stuff so our parents ... have a better life'* (VR p.12 lines 353–355). Whether it be caring for parents, children or extended family, there is a sense of overall concern within the community for others and a willingness to find ways to support and help those who are in need.

One of the statements that I enjoyed the most from the data that reflects pure kindness was when a boy offered to fix his friend's car, saying: *'uh maybe, ne, if you don't have money to fix your car, I will come to you; just phone, just text me phone me or WhatsApp me. I will go to you and fix your car'* (VR p.23 lines 19–22). This provides evidence that kindness as a value is nurtured from a young age within this community. No reference is made to a need for monetary compensation in return for helping others, which emphasises authentic altruism.

Career dreams and choices are also based on caring for and supporting of others through the expression of kindness. Examples the children used to explain their dreams for future

career choices all included careers in which the lives of others could be enhanced. Some of these examples are: *'Doctor is more of helping issues, like even though a doctor earns like most 90 to 100 thousand, so with that money I can manage to support other people who are struggling and give them like ... uh ... food. Those kinds of things, ja'* (VR p.23 lines 27–30), *'I also want to be a teacher. I would like to help kids, street kids, so they can learn something and have a better life'* (VR p.24 lines 34–35), and *'I want to be a teacher and my role model is our deputy principal of our school because there's maybe I think 20 to 25 children who don't pay school fees at school because their parents are poor and he helps them. He helps them to get a brighter future. That their parents want for them'* (VR p.24 lines 50–55). The willingness to share money, knowledge and resources for the betterment of others is a strong theme that emerged from the data.

According to Pflug (2009), one of the most important characteristics of collectivistic societies such as South Africa is its concern for others. Although few studies have been conducted on volunteering in less wealthy countries, De Wet et al. (2008) found that many residents in Diepsloot prioritise volunteering initiatives and initiatives to improve the community. According to Parboteeah, Cullen, and Lim (2004), volunteering is an important contributor to adding meaning in one's life and is a key reflection of an individual or community's altruistic nature. The broader literature defines it as giving freely of one's time, goods and services for the benefit of others without the expectation of receiving anything in return (Smith as cited in Parboteeah, Cullen, & Lim, 2004). This is also part of the Diepsloot community's social make-up and is reflected through involvement with the Diepsloot football club and community-building initiatives. Evidence of informal volunteering, caring and helping is a prevalent theme. Dageid and Grønlie (2015) refer to the strength of altruism and the volunteering initiative as a significant contributor to social capital and community wellbeing. The desire to help and support others, to uplift people who are less fortunate and to find ways to make the lives of those within the micro- and meso-context better is a striking theme within this community.

### **3.2.2.2 Hope/Optimism**

Hope and optimism refer to the strength and the will or agency to expect the best outcomes for the future and to work towards finding a way to achieve these (Cotton Bronk,

Hill, Lapsley, Talib, & Finch, 2009; Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Seligman (2006) mentions that hope and optimism begets resilience and that it serves as a driver for people in difficult situations to 'bounce back'. The theme of optimism was remarkably well represented throughout the data, as it was displayed through positive emotions aimed towards the future (in the form of hope, interest and excitement), and was also identified as the second strongest character strength that emerged from the data.

The character strength of hope that resides amongst the participants is illustrated in the following statement made by a young boy: *'wishes and dreams can be achieved where there is hope'* (VR p.22 line 636). The community's optimism that there will be positive change in the future and that there are opportunities for growth and improvement in the community is a strong theme. *'If we meet different people who do different things, great things like within our community, we'll make changes even though it can't be done today but tomorrow and that's what we want'* (VR p.4 lines 118–122). Hope is also nurtured within an environment where the community has a collectivistic view of change in the sense that in working together, there is hope. Hope for the attainment of goals and dreams such as obtaining an education, having the finances to study, excelling on the soccer field, experiencing success and having dreams realised stood out from the data. Furthermore, hope was not directed towards only the attainment of personal goals, but parents also displayed hope on behalf of their children – hope for their children's dreams to be realised. *'I want him to be a soccer star like Maradona. I wish that if he play well at Arsenal Diepsloot after some years he can play for the big teams like Chelsea or Orlando Pirates and after that if God guides him, he will be a coach of the national team'* (VR p.19 lines 564–568), *'reach higher education and become like other people we see got higher education who have been to university'* (VR p.11 lines 312–314), *'have a player from this Diepsloot field playing for the big teams and show that Diepsloot is growing'* (VR p.13 lines 394–395), *'... if you are busy don't worry maybe something will happen, or maybe you will get a scholarship or maybe something like that'* (VR p.29 lines 218–220), *'wishes and dreams can be achieved where there is hope'* (VR p.22 line 636), *'... you must have hope first, you are going to succeed'* (VR p.31 line 262). From these examples, it is evident that despite resource constraints, adversity and various contextual barriers, hope still reigns in this community.

As mentioned before, a surprising characteristic of South African quality of life trends has been the significant level of hope and optimism that exists amongst a vast population who live in abject life circumstances (Mahajan, 2014; Møller, 2007; Pfigu, 2014 Richards et al., 2007). Møller (2007) and Pflug (2009) have found that despite having great discontent with current life circumstances, South Africans tend to have hopeful expectations for improved future circumstances and daily live with hope in their hearts (Mahajan, 2014). Even within unsafe and crime-ridden communities, which are a reality for many South African neighbourhoods, Michalos and Zumbo in Roberts (2012) found that fear and the experiences of crime account for only 10% of the variation in subjective wellbeing amongst South Africans, which points to the strong sense of resiliency and resolve that characterises South African civilian life. The high prevalence for the character strength of hope within the Diepsloot community might also explain why results from livelihood and wellbeing studies in Diepsloot have indicated a relatively high incidence of mental wellbeing amongst its residents (Mahajan, 2014; Møller, 2007; Richards et al., 2007).

### **3.2.2.3 Gratitude**

As mentioned before, gratitude is having a disposition towards feeling thankful (Hasemeyer, 2013) and taking time to express thanks (Park et al., 2004; Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010). Peterson and Seligman (2004) define gratitude as: 'a sense of thankfulness and joy in response to receiving a gift, whether the gift be a tangible benefit from a specific other or a moment of peaceful bliss evoked by natural beauty' (p.554). From the research results, gratitude could be clearly identified as a prevalent emotional state (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000) and character strength amongst the families. A strong sense of gratitude towards the community's available resources and the positive contribution of stakeholders within the community emerged from the data. Gratitude, especially for Shumbashaba Community Trust and the Arsenal Football Club for the safety and stability it provides, was expressed by the participants in statements like: *'I'm very happy for that because it keeps them away from the streets. I like it, therefore Shumbashaba is really very nice'* (VR p.12 lines 341–342), *'So as a football team we are still comfortable when they go to play soccer, you know that they are somewhere and we know that they are with someone who is keeping them safe'* (VR p.10 lines 301–302),

*'...so Sizwe [soccer coach] is only taking care of them so that you know if you arrive, she is safe so and when he comes back he's tired. He's gonna take a bath and go to bed and you know that when he is not around he is playing soccer'* (VR p.12 lines 361–364), *'I am very happy for what is happening between Ngoako [soccer coach] and Shumbashaba'* (VR p.12 lines 347–348), and *'so I'm happy to be here'* (VR p.6 line 170). Parental gratitude for their children's safety was therefore an emerging theme.

In a study on South African xenophobic attack survivors conducted by Vromans, Schweitzer, Knoetze, and Kagee (2011), gratitude as a strength was still surprisingly evident amongst individuals who went through significant trauma and adversity. A sincere sense of gratitude seems to run within the veins of the participating families. Gratitude is a basic and essential emotion which promotes social harmony and stability (Peterson & Park, 2004). Furthermore, McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang (2002) mention that gratitude begets higher positive mood, life satisfaction, optimism, religiousness and vitality and leads to people displaying more altruistic behaviour.

#### **3.2.2.4 Love of learning**

The desire to master new skills and to acquire knowledge is an essential requirement for individuals wanting to feel fulfilled and happy (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). Love of learning is defined by the desire to interact competently and acquire knowledge; it involves self-regulation to persevere (Avey, Luthans, Hannah, Sweetman, & Peterson, 2012), even in the face of material constraints and obstacles (Rashid & Anjum, 2005). It was striking to see how strong the desire for education is amongst the adults and parents. Many of these adults were never afforded the opportunity to pursue education, mostly due to being oppressed and disadvantaged by apartheid and poverty. *'I didn't go far with education because of poverty, but as I grow I saw that education is key of life ...'* (VR p.20 lines 588–590). Parents also place a very high value on education for their children: *'she says we all want our children to have higher education ...'* (VR p.10 lines 305–306), *'... reach higher education and become like other people we see got higher education. Who have been to university'* (VR p.11 lines 312–314). *'I didn't go far with education because of poverty, but as I grow I saw that education is key of life ...'* (VR p.20 lines 588–590). Perseverance and motivation for learning was another strength that was identified in the



data, especially on the part of the parents. Parents place significant emphasis on the importance of making sure their children push through and learn at school despite the experienced barriers and challenges: *'We can see that in Diepsloot life is very tough, but anyway we see through that our children need to learn'* (VR p.10 lines 308–309), and *'so I am inviting those school boys and girls to concentrate at school because the difference comes from both sides. From football and from education. If they learn more at education they will be themselves'* (VR p.13 lines 387–391).

### **3.2.2.5 Perspective**

*Perspective* as a strength, also referred to as 'wisdom', involves the provision of advice and counsel to others. It is a view that makes sense to the self and to others (Park & Peterson, 2009). Evidence of divergent or flexible thinking to be open to multiple suggestions and solutions to problems was evident, which is seen as an essential characteristic of wisdom (Rashid & Anjum, 2005). Perspective is based on one's prior knowledge and experience and is actively constructed and reconstructed through interaction with the environment (Ackerman, 1996). Perspective on the relevance and importance of parental discipline and guidance as well as having healthy friendships was reflected by a child participant in the following statement: *'and I think that you choose you are good or bad so that we don't be like those [problem children] and even if our parents shouted at us we think that they don't want us to play with our friends but they are trying to help us to get out of those [unhealthy friendships] ... they help us to be positive'* (VR p.13 lines 380–384).

Individuals with perspective are aware of their own challenges and strengths, contemplate the meaning of life and realise the necessity of making societal contributions (Rashid & Anjum, 2005). This strength was well represented amongst the families – especially amongst the adults who displayed a strong inclination towards guiding and counselling the youngsters around them, as well as perspective on the importance of participation in football and education and its vital role in assisting with the development of identity in: *'... so I am inviting those school boys and girls to concentrate at school because the difference comes from both sides. From football and from education. If they learn more at education, they will be themselves'* (VR p.13 lines 387–391).

Furthermore, perspective on making compromises within the family to allow the family to be effective as a unit is indicated in: *'it shows that in life you must compromise, and they were compromising, the thing that we said to them they don't like it. It's about a family; you must compromise'* (VR p.17 lines 510–512). Wise counsel and parental guidance to their children on making good choices is a theme that came from the data on several occasions. Families displayed open-mindedness in fostering the opportunity to gain insight and input from others: *'so I teach him ... uh ... about life at home and teach him about life at school; I just go with him at the shebeens and saw those people who are now damaged, who don't know how to work, don't have where to sleep, don't have where he can. I tell him that you see these people, it's people like you but as they grow they didn't understand their parents. They didn't understand their teachers and now today they are suffering. If you don't understand me as your parent and your teacher, you will suffer like them. So, I can teach him like that as it goes'* (VR p.20 lines 590–599).

### **3.2.2.6 Leadership**

The ability to mobilise organisations and communities to focus on aspects that the leader views as significant is the definition of leadership and it has three functions, namely decisional, organisational and interpersonal functions (Cyert, 1990). Taking the lead in community-building initiatives and taking responsibility, delegating and organising these initiatives was a theme that emerged from participant reflections: *'I regard myself as a community builder and maybe if there were awards I'd be awarded for the best community builder in the community. That is what I regard myself as'* (VR p.3 lines 76–79), *'I can take it there, I can divide it in the department, the department of ... and the department of ... and each department ...'* (VR p.18 lines 519–521). Furthermore, the value of being a leader with integrity, leading by example and being aware of the fact that good leadership is necessary in order to guide younger generations was indicated by the participants: *'... your child is led by your steps. If you do wrong, your child will do wrong and if you do right your child will do right'* (VR p.26 lines 105–106); *'it means that if you are a leader, you lead someone with examples'* (VR 26 lines 116–117).

### 3.2.2.7 Open-mindedness

The ability to make decisions based on being open to any available information that might potentially inform one's decision is the definition of open-mindedness (Fujita, Gollwitzer, & Oettingen, 2007). The willingness to compromise and make adaptations against personal convictions and personal opinions in order to enhance family functioning was reflected by the participants: *'it shows that in life you must compromise, and they were compromising, the thing that we said to them they don't like it. It's about a family; you must compromise'* (VR p.17 lines 510–512). The open-mindedness to acknowledge one's own mistakes and to make adaptations in rectifying those mistakes was also evident from a participant's reflections: *'you see if we do something wrong we say this is wrong, do it the right way, then he can understand that'* (VR p.22 lines 639–640). Open-mindedness on the part of parents – specifically the father figures towards acknowledging the voices of their children in influencing family decisions – was a value that emerged from the data. A willingness to adhere to and listen to all members of the family in making important decisions was reflected: *'you mustn't say I am a father, I make all the decisions. Even a child can lead you and say: "Daddy and mommy, you are wrong. 1 2 3 will be right, let's take this direction." Don't say, "well I am a father, I'm putting the bread on the table. I must not say anything is final." Even the horse can lead us'* (VR p.27 lines 142–147), and *'... show us that when you are a father at home, don't act like a dictator. You must communicate with your family'* (VR p.28 lines 183–184).

### 3.2.2.8 Intimacy/Love

A strong sense of togetherness, dependency and reciprocal care towards one another within the community emerged from the data. The theme of *ubuntu* ('I am, because we are'), which is a well-known (South) African principle (Lutz, 2009) – especially within collectivistic cultures – is well represented throughout: *'and the family can direct the family and they are forced to direct themselves. Two together, the road is one'* (VR p.7 lines 207–209) *'... I am here to learn more about the horses and to learn about how to respect your elders and how to share ubuntu'* (VR p.8 lines 233–235), *'it means that as a family from zero to ten per cent we work together till the end'* (VR p.28 lines 161–163), *'I think us working together we can learn more than to work alone'* (VR p.29 lines 203–204). Love

as a value is central to the community and presented in the desire of the community members to do good deeds for one another, to support one another and a desire to be together and take care of one another: *'you must also have love. Love also everybody. Like one to the other. Share love and spread the message even those who are attending churches they can even spread that in church where a group of people are there'* (VR p.31 lines 264–267).

### **3.2.2.9 Spirituality**

Spirituality is an integral part of human wellbeing as its practices and beliefs have been found to enhance the levels of meaning people attach to their lives, the people around them and the decisions that they make (Eckersley, 2007). Belief and trust in the church community for providing spiritual guidance and creating a platform to support and include people within the community is a strong value. Belief in God's teachings and the desire to live out those teachings is evident from the data: *'I'll take him to church to pray so God can guide him'* (VR p.20 lines 577–578) and *'the first thing I take my son to church. I think the church is an umbrella for every sort of life you can come across. You can encounter problems you can help people, but all those things eh ... in church when we preach there are some chapters where Jesus was teaching or where he was helping people'* (VR p.21 lines 626–630).

### **3.2.2.10 Citizenship**

In the most general terms, citizenship is defined by a relationship between an individual and the state. It implies membership to a community that is internally defined by rights, participation, duties and identity (Delanty, 1997). A strong sense of teamwork and partnership in the collective pursuit of social solutions and improving the community emerged from the data. The value of appreciating the valuable contributions of all stakeholders and role-players within the community is clear. *'I think partnering with stakeholders who are doing great things within the communities, then we build, we change the life or the lifestyle of the community of Diepsloot'* (VR p.4 lines 115–118). An example of this strength was reflected through a grandfather's vision to solve the drug (Nyaope) problem in the community. He voiced his ideas of mobilising the community by

getting various parties involved and dividing the volunteers into departments to join him in drawing up a petition to take to the government. *'Every committee must go together. Churches, teachers, schools, soccer players must go together, stay together and then spread the word to those people who are in ... and take the petition to the government ... these people work together...'* (VR p.18 lines 522–526). The value of relying on one another within the community for support and resources is another strong value that emerged. The value of going beyond self-interest and displaying goodwill to contribute to the betterment of others is indicative of this community's inclusive culture: *'... you see, sometimes help is like when I want to buy something then I can go to my neighbour and say can you borrow me some money; I need to buy something. And then someday you would say yes you can borrow it, I can give the money, but you need to tell me a day that you will bring the money back, you see?'* (VR p.10 lines 286–290).

#### **3.2.2.11 Humour**

A healthy sense of humour, which is both an emotional state and a personal value (Ford et. al., 2017), emerged from the data as the participants would often laugh and react humorously to seemingly ordinary circumstances and/or tasks. One male participant, for example, playfully referred to his wife as *'my first lady'* (VR p.6 line 168), which resulted in a burst of laughter from the rest of the participants. On another occasion, one participant reflected on his experience in the arena with the horses and said that the horses reacted in a certain manner because they could sense that he was not a horse. He recounted his experience in a humorous manner that again led to laughter from the rest of the participants: *'but they can see that I am not a horse...'* (VR p.15 lines 447–448).

#### **3.2.2.12 Bravery**

Bravery is referred to as the ability to confront fear, pain or discomfort boldly and courageously (Kinsella, Richie, & Igou, 2017). Many of the participants posed bravery as a strength, as they do not give up even though they daily face adversity and hardships. The will to still pursue one's dreams and stay motivated to reach goals (such as obtaining education) is a very clear example that bravery is a value within this community: *'we can*

*see that in Diepsloot life is very tough, but anyway we see through that our children need to learn*' (VR p.10 lines 308–309). Taking part in the EAP programme took bravery and courage from the participants as many of the families had to face new and unknown challenges (such as working with horses): *'then you are fine, ne, nothing to be afraid of'* (VR p.5 lines 129–130). It took bravery to walk into the arena and face their fears.

### **3.2.2.13 Curiosity**

Curiosity is defined as taking a keen interest in an ongoing experience, as well as the desire for exploration and discovery (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). There is a link between curiosity and a betterment in physical health and improved social relations amongst people (Ivtzan, Gardner, & Smailova, 2011). The curiosity to learn new things and to be open to new experiences, such as working with horses, emerged from the data: *'I'd like to learn a lot about horses, because I never learned about horses'* (VR p.5 lines 150–151), and *'much more to learn how the horses see us, how they eat and how they walk...'* (VR p.6 lines 164–165).

### **3.2.2.14 Perseverance**

The persistence to go on and pursue goals and dreams and staying on the task despite challenges and obstacles (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) was a value that could be identified in the data. Especially with regard to obtaining an education, there seems to be a strong drive to overcome multiple barriers in pursuit of this goal: *'we can see that in Diepsloot life is very tough, but anyway we see through that our children need to learn'* (VR p.10 lines 308–309), and *'I think it means expect and expected because in life you've got many circumstances. Sometimes you get that maybe you don't have shoes to go to work, because I don't have school shoes, other kids have'* (VR p.29 lines 221–225).

### **3.2.2.15 Integrity/Authenticity**

Leading by example as an authentic and transparent individual who takes responsibility for own thoughts and actions (Seligman, 2010) is an important strength that was reflected. Being authentic and acting with integrity amid living within significant resource-constrained bounds is remarkable: *'... your child is led by your steps. If you do wrong, your child will do wrong and if you do right, your child will do right'* (VR p.26 lines 105–

106), and *'it means that if you are a leader, you lead someone with examples'* (VR p.26 lines 116–117).

### **3.2.2.16 Self-regulation**

Self-regulation is the value of controlling and regulating one's own feelings and thoughts even though one feels uncomfortable or frustrated (Seligman, 2010). Self-regulatory behaviour with regard to parental constraints and/or discipline is a value that emerged from the reflection of a child in the community: *'and I think that you choose you are good or bad so that we don't be like those and even if our parents shouted at us we think that they don't want us to play with our friends but they are trying to help us ... they help us to be positive'* (VR p.13 lines 380–384).

### **3.2.2.17 Social intelligence**

An empathetic understanding of the feelings and needs of others (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) is reflected in the example of one participant's comment. He referred to the horse to explain the principle of social intelligence in the form of reading social cues within the family environment: *'... so we have to listen to each other and if it wanted to eat we gave it a chance to eat'* (VR p.26 lines 122–123).

### **3.2.2.18 Appreciation of beauty and excellence**

A healthy self-image and an appreciation for personal strengths, skills and accomplishments (Seligman, 2010) is reflected by this participant: *'I regard myself as a community builder and maybe if there were awards I'd be awarded for the best community builder in the community. That is what I regard myself as'* (VR p.3 lines 76–79).

## **3.2.3 Theme 3: Relationships (R)**

Relationships amongst people are enduring and consequential for wellbeing across the course of life (Thomas, Liu, Umberson, & Suiitor, 2017). Family relationships, relationships between parents and children, relationships with elders, relationships within the community and relationships with relevant stakeholders were identified as important contributors to wellbeing within the data. A strong sense of identity and satisfaction comes

from these relationships – especially from the experience of unity and harmony within and amongst families – as well as from intergenerational bonds between parents and their children. An overall sense of support, care and respect characterises these relationships.

The importance of **positive family relationships** and unity through cooperation was a recurring theme throughout the data. Comments to this effect included: *‘... if you are a family you must be together’* (VR p.27 lines 141–142), *‘it shows that I’m part of the family and if we work together, we win’* (VR p.27 lines 149-150), *‘it means that as a family from zero to ten per cent, we work together till the end’* (VR p.28 lines 161–163), and *‘I think us working together we can learn more than to work alone’* (VR p.29 lines 203–204). Solving problems and maintaining good relationships through communication was also mentioned: *‘talk, have sit down and talk with your son or your, my wife’* (VR p.19 lines 544–545), *‘you as a family also you can solve your own problems’* (VR p.19 line 550). A very strong emphasis was placed on ‘togetherness’ as a family and almost no reference was made to selfish pursuits or individual endeavours in achieving success without the inclusion of others. Thomas et al. (2017) state that family relationships provide a greater sense of meaning and purpose, as well as tangible resources that benefit wellbeing.

For many parents, the **relationship with their children** together with the quality of these relationships strengthened by open communication and respect is highly valued. Literature indicates that the quality of intergenerational relationships is an important contributor to the wellbeing of both generations (Thomas et al., 2017). *‘Don’t say ah my son is playing, he doesn’t listen. You have to talk to her [or] him...’* (VR p.26 lines 101–103), and *‘on Sunday I’ll take him to church to pray so God can guide him and if he is grew up I want him to show respect to all the teachers and his parents because uh education comes from home ... . If he can’t respect at home even at school they cannot ...’* (VR p.20 lines 576–580).

Parents also regard time and resources spent in caring for and supporting their children as a priority worthy of pursuit. As two parents mentioned: *‘I encourage him, I can buy some footballs at home. If he is reading, there some books of education, reading for so long hours or two hours. I just relax him to take on the ground and play football like ...’*



(VR p.20 lines 573–576), and *'I bought some pianos and trumpets and bass guitar also, he's busy singing at home. It's nice'* (VR p.21 lines 605–606).

Another important characteristic of the relationship between the parents and their children was that the parents seemed to draw a sense of personal identity and purpose from the hopes, dreams and aspirations of their children. Some parents even mentioned that they lived out their own unrealised dreams through the lives of their children: *'for the young ones. I wanted to be somebody and someone because of that, but I didn't so I am concentrating on my children'* (VR p.6 lines 173–175). Another's wellbeing was directly linked to the wellbeing and success of their children: *'so I know they got some dreams and I need to motivate them then and whatever is needed I need to assist them in whatever makes them happy, aspirations is happy, whatever job he is happy, dreams he is happy, then I am happy'* (VR p.6 lines 175–178). It was clear that parents felt proud and hopeful for the successes and achievements of their children: *'I want him to be a soccer star like Maradona. I wish that if he played well at Arsenal Diepsloot after some years he can play for the big teams like Chelsea or Orlando Pirates and after that if God guides him, he will be a coach of the national team.'*

Furthermore, there also seemed to be a sense of appreciation and concern from the **children towards their parents**: *'so that we can help our parents when they are old and do some stuff so our parents ... so they have a better life'* (VR p.12 lines 353–355), *'...so that we don't be like those and even if our parents shouted at us we think they don't want us to play with our friends but they are trying to help us ... they help us to be positive'* (VR p.13 lines 381–384). Overall, it is evident that the relationships between the parents and children most definitely contributed to wellbeing within the community.

Other positive relationships characterised by care and support were those **within the community** and between the community and **relevant stakeholders**. Neighbour relations where there is trust and support is emphasised in comments such as: *'...you see sometimes help is like when I want to buy something then I can go to my neighbour and say can you borrow me some money, I need to buy something. And then someday you would say yes you can borrow it. I can give you the money but you need to tell me a day that you will bring the money back'* (VR p.10 lines 286–290). Collaborative problem-

solving and the sharing of ideas amongst community members in overcoming obstacles is seen in: *'... people have different ideas ... different thoughts ... different plans ... but in together sharing also so that you can overcome some of the problems...'* (VR p.30 lines 242–243). These statements are all evident of trust and care between people in the community. Finally, the relationship between the community and stakeholders such as Shumbashaba, the Arsenal Football Club and the coach is viewed as being meaningful in their contribution to the overall wellbeing of the community: *'I think partnering with stakeholders who are doing great things within the communities'* (VR p.4 lines 115–116), *'I am very happy for what is happening between Ngoako [soccer coach] and Shumbashaba'* (VR p.12 lines 347–348), *'... Sizwe [soccer coach] is only taking care of them so that you know if you arrive she is safe so and when he comes back he's tired'* (VR p.12 lines 361–363) and *'Sizwe is the best coach I have ever met and later Shumbashaba because actually they gonna go help us through lot of things...'* (VR p.13 lines 369–371).

#### **3.2.4 Theme 4: Meaning (M)**

After a thorough analysis of the data, indices of meaning characterised by references to belief in a higher power (spirituality, religiosity, faith) and the use of values in service of a greater good, for example loving, caring and serving others, bringing hope, providing wise counsel and guidance or persevering in the face of adversity, were highlighted. The value of moving beyond a focus on the self, beyond one's own personal challenges, needs and comfort towards serving, caring and having a concern for others' needs was the strongest indicator that the families in Diepsloot live meaningful lives. This interpersonal strength, which was identified on a micro-level between family members, as well as on meso-level between community members, stood forth as a contributor to high levels of social capital within the community. From the data, it was clearly evident that a strong sense of altruism was the most distinct indicator of wellbeing amongst the participants. The value that was most identified in the data was humanity, followed by transcendence, wisdom and knowledge, justice and courage.

Comments reflecting **humanity** as a strong value contributing to meaning as a pathway to wellbeing include *'... you don't have money to fix your car. I will come to you, just phone,*

*just text me, phone me, or WhatsApp me. I will go to you and fix your car'* (VR p.23 lines 27–30), *'I also want to be a teacher. I would like to help kids, street kids so they can learn something and have a better life'* (VR p.24 lines 34–35), *'I want to be a teacher and my role model is our deputy principal of our school because there's maybe I think 20 to 25 children who don't pay school fees at school because their parents are poor and he helps them. He helps them to get a brighter future. That their parents want for them'* (VR p.24 lines 50–55), and *'help the poor people and sharing something like food, clothes when someone does not have enough and sharing some clothes with everybody'* (VR p.30 lines 250–253). Reis and Gable in Forgeard et al. (2011) confirmed that one of the most recognised determinants of wellbeing is social support, and the belief that one is cared for, loved and esteemed. Literature confirms that neighbourhoods characterised by benevolence, care and support, which ultimately create trust amongst citizens, lead to flourishing communities. Studies by Mahajan (2014) and De Wet et al. (2008) indicate that there are high levels of trust amongst the Diepsloot residents, which goes to show that humanity is a core demonstrable value there.

Another value that contributed significantly to meaning as a pathway to wellbeing was **transcendence**, characterised by belief in a higher power reflected through spirituality, religiosity and faith. Christianity seemed to be the main religion practised amongst the participants, and phrases referring to faith in God and Jesus, seeking Godly guidance and attending church were numerous. Examples of the value of transcendence include: *'... and after that if God guides him, he will be a coach of the national team'* (VR p.19 lines 567–568), *'on Sunday I'll take him to church to pray so God can guide him...'* (VR p. 20 line 577), *'the first thing I take my son to church. I think the church is an umbrella for every sort of life you can come across. You can encounter problems you can help people, but all those things eh ... in church when we preach there are some chapters where Jesus was teaching or where he was helping people'* (VR p.21 lines 626–630), *'... you must also have love. Love also ... everybody. Like one to the other. Share love and spread the message even those who are attending churches they can even spread that in church where a group of people are there'* (VR p.31 lines 264–267). A strong sense of faith and community through a unified belief in God gives meaning to the lives of these families.

Transcendence creates meaning, belonging, relatedness and identity as well as structure through routines (Greeff & Loubser, 2008; Vromans, et al., 2011).

The broader literature confirms that there is a direct link between wellbeing and transcendence as it relates directly to life satisfaction, hope and resilience (Koenig, 2012). A strong sense of faith and community through a unified belief in God gives meaning to the lives of these families and, from the examples given, it is clear that the participants' belief in God provides hope for the future and support through adversity, and establishes unity, gratitude and love amongst people.

The value of **wisdom and knowledge** was furthermore a strong contributor to the meaning pathway to wellbeing reflected by the participants, with perspective and open-mindedness adding considerably to this value. The provision of wise counsel with the aim of contributing to society and helping others in their decision-making and action-taking process was a strong theme that emerged from the data. Examples of this include: *'but I am encouraging those guys that they must go away from drugs, smoking and drinking alcohol. They must concentrate at school and what is happening at the ground'* (VR p.13 lines 396–399), *'... I didn't go far with education because of poverty, but as I grow I saw that education is key of life so I teach him about life at home and teach him about life at school so I just go with him at the shebeens and saw those people who are now damaged who don't know how to work, don't have where to sleep, don't have where he can. I tell him that you see these people, it's people like you but as they grow they didn't understand their parents. They didn't understand their teachers and now today they are suffering. If you don't understand me as your parent and your teacher you will suffer like them. So, I can teach him like that as it goes'* (VR p.20 lines 588–599).

Indicators of wisdom displayed by parents and of being open to learn and change course of action to benefit the family were also displayed in: *'you mustn't say I am a father, I make all the decisions. Even a child can lead you and say: "Daddy and mommy you are wrong. 1 2 3 will be right, let's take this direction." Don't say well I am a father, I'm putting the bread on the table. I must not say anything is final. Even the horse can lead us'* (VR p.27 lines 142–147). The literature indicates that wisdom and knowledge have a strong influence on the sense of competency that people experience of themselves. Not only

does it help to make people feel competent, but it also helps to create social harmony through effective problem-solving (Brookfield, 1995). The wisdom to know that one can learn from others is a strong contributor to family wellbeing, and it was notable that parents are willing to learn from their children.

**Justice**, which is the civic value underlying healthy community life (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), characterised by citizenship, fairness and leadership, was evident in the reference to a trusting and supportive community life and neighbour relations. The generous and supportive nature of people within the community, which further contributes to meaning as a pathway to wellbeing, is displayed in this statement: *'... you see, sometimes help is like when I want to buy something, then I can go to my neighbour and say can you borrow me some money, I need to buy something. And then someday you would say yes you can borrow it. I can give you the money but you need to tell me a day that you will bring the money back ...'* (VR p.10 lines 286–290). Furthermore, the community's heart for building and taking initiative in improving the lives of the people in Diepsloot is well depicted through these statements: *'... then we build, we change the life or the lifestyle of the community of Diepsloot'* (VR p.4 lines 116–118), *'I can take it there, I can divide it in the department, the department of ... and the department of ... and each department... and every committee must go together. Churches, teachers, schools, soccer players must go together, stay together and then spread the word to those people who are in ... and take the petition to the government. These people work together ... problem of Nyaope is done and tell those people of the tavern to chase the ... under 18 or 20 they must not enter those places. It's whereby we can defeat the drug'* (VR p.18 lines 519–529).

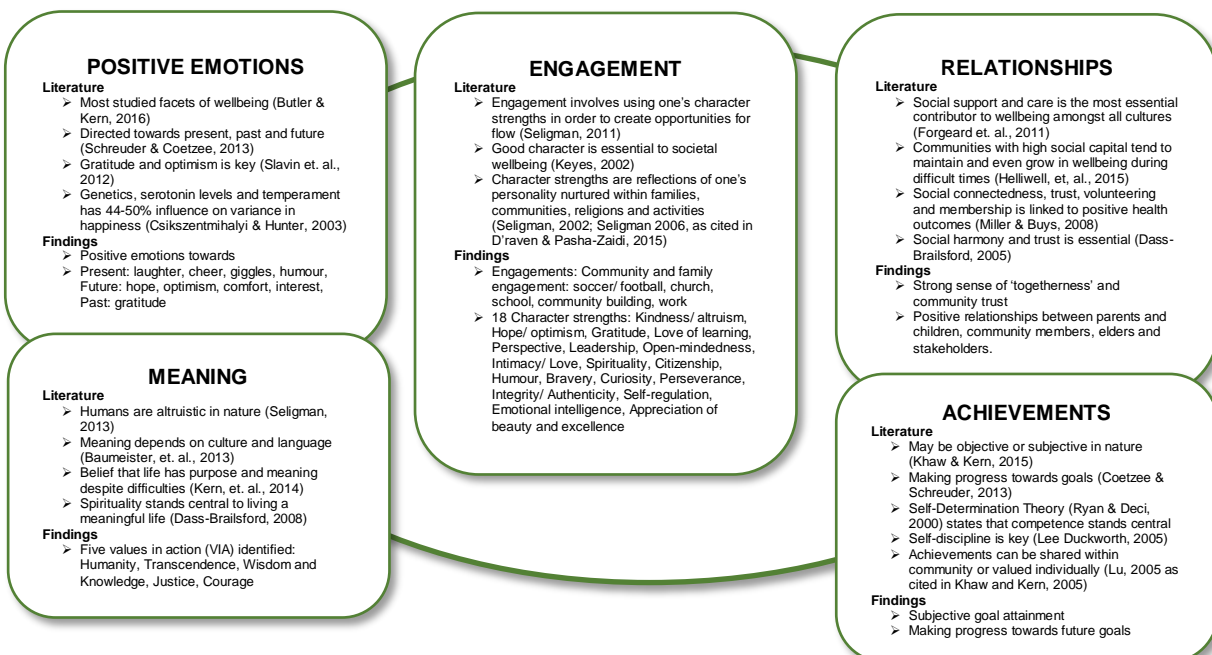
The emotional strength and will to achieve goals in the face of internal and external opposition is referred to as courage (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). A reference to the display of **courage** (especially characterised by perseverance and bravery) towards the greater good of others is captured in the following statement: *'we can see that in Diepsloot life is very tough, but, anyway, we see through that our children need to learn'* (VR p.10 lines 308–309). With this statement made by a parent, strength, valour and resilience are portrayed, which further add to a strong sense of meaning and straining towards a greater good in the lives of the families.

### 3.2.5 Theme 5: Achievement (A)

Achievement requires a sense of ambition and drive (Khaw & Kern, 2014). Within the data, this pathway to wellbeing was mostly depicted as **making progress towards the achievement of future goals** and all of them were **subjective** in nature. Examples of these include: ‘... then we build, we change the life or the lifestyle of the community of Diepsloot’ (VR p.4 lines 116–118), ‘We are leaving a better future. The children are educated. Everything is very smoothly.’ (VR p.29 lines 201–202), ‘It showing that goals can be achieved.’ (VR p.29 lines 213–214), ‘... I think it is possible to take some ideas here and then there at Diepsloot so that people can achieve more.’ (VR p.30 lines 245–247), ‘... you must have hope first if you are going to succeed.’ (VR p.31 line 262). An example of a participant experiencing a sense of achievement for his contributions in supporting and enhancing the community is very well depicted in this sentiment: ‘maybe if there were awards, maybe I’d be awarded for the best community builder in the community’ (VR p.3 lines 77–78). As illustrated in these examples, the families experience a sense of hope for making progress towards the achievement of future goals.

Table 3.1 is a visual illustration of the key findings from the deductive data analysis, as well as an overview of wellbeing literature.

**Table 3.1:** Overview of wellbeing literature and the findings of the study



### 3.3 RESEARCH RESULTS: INDUCTIVE ANALYSIS

With the inductive analysis process, additional and disconfirming themes to the PERMA model were identified in the data. Here, my knowledge of other wellbeing indicators as well as protective factors that have been brought to my attention through my review of wellbeing and resilience literature guided the analysis process. These additional themes include favourable contextual circumstances considered important for the experience of wellbeing, which most of the participating families evidently do not have. These factors are therefore identified as risk factors which threaten family wellbeing in this community. Wellbeing and resilience constructs such as self-esteem, flexibility, open communication, collaborative problem-solving and connectedness could also be identified as protective factors that support family resilience (Walsh, 2002).

#### 3.3.1 Risk factors

From the data, it is evident that the participating families experienced significant adversity and resource constraints within their community. Table 3.2 lists the various risk factors from a bioecological systems perspective that were identified in the data.

**Table 3.2:** Risk factors in Diepsloot from Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) bioecological systems perspective

MICROSYSTEM	MESOSYSTEM	EXOSYSTEM	MACROSYSTEM
Lack of finances	Lack of resources	Community safety	Unemployment
Poverty	Lack of income	Crime	Unsafe
Lack of safety	Drug and alcohol abuse	Lack of resources	environment
		Restricted access to education	

Themes of the various challenges that the families in this community face which threaten healthy family functioning as reflected by the families include: **(i) unemployment** (Cole, 2006): *‘I can say financial crisis is the main thing because most of the people in Diepsloot are not working. Most of them are not. They’ve got no income if there are maybe two in*

*the family maybe one is working and earning less, very less and it becomes a challenge*' (VR p.4 lines 103–107); **(ii) poverty/lack of finances** (Ferrer-i-Carbonell, 2005): *'... it becomes a challenge. Just living for food maybe they're working for food; like that is why most of them can't afford to pay school fees. Tertiary and other stuff, they can't because of that challenge'* (VR p.4 lines 109–111); **(iii) resource constraints** (Beeble, Bybee & Sullivan, 2010): *'... and maybe you don't have a cell phone or a laptop or a computer ...'* (VR p.13 lines 371–372), *'sometimes you get that maybe you don't have shoes to go to work, because I don't have school shoes other kids have'* (VR p.29 lines 221–225); **(iv) restricted access to education** (Cohen, 2006): *'She says we all want our children to have higher education, but then the purpose of money plays a part'*; **(v) lack of safety** (Chase, 2013): *'in Diepsloot we live a normal life, but there are some times when we have to think about our children, because ... we sometimes feel they are not safe enough'* (VR p.10 lines 298–301); **(vi) crime** (Lorenc et al., 2012): *'there is a very high risk of crime in Diepsloot. There are people who are killing kids...'* (VR p.12 lines 357–358); **(vii) drugs** (Teesson, Hall, Lynskey & Degenhardt, 2000): *'know that there is always people around who are selling drugs on the street ...'*.

What the aforementioned authors all agree on is that the various adversities pose as significant risk factors to family wellbeing. Research by Maslow (Maslow & Lewis, 1987), Pittman and Zeigler (2007), as well as Tay and Diener (2011) has indicated that wellbeing is largely dependent on the measure to which the basic needs of individuals and families are met. Contextual difficulties such as the aforementioned risk factors have an adverse effect on a family's overall health and functioning (Rutter, 1999). De Wet et al. (2008), Mahajan (2014) and Richards et al. (2007) have conducted studies in Diepsloot, and add that some of the major challenges that were indicated by the findings include a lack of safety at night, insufficient government support, distrust in township governance, poverty, a high percentage of uneducated citizens and unemployment, to name a few. A significant amount of family protective factors are consequently needed to support families in displaying resilience and resolve amid these difficulties.



### 3.3.2 Protective factors

Protective factors that could be identified as strengths against the experienced risks within the community are self-esteem, flexibility, open communication, collaborative problem-solving and connectedness. A healthy sense of **self-worth** (Fox, 2000) and **self-appreciation** (Avalos, Tylka, & Wood-Barcalow, 2005) for one's accomplishments and talents is regarded as an important wellbeing and resilience indicator. Holding a positive view of oneself is a central characteristic of positive psychological functioning. Reference to a participant's display of good self-esteem is illustrated by the following statement: *'I regard myself as a community builder and if maybe if there were awards, maybe I'd be awarded for the best community builder in the community'* (VR p.3 lines 76–78).

The ability to be **flexible** (Walsh, 2002) and to adapt one's views in order to be cooperative within a group or family setting is another strength which can be an indicator of wellbeing. The willingness of parents – and in this instance a father – to allow his son to take the lead is a beautiful example of flexibility. It is also a willingness to compromise or recalibrate relationships and family patterns (Walsh, 2003) to allow for the family to solve problems or overcome obstacles, as is displayed through the following statement: *'you mustn't say I am a father; I make all the decisions. Even a child can lead you and say: "Daddy and mommy, you are wrong. 1 2 3 will be right, let's take this direction." Don't say well I am a father, I'm putting the bread on the table. I must not say anything is final. Even the horse can lead us'* (VR p.27 lines 142–147). Another participant also displayed this with the following statement: *'It shows that in life you must compromise, and they were compromising, the thing that we said to them, they don't like it. It's about a family; you must compromise'* (VR p.17 lines 310–312).

The value of being **open to communicate** (Walsh, 2003) and to listen with the intent to understand is another value that was identified in the data. A strong sense of mutual respect that exists between family members was evident. According to Walsh (2003), clear and open communication fosters resilience by bringing clarity to crisis situations. One father expressed his desire to have an open communication channel with his son in the following statement: *'if you want your son to make a good team, you must teach him. So, he is going to do what you like. Don't say ah my son is playing, he doesn't listen. You*

*have to talk to her ... him ...* (VR p.26 lines 100–103). Other examples of statements made by the families that illustrate the importance they place on the clarity of communication are: *'... we have to listen to each other ...'* (VR p.26 line 122), *'I think we should communicate better together'* (VR p.30 line 234), *'you can talk to me, just cool down'* (VR p.18 line 540).

The family strength of **collaborative problem-solving** (Walsh, 2003) was identified in the data. The strength of finding creative solutions to family and/or community problems and taking initiative in applying those solutions is a very important family resilience factor and was reflected by two male participants: *'I can take it there, I can divide it in the department, the department of ... and the department of ... and each department ... and every committee must go together. Churches, teachers, schools, soccer players must go together, stay together and then spread the word to those people who are in ... and take the petition to the government ... these people work together ... problem of Nyaope is done'* (VR p.18 lines 519–527). Another father also made the comment: *'we have to get together even ... it's not only if you got problems that when one comes to talk to you ... you as a family also you can solve your own problems ...'* (VR p.19 lines 547–550).

The strength of **connectedness** (Koopman-Boyden, & Van der Pas, 2009) is closely related to positive relationships and refers to mutual support, collaboration and commitment to weather difficult situations together. Respect stands central to this strength and was illustrated by a young boy who expressed his desire to share *'ubuntu'* with others and to show respect to his elders. This is illustrated by the following statement: *'...and to learn more about how to respect your elders and how to share ubuntu with others'* (VR p.8 lines 234–235).

Other themes were identified through the inductive thematic analysis process but are also well represented by the PERMA model. These include respect, ambition, aspirations, self-responsibility, autonomy, compassion and vision.

(See Annexure VII for a comprehensive analysis of themes and line references.)

### **3.5 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, I reported on the findings obtained from both the deductive and inductive analysis processes of the secondary data sources and discussed relevant literature. In Chapter 4, I will answer the research question, discuss the limitations to the study and offer recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER 4

# RESPONDING TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS, POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I answer the primary research question and then the secondary questions, while integrating the research findings presented in Chapter 3 with the findings reported in existing literature. I then go on to discuss the possible contributions of this study, the limitations to the study in terms of the research design and the findings. I conclude with recommendations for possible future research.

### 4.2 ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

#### 4.2.1 Primary research question: How can insight into the wellbeing of families in a resource-constrained community contribute to the knowledge and understanding of family wellbeing in a South African peri-urban community?

The findings discussed in Chapter 3, indicated the following themes in relation to the wellbeing of families in a resource-constrained community:

- The identification and nurturing of strengths and resources within communities such as Diepsloot is important in ultimately supporting these communities to grow and develop and overcome obstacles. There is a dearth of literature that indicates that the overall wellbeing and life satisfaction of a country's population is directly linked to a country's growth and prosperity, as it bolsters longevity, creates good citizenship, helps to prioritise government goals and enhance overall productivity (Bok, 2010; Diener & Seligman, 2004). Studies similar to this one are therefore imperative.

- Studies by De Wet et al. (2008) and Mahajan (2014), found that there is a fairly high amount of neighbourhood trust in Diepsloot, as well as low incidence of mental health problems. Findings from these studies further indicate that its residents have reasonably high levels of hope, where a significant number of people take part in volunteering initiatives, engage in social and church groups and take part in initiatives to help those who are in need (De Wet et al., 2008; Mahajan, 2014; Richards et al., 2007).
- These findings, in conjunction with a number of South African wellbeing and resilience studies (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Helliwel et al., 2015; Møller, 2007; Pflug, 2009), portray South Africa to be one of the happiest countries on the African continent (Rothmann & Veenhoven, 2015). It is ranked number 78 on a list of 149 countries on the World Database of Happiness list, necessitating studies such as this one to shed light on this fascinating phenomenon.
- Conducting wellbeing studies in South African resource-constrained communities may help families in these communities identify their own strengths and inner resources and, in doing so, find pathways to living flourishing lives.
- Furthermore, to support the South African government in its quest to reduce the disparity between the richest of the rich and the poor, it is essential that we understand the inner workings of our poorest and fastest growing residential areas in South Africa.

#### **4.2.2 Secondary research question: What are the indicators of family wellbeing in terms of character strengths and virtues of families in a high-risk community?**

Despite all the significant experienced challenges and resource constraints within the Diepsloot community, the results from the secondary data analysis revealed that all the pathways from the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011) are represented in varying degrees throughout the data. This shows that there are conditions and opportunities for the Diepsloot families to live flourishing lives. Within the data, 18 character strengths and 6 virtues/values in action could be identified as indicators of wellbeing on a micro- (family) and meso- (community) level.

A summary of the three strongest values and the five strongest character strengths that go with each value is provided in Table 4.2 below.

**Table 4.2:** Values in action and character strengths in Diepsloot

VALUES IN ACTION (VIA)	CHARACTER STRENGTHS
1. Humanity	Kindness/Altruism
2. Transcendence	Hope/Optimism Gratitude
3. Wisdom and Knowledge	Love of learning Perspective

#### **4.2.3 Secondary research question: How do the indicators of family wellbeing support resilience in the micro-context of the family?**

Given the key findings that were discussed in Chapter 3, it can be concluded that there is a strong conceptual link between resilience and wellbeing, and some scholars argue that these are indeed two sides of the same coin (Mguni, Bacon, & Brown, 2012). Both wellbeing and resilience are multidimensional constructs with definite conceptual overlap. Resilience is characterised as a dynamic process which considers both the past and the future and is defined as a person’s ability to ‘bounce back’ or recover quickly after adversity is experienced (Zautra, Arewasikporn, & Davis, 2010). It requires of someone to be mentally tough and can be planned for, developed and practised (White, 2013). Literature suggests that people need both resilience and wellbeing to live full lives and that the one should not go without the other. Mak, Ng, and Wong (2011), refer to people with low wellbeing and high resilience as tough and dissatisfied, while people with high wellbeing and low resilience are satisfied, but vulnerable.

The Family Resilience Framework (Walsh, 2002 developed from systems-oriented family process research (Walsh, 2003) identifies key family processes that help families to overcome adversity. These key processes are belief systems, organisational patterns and

communication processes and each process requires the use of specific strengths to help families overcome the difficulties. Between the Family Resilience Framework and the PERMA model, there is definite conceptual overlap. With the Family Resilience Framework, the family strengths that form part of the 'belief system process' are indicated as positive outlook (in which hope and optimism stand central) and transcendence/spirituality in adversity. The 'organisational patterns' process involves flexibility, connectedness and emotional and economic resources and the 'communication process' involves collaborative problem-solving, clarity and open emotional expression.

One example to illustrate how resilience factors and wellbeing factors within the family system overlap is with the strength of optimism and hope. Mak, et al., (2011) explain that resilient people are often known to be determined, confident and self-efficacious individuals who thrive in situations of hardship. Resilient people believe they are worthy and, due to positive self-talk, they tend to display a good self-esteem. Literature shows that people with high self-esteem tend to show persistence in seeking out wellbeing promoting activities; they therefore see the world in a more positive light and display more hope and optimism.

Wellbeing indicators such as hope and optimism amongst families in high-risk environments can therefore also be indicative of a family's sense of resilience.

#### **4.2.4 Secondary research question: How do cultural factors support family wellbeing?**

Cultural and historical factors play a significant role when it comes to how families make meaning of their lives and define their own wellbeing. Not only does every family have their own internal family culture, but each family is also embedded within a broader cultural system, which influences the way life is lived and experienced. It is therefore essential to understand that wellbeing and culture have a very specific interplay with one another and that an understanding of cultural definitions of wellbeing is essential for the successful development of societies.

Within the South African context, many African communities such as Diepsloot are collectivistic in nature and caution should therefore be taken when individualistic notions of wellbeing are used to conceptualise family functioning within a community such as Diepsloot. An example of how wellbeing is culturally diverse in its conceptualisation comes from a study by D'raven and Pasha-Zaidi (2015), who found that individualistic cultures' definitions of wellbeing revolve around personal pleasure, as well as individual achievement and independence. Conversely, in collectivistic cultures, happiness is mostly centred around role fulfilment, interdependence and the fulfilment of social obligations. The results from the current study clearly depict that within Diepsloot, a collectivistic notion of wellbeing stands central to the way families make meaning of their lives. This relates to Pflug's (2009) description of how South Africans define wellbeing as a 'contemplative state' that relies strongly on contentment, close family bonds and social harmony.

According to Pflug (2009), another culturally specific characteristic of collectivistic societies is that they tend to have a dualistic view of wellbeing, which centres around the belief that unhappiness is a precondition for happiness and that persevering through heartaches and struggles is part of everyday life, where overcoming challenges and finding solutions to societal problems is part of the quest to living a full life. From the research results, the deduction is made that the Diepsloot community is generally oriented towards having a more dualistic view of wellbeing, where difficult circumstances, such as resource constraints, are therefore not automatically viewed in a fatalistic light. It is evident that certain families still manage to live hopeful and meaningful lives regardless of these challenges.

The role of understanding the cultural perspectives on wellbeing in the Diepsloot community therefore provides valuable insight into the family strengths, values and everyday functioning within this understudied community. Not only is an understanding of cultural definitions of wellbeing essential for the development of government policies, but it also guides healthcare practitioners and stakeholders to understand the communities and families within which they are involved and to adequately address the needs of these individuals.



### **4.3 POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY**

Through my extensive literature review of wellbeing literature and wellbeing studies on national and international level, it became apparent to me that there is a limited amount of studies on South African wellbeing, especially within resource-constrained contexts such as Diepsloot (Møller, 2007). The research results of the present study will contribute to the existing literature on wellbeing in South Africa and wellbeing studies in Diepsloot. The study may furthermore form part of a foundational start to conduct similar studies in comparable South African contexts.

The study makes a unique contribution to the application of the PERMA model in a resource-constrained community, providing a view of how the PERMA model might be valuable in providing a vision for using the strengths within this context to build an environment where families can flourish, regardless of facing contextual adversity (Seligman, 2011). It can further perhaps also be helpful in demonstrating which pathways from the PERMA model are the most essential to the community's wellbeing and also which pathways are underused and could be further built upon to obtain a full life. The findings from this study also add to an important body of knowledge within cultural and positive psychology, providing evidence that Seligman's Wellbeing Theory indeed holds relevance within the South African family context.

It is a further aim of this study to provide evidence of the applicability and relevance of the PERMA model within the South African context and especially so with regard to policy creation and social upliftment objectives in government. It is hoped that the results of the study will communicate that while money and social-economic status have some value with regard to wellbeing, these do not guarantee wellbeing in all contexts and factors. For instance, the character strengths of altruism and hope and optimism have shown to be a significant driving force behind the resiliency, resolve and flourishing of South African communities (Hagerty & Veenhoven, 2003; Møller, 2007).

### **4.4 LIMITATIONS**

The main limitation to the present study was the research design. Due to the fact that a secondary data analysis had been conducted, I did not have the opportunity to ask follow-

up questions or to gain more insight into the participants' reflections that were in the data, which limits the richness and depth of the data available to me for analysis (Hox & Boeije, 2005). Furthermore, because the primary research study was focused on answering another set of research questions and not specifically this study's questions, the secondary data could only be analysed in order to seek answers to my questions. This in itself poses a concern for possible over- or under-interpretation of data, as well as the concern of researcher bias (Heaton, 2003). The application of standards of rigour (especially triangulation and peer review) was therefore absolutely essential (Seale, 1999).

Another limitation to the present study was that the participating families' first language was not English, which placed a limitation on their ease of expression. This was a factor that I had to keep in mind while transcribing and analysing the data. Also, with the deductive thematic data analysis process, there were certain limitations that need to be mentioned. As there is conceptual and operational overlap between the different pathways of the PERMA model (Park, 2015), the task of exploring each pathway's individual contribution to flourishing was complicated, which allowed for the opportunity to misinterpret the data and results. To address this limitation, I did, however, make use of peer review to enhance the dependability of the findings (Seale, 1999).

The small sample size of this study is likely to impact the generalisability of the study and the findings and should therefore be kept in mind (Richie & Lewis, 2003). As only four families were part of the sample group, their realities cannot be generalised to the rest of the Diepsloot community's families. To address this limitation, I conducted an extensive literature review and made references to other studies similar to the current study in order to triangulate my results (Richie & Lewis, 2003). Another aspect that should be noted when interpreting the findings of this study is that all the participating families utilised the EAP family intervention programme and the Arsenal Football Club as resources to add quality to their lives. This might possibly contribute to a better quality of life for these families, which might not be true for other families in the community. To address this limitation, it would be a recommendation to include other samples from the community in future research so that variation can be achieved.

Although this study does not claim to be representative of the Diepsloot community or other communities within South Africa, it hopes to offer a promising beginning for future research.

## **4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of my study and the insight gained into the topic of family wellbeing within a resource-constrained community, I make the following recommendations.

### **4.5.1 Recommendations for future research**

#### **4.5.1.1 Further research on family wellbeing in resource-constrained communities in South Africa**

Due to the limited literature that exists on family wellbeing within South African resource-constrained communities, it is recommended that other studies be conducted to establish a full-bodied understanding of family wellbeing within resource-constrained communities.

#### **4.5.1.2 Adaptation and development of a validated PERMA measurement instrument**

I recommend that the PERMA model be applied in several South African contexts to validate its cross-cultural validity and to develop a reliable measurement instrument that can be used in South Africa.

#### **4.5.1.3 Explore effective family interventions**

I further recommend that family intervention programmes within resource-constrained communities be developed based on current wellbeing research. This is essential as it provides insight into knowing how to effectively support families and communities and to build on existing strengths and values.

## **4.5.2 Recommendations for training and practice**

### **4.5.2.1 Family wellbeing**

Healthcare practitioners should be made aware of the different wellbeing constructs that hold relevance to the South African context. This study reveals that cultural conceptualisations of wellbeing play a significant part in how life is approached and experienced by families.

### **4.5.2.2 Multidisciplinary approach**

The effective partnership between Shumbashaba Community Trust, the Arsenal Football Club and the University of Pretoria's Educational Psychology Department provides one example of how multidisciplinary partnerships can ultimately benefit a community. It is therefore a very important recommendation that professional partnerships be developed to support our high-risk communities such as Diepsloot.

## **4.6 CONCLUSION**

Seligman (2013) emphasises the importance of exploring wellbeing by stating that it should be a matter of national concern and that policy creation should be primarily focused on wellbeing promoting institutions. The findings of the study emphasise the value of exploring family strengths and resources to grow and develop under-resourced South African communities.

The study further showed that the PERMA model holds relevance for the South African context and that it is a valuable model to be used in the identification of family assets and strengths. As a researcher and educational psychologist in training, my hope is that this study will make a valuable contribution to the field of positive psychology within the South African context.

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## **Annexure I: Programme Planning**

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## **Annexure II: Example of Activity Planning**

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## Annexure III: Informed Consent Form

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## **Annexure IV: Permission programme planning**

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# Annexure V: Non-participatory Observational Notes

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## **Annexure VI: Data transcription and analysis**

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## **Annexure VII: Full data analysis themes and line references**

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