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Child Well-Being in Middle Childhood:

A Mixed Methods Cross-National Comparison

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Abstract

This mixed methods case study explores child well-being in middle childhood with the overarching goal of completing a strength-based, cross-national comparison. In order to develop an understanding of what child well-being means to local children aged between 9 to 11 years old, semi-structured interviews were held using an adjusted version of the interview guide developed by Fattore, Mason and Watson (2009). The main dynamic child well-being dimensions included relationships, emotional health and interests, with independent contributions from the themes of accomplishment, special events, safety, values and the environment. These findings respond to international requests for age-specific child well-being research (Dex & Hollingworth, 2012) and uniquely contribute to the national literature.

The limited cross-national research that includes New Zealand details our poor child well-being outcomes (Heshmati, Bajalan & Tausch, 2007). Using the Developmental Assets questionnaire, the current study identifies local children's well-being to be in the good range, although at the low end. This is comparable to the well-being levels reported in the American pilot sample (Scales, Fraher & Andress, 2011). With one third of participants in both samples reporting fair but vulnerable levels of well-being, similar room for improvement is purported.

The integration of the assets data and thematic data presents a rich and pragmatic picture of local child well-being in middle childhood. With the Education Review Office (ERO, 2013) requiring all schools to develop well-being initiatives by 2015, the current case study identifies the children's agenda and supports the design of 'complete' policies (Ben- Arieh, 2010).

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 The Child Well-Being Movement

Poor and inequitable child well-being outcomes are a fundamental ethical issue that unites multi-disciplinary researchers, practitioners and policy makers from across the world (Ben-Arieh, 2010; ERO, 2013; Scales, 2014). The child well-being movement, which has slowly developed over the last forty years, seeks to develop united frameworks which better support the health and well-being of all children and their families. The development of such a system, which promotes positive development for all, is the most likely pathway to effectively protect our most vulnerable children (Kahn, 2010).

Child well-being has been defined in many ways (McAuley & Rose, 2010). Although this increases ambiguity around the term, this flexibility is essential to it being able to reflect cultural variations in what constitutes a good life. Well-being is used interchangeably with the term health, defined by The World Health Organisation to include physical, mental, and social well-being (WHO, 1998). Within the New Zealand context, the definition of health also includes spiritual well-being (Durie, 1994). The term well-being is understood by the Greek philosophical constructs of hedonia (i.e., feeling good) and eudaimonia (i.e., doing well), Maslow's hierarchy of human needs (1954), the theory of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000) and the well-being model of loving, being and having *(*Allardt, 1993). These models, along the ecological, strength-based and child's rights principles of the child well-being movement, are described in more detail in Chapter Two.

There are two types of measurement pertaining to child well-being (Ben-Arieh, 2010). These include:

a) The child well-being indicator movement which provides objective measures, over time, of developmental components related to positive outcomes

b) Subjective well-being accounts which seek to understand child well-being from the children's perspective

Cross-national comparisons of child well-being indicators serve a central function for society in that they inform the public about factors of importance and establish a foundation for accountability-based public policy (Ben-Arieh, 2010). The United Nations Convention for the Rights of Children (UNCRC, 1989) commits member countries to producing data on six indicators of child well-being every five years to be analysed by the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2013). This cross-national comparison highlights the poor child well-being outcomes of many of the world's richest countries. New Zealand, slow to meet its commitments to UNCRC (1989), has yet to produce sufficient data to be included in these cross-national comparisons alongside its partners in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). However, in an additional analysis which relaxed the data requirements, New Zealand ranked poorly next to the top 30 OECD countries (Heshmati, Bajalan & Tausch, 2007). The current case study aims to provide a further cross-national comparison using a strength-based framework.

The study of subjective well-being is central to developing our understanding of what child well-being means and how to design meaningful and complete frameworks to support positive

youth development (Ben-Arieh, 2010). Subjective child well-being, defined by their thoughts and feelings about their lives, has been explored in a number of ways, with a large number of dimensions identified (O'Hare & Gutierrez, 2012). A limited number of studies however include children in middle childhood. Fattore and colleagues (2009), included 123 children aged between 8 to 15 years old, concluded that "the underlying mediums through which children understood experiences of well-being are children's significant relationships and emotional life" (p.61). Morgan (2010) reported that, within a sample of 1,193 children and young people, that being healthy was most important to their sense of well-being, far exceeding other ideas such as feeling loved, enjoying activities, feeling happy, being safe and having a family.

Within the New Zealand context limited research on subjective child well-being is available. Narrative enquiry has been used to identify the well-being components for pre-schoolers as including independence, connectedness, caring, inclusivity, mastery, respect, being comfortable and pride (Farquhar, 2012). Narrative enquiry was also used by Chen (2011) to identify the prevalence of theory-based well-being themes from middle childhood through to adolescents. According to Chen (2011) 90% of all wellbeing events denoted during middle childhood included leisure activities, relationships and achievement. Soutter and colleagues (2012b) employed several methods, including classroom observations, interviews and student's journal entries to contextualise the Student Well-Being Model with students in the top two years of secondary school. With none of the aforementioned studies including a data-driven analysis of subjective well-being in middle childhood, the current case study aims to address this gap in the national literature.

Middle childhood is a critical time in development when the advantages or disadvantages of early childhood can be maintained, reversed or advanced (Huston & Ripke, 2006). Defined as including children aged from 5 to 12 years old, middle childhood has received limited attention in both research and public policy worldwide (Nic, Kelly, & Molcho, 2007). The current case study aims to contribute to the limited international literature on subjective well-being in middle childhood (Dex & Hollingworth, 2012).

1.2 Rationale, Aim and Objectives

The rationale for the current case study, based on the overview above, was to extend the literature base to include the subjective well-being of children in middle childhood in New Zealand. The overarching aim was to establish a strength-based, cross-national comparison of child well-being. To systematically address this aim a number of objectives were identified:

1. To investigate local children's understanding of well-being
2. To examine the key dimensions of well-being as identified by the children
3. To integrate the well-being dimensions identified from the children's contributions with the Developmental Assets data
4. To identify asset levels and enable cross-national comparison of child well-being levels

1.3 Research Setting and Sample

The research setting for the current case study, described in greater detail in Chapter Three, was a large primary school in a secondary urban area of New Zealand, defined as such by its 10, 000 to 29, 999 inhabitants (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). The sample population consisted of general education students aged between 9 to 11 years old, with 81 students partaking in the focus group discussions and 131 students completing the Developmental Assets questionnaire.

1.4 Methodology

A concurrent exploratory mixed methods approach, explained in more detail in Chapter Three, was adopted. This allowed well-being to be explored from both a subjective and an objective perspective, a recommendation of current literature (Jones & Sumner, 2009; McAuley & Rose, 2014). The two data sources were integrated during the discussion to establish a more complete picture of local child well-being than either method alone could provide (Clark & Creswell, 2011).

1.5 Theoretical Orientations

The child's rights perspective, a central tenet of the child well-being movement, underpinned the current study (UNCRC, 1989). Children were considered to be expert knowledge holders regarding their well-being and it was the researcher's aim to facilitate their voice and present

their views. The thematic analysis process, which adopted a semantic approach, was underpinned by realism and a straightforward view of the unidirectional relationship between language and meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, the researcher's philosophical underpinnings did not reflect naïve realism; it is acknowledged that, to some degree, the researcher's prior knowledge of the discourse surrounding child well-being will have influenced inductive thematic developments.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is organised into six chapters. Chapter One provides an overview of child well-being and the thesis and ends here. Chapter Two includes key research describing definitions and theories of health and well-being, definitions and approaches to child well-being, the measurement of child well-being including cross national comparisons and subjective child well-being, research pertaining to well-being in middle childhood, national child well-being policy initiatives and the Developmental Assets framework. Chapter Three details the methodology including ethics, design, measures and procedure. Chapter Four includes the results from the thematic analysis and the descriptive statistics from the developmental assets data. Chapter Five presents a visual model of the thematic data followed by a narrative integrating the thematic data with the developmental assets data. A cross-national comparison of child well-being levels is then presented followed by a description of the study's strengths and limitations. Chapter Six concludes the case study offering a summary of the findings and appropriate recommendations for further research.

Chapter Two: Key Research

2.1 Definition of Well-Being

The term well-being is a multi-faceted social construct which means different things to different people across the fields of psychology, economics, health studies, sociology, education and philosophy (Cronin de Chavez, Backett-Milburn, Parry & Platt, 2005). With no single agreed upon definition, well-being is most readily defined by its direct relationship with health.

Well-being is synonymous with the term health. Defined by The World Health Organisation health is purported to be "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 1998, p.3). Health is understood to be more than a state of proficient biological functioning. It is conceived to exist on a multi-faceted positive continuum, ultimately linked to a 'good' life (Buchanan, 2000) in which individuals and collectives are happy and thriving (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

In New Zealand well-being is understood through a local cultural lens. Te Whare Tapa Wha (Durie, 1994) purports health and well-being to exist of four dimensions; Taha Tinana (physical well-being), Taha Hinengaro (mental and emotional well-being), Taha Whānau (family and social well-being) and Taha Wairua (spiritual well-being). These dimensions are visually represented by the walls and roof of a Marae (see Figure 1). This national philosophy of health and well-being, also referred to in Māori as hauora, underpins the New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 2007).

Figure 1. *Te Whare Tapa Wha (Best Practice in New Zealand, 2010)*

2.2 Models of Well-Being

For centuries, philosophers, researchers and practitioners have attempted to understand what well-being means. A large number of well-being theories offer insight into the concepts which underpin well-being. Those that have contributed to the theoretical basis of the current study are detailed in the text below.

The Greek philosophical constructs of hedonia (i.e., feeling good) and eudaimonia (i.e., doing well) describe the meaning of well-being. According to the hedonic perspective well-being is determined by the balance of pleasure over pain (Soutter, Gilmore & O'Steen, 2011). Eudaimonic research explores the development of human excellence, morality and living a meaningful life.

Jayawickreme, Forgeard and Seligman (2012) describe Maslow's hierarchy of human needs (1954) to be one of the earliest models of well-being. This model asserts that basic physiological and security needs must be met before higher-order needs can develop (e.g., social needs,

esteem needs and self-actualising needs). Current strength-based practice focuses on removing disabling conditions (i.e., meeting physiological and safety needs) and building enabling conditions (i.e.., assets).

Another central well-being theory is that of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This theory purports well-being to be underpinned by three basic psychological needs; autonomy, competence and relatedness. The ongoing satisfaction of these needs, driven by the intrinsic motivation to develop interests, has been shown to increase well-being across cultures, contexts and generations (Chirkov & Ryan, 2001).

Allardt's well-being model of having, loving and being (1993) has been applied to the New Zealand context (Farquhar, 2012; Soutter, O'Steen & Gilmore, 2012b; Soutter, O'Steen & Gilmore, 2013). Herein, the term having describes material resources (e.g., housing, health, income and education), loving identifies relationships and being denotes acts of doing. This humanist and socially-oriented theory of well-being, developed within an adult population, resonates with the New Zealand curriculum (Soutter, O'Steen & Gilmore, 2012a) and has been applied to pre-school (Farquhar, 2012) and adolescent populations (Soutter, O'Steen & Gilmore, 2012b). The current case study builds its conceptual understanding of well-being based on the aforementioned models (see Table 1).

Table 1. *A Five-Part Framework of Well-Being*

DURIE (1994)	**GREEK PHILOSOPHY**	**MASLOW (1954)**	**ALLARDT (1993)**	**DECI & RYAN (2000)**
Te Whare Tapa Wha	**Eudaimonia**	**Human need**	**Humanism**	**Self-determination**
Physical	Doing well	Physiological	Having	Autonomy
Mental/emotional	Having a meaningful life	Safety	Loving	Competence
Family & Social	Reaching one's potential	Social	Being	Relatedness
Spiritual		Esteem		
		Self-actualising		
	Hedonia			
	Feeling good			
	Having a 'happy' life			

2.3 Definition of Child Well-Being

Well-being has been most commonly operationalised in relation to child well-being (Cronin de Chavez et al., 2005). However, the definition of child well-being remains uncertain due to the number of methods and taxonomies developed across international multi-disciplinary research (McAuley & Rose, 2010). In the text below two theoretical accounts of child well-being are described; the first of these is an international, conceptual model of child well-being (Minkkinen, 2013) and the second, a national Model of Student Well-Being (Soutter et al., 2013). Policy-based definitions of child well-being are then presented.

The Structural Model of Child Well-Being (Minkkinen, 2013) presents a holistic, developmental definition of child well-being. It integrates physical, mental and social

dimensions of health (WHO, 1998) with a fourth dimension, material well-being. It contextualises these individual factors within subjective processes and ecological influences. This model, designed within the Finland context, would be more appropriate within New Zealand culture if the fourth dimension included spiritual well-being (Durie, 1994).

New Zealand researchers have recently published a Model of Student Well-Being (Soutter et al., 2013). Generated from a review of the child well-being literature the Model of Student Well-Being has been developed through cross-examination with the New Zealand Curriculum (Soutter et al., 2012a) and a year-long investigation into the well-being views of students and teachers (Soutter et al., 2012b). Focused on youth in the top two years of secondary school the Student Well-Being Model (SWBM) identifies seven domains of well-being located within three interacting categories. The Assets category depicts interpersonal and intrapersonal components of well-being and includes the dimensions of having, being and relating. The Appraisals category includes cognitive and affective dimensions of feeling and thinking. The Actions category involves the development of assets and is depicted by functioning and striving dimensions. Examination of students' views relative to the SWBM identifies a lack of educational experience within the feelings dimension, defined by the regular experience of positive affect and ability to manage emotions (Soutter et al., 2012b).

The broad nature of child well-being is perhaps more clearly defined within policy-based definitions. The guiding international definition of child well-being is provided by UNICEF (2007):

> The true measure of a Nation's standing is how well it attends to its children – their health and safety, their material security, their education and socialization, and their sense of being loved, valued, and included in the families and societies into which they are born. (UNICEF, 2007, p.4)

The Ministry of Social Development (2002) expands on this socio-ecological definition of child well-being, explicitly including strength-based principles and children's rights:

> The well-being of children matters to us all. How well they do affects how we as a society do. All children need love, protection, support and opportunities to thrive during childhood, to grow up healthy and happy, to acquire the skills they need to form relationships, and to fully participate as adults. Children who are nurtured and supported throughout childhood are also more likely to reach their full potential at school, in higher education, in work, in sport or artistic activities and in society. This has positive benefits for individuals and for the whole of society.
>
> Children have the right to be treated as respected citizens, to be valued for who they are, and to have their views considered in matters that affect them. Achieving this requires a change in the way childhood and children are viewed and understood. It means raising the status and profile of children in society. It also means keeping pace with the changes in children's lives. (MoSD, 2002, p.10)

Recently, growing interest in student well-being has led to the adoption of a national definition (ERO, 2013). This definition, which further operationalises well-being for youth, builds on the child's rights, strength-based and ecological principles of the aforementioned definitions.

> Student well-being is strongly linked to learning. A student's level of well-being at school is indicated by their satisfaction with life at school, their engagement with learning and their social-emotional behaviour. It is enhanced when evidence-informed practices are adopted by schools in partnership with families and community. Optimal student well-being is a sustainable state, characterised by predominantly positive feelings and attitude, positive relationships at school, resilience, self-optimism and a high level of satisfaction with learning experiences (Noble, McGrath, Roffey & Rowling, 2008, p.30)

2.4 Approaches to Child Well-Being

Aldgate (2010) reports child well-being to be underpinned by Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of child development (1994), the sociology of childhood, the children's rights perspective (UNCRC, 1989) and strength-based practice. These guiding principles of the child well-being movement are expanded on in the text below.

2.4.1 A Child's Ecology

The ecological model of child development is at the heart of the child well-being movement (UNICEF, 2007; ERO, 2013). This model of child development represents Bronfenbrenner's embedded systems approach (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). Herein, human development is influenced by successively larger and more complex social groupings. At the heart of this social model of child development is their immediate environment, activities and relationships (i.e.,

the microsystem). The next ecological level, the mesosystem, links the processes that occur across settings, for example, a child's education depends not only on the knowledge of the teacher but also on the parents knowledge of their child's learning. The following ecological level, the exosystem, describes the surrounding social systems, for example parents work conditions. The macrosystem, the final outer layer of the ecological model, denotes the influences of culture, law and resources. These dynamic interactions allow for many different childhood experiences (Algate, 2010). The reciprocal nature of relationships means that both children and others across their ecology influence the nature of relationships. For example, a child's behaviour affects the amount of support they receive from adults and peers (Algate, 2010).

2.4.2 The Sociology of Childhood

The sociology of childhood has influenced the field of child well-being. According to Aldgate (2010) children are 'social actors' who influence their environment and well-being. Herein children are considered interdependent with others, co-constructing knowledge regarding their identity and culture.

2.4.3 The Child's Rights Perspective

The child right's perspective, espoused by international politics, recognises children's rights to have their voice heard and participate in the development of policies and services which affect

them (UNCRC, 1989). Underpinning the child's rights perspective is recognition of their ability to provide competent commentary on their experiences, their differing opinions to adults and the growing realisation that children's subjective well-being views are, to some degree, policy-amendable (McAuley, Morgan, & Rose, 2010).

2.4.4 A Strength-Based Approach to Child Well-Being

The strength-based paradigm, emerging from resiliency research, is a central tenet of the child well-being movement (Aldgate, 2010; Masten, Hubbard, Gest, Tellegen, Garmezy & Ramirez, 1999). It pursues the development of competence and well-being through the growth of strengths and assets (Laija-Rodriguez, Grites, Bouman, Pohlman & Goldman, 2013). Most children who experience a variety of assets, which increase positive outcomes and decrease negative outcomes, regardless of risk and adversity, experience healthy outcomes and can adapt to adverse situations (Masten et a., 1999). A linear relationship is reported between higher asset levels and more positive youth outcomes (Scales, 2014).

2.5 The Measurement of Child Well-Being

The measurement of child well-being, including both the child indicator movement and subjective child well-being, has exhibited significant developments over the last decade (Ben-Arieh, 2010). The previous deficit-based focus on child survival and welfare has been replaced by a strength-based orientation towards positive youth development for all (McAuley & Rose,

2010). The focus on well-becoming, which is orientated around preparing children for adulthood, is increasingly being replaced by the growing appreciation of the need to nurture children's current well-being (Ben-Arieh, 2010).

2.5.1 The Indicator Movement

The child indicator movement, emerging from the field of economics and based on a developmentalist approach, gathers objective data on physical, psychological, cognitive and socio-economic correlates of future well-being (Ben-Arieh, 2010). These indicators, measured over time, guide the development of social policy, channelling resources to those most in need (Pollard & Lee, 2003).

The national indicator movement is conducted by the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD, 2008) and largely describes child well-being in the absence of deprivation. The nine domains of child well-being are health, care and support, education, economic security, safety, civil and political rights, justice, cultural identity, social connectedness and environment. Each domain includes a number a specific indicators. For example, in the health domain, indicators include low birth weights, infant mortality, immunization, hearing test failure at school entry, oral health, obesity, physical activity, smoking cigarettes at 14 to 15 years old and youth suicide. Although such information does describe conditions and patterns of human development, it does not tell us what healthy behaviours are to our children and how often children engage in these behaviours. Similarly, the total sum of these well-being domains does little to tell us how happy our children are, how well they are doing and what we can do to best support them to

thrive. The development of positive well-being indicators addresses this situation (Ben-Arieh, 2010; ERO, 2013).

The indicator movement allows for cross-national comparison of child well-being. The main source of cross-national comparison is provided by UNICEF who, every five years, as stipulated by UNCRC (1989), compares data from the 30 leading OECD countries on six measures of child well-being. New Zealand has yet to provide sufficient data to meet its commitments to UNCRC and be included in these comparisons (UNICEF, 2013). An additional analysis of the 2007 data set (UNICEF, 2007), which relaxed the data requirements, reported New Zealand to score poorly on all six dimensions of child well-being. In particular, New Zealand adolescents' ranked 29th out of the top 30 OECD countries on the dimension of health and safety and 24th out of 30 on risk behaviours (Heshmati et al., 2007). New Zealand has the second highest youth suicide rate in the thirty leading OECD countries, with higher prevalence rates for Māori (Parliament Library, 2002). Our comparatively poor child well-being outcomes highlight the urgent need for children to be placed at the centre of policy developments and for the well-being inequalities within our society to be addressed.

2.5.2 The Well-Being Views of Those in Middle Childhood

Children posit unique views regarding their well-being (Sixsmith, Gabhainn, Fleming & O'Higgins, 2007). These views are believed to vary with age (Dex & Hollingworth, 2012). A limited number of studies have included children in middle childhood although not focused exclusively on the views of this age group (Dex & Hollingworth, 2012).

The central importance of relationships is well established in the subjective child well-being literature. According to Fattore and colleagues "the underlying mediums by which children understand experiences of well-being are children's significant relationship and emotional life" (2009, p. 61). Further to this McAuley and Rose (2014) have published a literature review focused on socio-emotional aspects of subjective child well-being. The key features of relationships were detailed to include trust and being able to rely on the people around them, free time, personal power, being able to relax and access to doing things, particularly outdoors and after-school activities such as sports.

Activities and health are also prevalent themes within the child well-being literature. Chen (2011), who conducted a theory-driven analysis of the prevalence of well-being themes from middle childhood through to adolescents, reported 90% of all narrative events in middle childhood to include leisure activities, relationships and achievement. Respectively, these were the first, second and third most frequently identified themes. Morgan (2010) reported being healthy to be by far the most prevalent component of subjective child well-being (see Table 2). In Morgan's UK study youth aged between 4 to 24 years old were told that the meaning of well-being in the dictionary was 'being comfortable, healthy and happy' and were asked to write down or draw three things that they thought were important for them to feel like that. Fattore and colleagues (2009), who explored what well-being meant for 123 children aged between 8 to 15 years old, identified positive sense of self, agency and security to be key factors in subjective child well-being, and the physical environment, material and economic resources, physical health, activities, social responsibility and adversity to provide independent well-being inputs (see Table 2).

Table 2. *Key Components of Subjective Child Well-Being*

MORGAN (2010)	**FATTORE ET AL., (2009)**	**DEX & HOLLINGWORTH (2012)**
Being healthy (44%) Feeling loved (24%) Having a home (23%) Having fun (21%) Feeling happy (19%) Being cared for (17%) Being safe (17%) Having a family (14%) Having friends (14%) Being supported (11%) Enjoying activities and having fun (21%)	**Significant relationships and emotional life** were the underpinning factors through which children understood child well-being **Positive sense of self, agency and security** were the three central, independent themes threaded throughout the six themes **Six general themes**; A) physical environment B) material & economic resources C) physical health D) activities E) social responsibility F) adversity	**Quality of Relationships**; A) with parents, friends, wider family, pets, teachers and others B) central qualities included loving, accepting, caring, listening, supportive, togetherness and belonging, praise and respect – fairness **Self and Freedoms;** A) health and in particular food and exercise B) education and in particular achievement and aspirations C) choices and in particular use of time, possessions, IT, freedom-responsibility and sports and outdoor activities D) psycho-social domain with identity and agency most important **Quality of Environment;** A) including home, school and neighbourhood contexts. B) the importance of having fun and playing across home and neighbourhood contexts were important for younger children in middle childhood

2.6 The Significance of Middle Childhood

Middle childhood occurs between the ages of 5 to 12 years old (Nic et al., 2007). It is a critical period in development when youth's self-structures, values, beliefs and aspirations are still relatively malleable and optimistic (Scales, 2014). For some this middle childhood sees the growth of thriving behaviour. For others, anxiety and withdrawal develops. Establishing well-being frameworks and supporting the development of positive well-being trajectories throughout middle childhood is essential to promoting the current and future well-being of all and in particular our most vulnerable children (ERO, 2013).

2.6.1 Well-Being Trajectories in Middle Childhood

Gutman, Brown, Akerman and Obolenskaya (2010) published a longitudinal study exploring the well-being trajectories of a large group of children in middle childhood. Measures of social, emotional, behavioural and school well-being were taken from children aged between 7.5 years and 10.5 years old and then again in early adolescence (between 10.5 years old and 13.8 years old). Positive parent-child relationships, attainment and the presence of friendships acted as protective factors. These were positive drivers of well-being for both genders. Students with special education needs, including specific learning difficulties and emotional behavioural problems, were most at risk of poor well-being. Having special education needs, which one fifth of the study's general population did, was one of the most powerful predictors of worse than average decline in well-being across all dimensions of well-being for both girls and boys. This assertion is supported by Feinstein and Bynner (2004) who report the strong relationship

between successful cognitive development between the ages of 5 to 10 years old and adult outcomes at 30 years old including increased likelihood of employment and decreased likelihood of smoking and depression.

2.7 National Child Well-Being Policies

New Zealand's struggle with poor and inequitable child well-being outcomes have long been known about (D'Souza, Turner, Simmers, Craig & Dowell, 2012). The recent White Paper (MoSD, 2012) details the 153, 000 child protection orders made in 2011-2012 along with the government's systematic development plan to identify and help 20,000 to 30,000 of the most vulnerable children. A significant sub-group of Māori children experience poorer outcomes across all indicators of well-being and are overrepresented within the cohort of underachievers (Children and Youth in Aotearoa, 2010). According to Professor Hamid Ghodse, a senior UN official, this inequality must be addressed "before it hits a tipping point beyond which effective action becomes impossible" (Māori Affairs Select Committee, 2012, p.2). Recent policy developments suggest that significant opportunity may soon be available to develop strategies to improve child well-being (MoSD, 2012; ERO, 2013).

Bullying is the most influential factor on children's sense of well-being, that is after their relationships with family and friends (Goswami, 2012). With, according to the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2011), three-quarters of primary school children having experienced bulling within the past month there is a significant need for systematic development. The

Wellbeing@School initiative (MoE, 2011), a voluntary National programme, has been developed to target the growth of positive school culture.

Ka Hikitia is a mandatory policy initiative targeting the spiritual well-being of all youth and, in particular, well-being equality for Māori (MoE, 2013). It aims to develop culturally responsive schools which value, affirm and develop cultural skills and values. This is particularly important for development of Māori cultural giftedness, defined as the mastery of cultural skills and values (Bevan-Brown, 2005). Bevan-Brown (2005) details cultural skills to include te reo (Māori), waiata (Māori songs) and whaikorero (traditional Māori speeches), Māori haka (performing arts), weaving flax and carving stone; and cultural values to include manaakitanga (hospitality), awhinatanga and whakaritenga mahi (serving and helping others) and wairuatanga (spirituality), mäia (courage, bravery), mana (respect, power, authority), whanaungatanga (family ties), aroha-ki-te-tangata and tütohutanga (love for, caring and sensitivity to others) and pukumahi and pükeke (industriousness and determination). The transferal of cultural knowledge, which requires strong partnerships with local whānau, provides central input for the spiritual well-being of all youth (Bevan-Brown, 2005; Durie, 1994; MoE, 2013; MoE, 2007).

The Wellbeing for Success initiative is due to be launched in 2015 (ERO, 2013). This mandatory initiative makes schools accountable for identifying and responding to children's well-being needs. It is an ecological, strength-based framework targeting nine well-being outcomes. These are resilience, belonging and connectedness, achievement and success, being physically active, included, socially and emotionally competent, safe and secure, nurtured and cared for, and confident in their identity. A number of potential data sources are identified to

measure these nine well-being outcomes. The five principles underpinning the initiative are relationships, strengths, inquiry, collaboration and cohesion. The three-part framework underpinning the initiative purports that the expressed values of schools, the dynamic learning situation and the shared sense of responsibility across schools, agencies, families and communities are key to supporting student well-being. No research-based frameworks have yet been identified to support schools to develop student well-being (ERO, 2013).

2.8 Developmental Assets

The Developmental Assets approach, developed over the last two decades, is a major international movement purporting positive youth development (Scales, Sesma, & Bolstrom, 2004). This ecological framework measures, monitors and supports the development of forty assets, which, by definition, increase well-being outcomes regardless of levels of risk or adversity (Masten et al., 1999).

2.8.1 Definition of Child Well-Being

The Developmental Assets model conceptualises child well-being in terms of the relationships, opportunities, competencies, values and self-perceptions that all youth need to be resilient and thrive (Scales et al., 2000). The definition of child well-being purported by the assets framework maps directly onto World Vision's concept of child well-being and mirrors the findings of the Health Behaviours in School-Aged Children study (Scales, 2014).

2.8.2 Assets Research

There is significant research evidence supporting the assets approach to child development. Increased asset levels are consistently linked, with only a few exceptions, to higher levels of thriving behaviour and lower levels of risk behaviours, both now and in the future (Benson, Scales, Leffert & Roehlkepartain, 1999; Leffert, Benson, Scales, Sharma, Drake & Blyth, 1998; Scales, Benson, Leffert & Blyth, 2000). In particular, higher asset levels have been linked with a greater chance of avoiding alcohol abuse and violence (Benson & Scales, 2009), achieving in school (Scales et al., 2006) and valuing racial and ethnic diversity (Scales, 2014). Children with higher asset levels report higher levels of satisfaction with life than children with lower asset levels (Scales, 2014).

The Developmental Assets approach has been used to measure child well-being in over 60 countries offering strong evidence of cross-cultural validity. Response validity, internal consistency and convergent validity was evidenced in Albania, Bangladesh, Japan, Lebanon, the Philippines and the US (Scales, 2011). In another cross-national study involving Bangladesh, Honduras, Jordan and Rwanda, higher levels of assets were consistently associated, with only a few exceptions, to better outcomes (Scales, Roehlkepartain, & Fraher, 2012). Save the Children and World Vision International have both adopted the asset-based approach in their international youth development work. Although some items in the questionnaire require cultural re-adjustment, the assets framework purports to be a culture-free approach to positive youth development (Scales, 2014; Scales et al., 2012).

The assets framework has been successfully used to build child well-being levels (Youth Development Forum, 2012). An after-school care facility in North Carolina used the Developmental Assets questionnaire and The Youth Programme Quality Assessment, which is completed through observation to provide feedback to staff about instructional quality and development needs, to develop their after-school programme. Three weaker asset categories were chosen by the staff for development. Conflict resolution was developed through training youth to work as guides in a local museum where they were trained to resolve conflicts that may arise among visitors (e.g., groups of children). Frustration management was developed through role play which focused on expressing feelings and putting themselves in the other person's shoes. Serving others and helping in the community were also targeted. Asset development over the year long period is displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. *Asset Intervention (Youth Development Forum, 2012)*

DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS	**2010-2011**	**2011-2012**
Managing Frustration	38.9%	59.1%
Resolving Conflict	52.9%	76.7%
Serving Others	52.6%	62.8%

Children's rights and accessing their subjective well-being views underpin the Developmental Assets framework. The questionnaire supports children to assert their opinions as to the strength of well-being assets as they see it. It also promotes children's rights to be protected from the development of high risk behaviours and have increased opportunities to develop thriving behaviours (Mannes, n.d.).

Asset researchers have begun the process of developing a spiritual axis for the developmental assets model (Benson, Scales, Syvertsen & Roehlkepartain, 2012). Spirituality, not defined by its ties to any one religion, was considered to represent a set of human qualities including "understanding and insight, awareness of the interconnections between people and other forms of life, the experience of mystery and awe, and a mindframe of generosity and gratitude". Benson and colleagues (2012) operationalised spirituality to include awareness of the self and the world, connecting and belonging, and having a life with meaning and contribution. They embedded this definition of spirituality within the subsequent design of the Youth Spiritual Development survey. They found that in 6725 youth from across 8 countries of varying religious orientations, that spiritual development levels in the highest third were associated with higher levels of physical health, civic engagement, academic success, coping skills, happiness and self-awareness. Youth in the middle third were better off relative to the associated outcome measures than those in the lowest third. These findings concur with those reported by other researchers including links between spirituality and; a) higher rates of exercise and healthy eating habits; and b) lower rates of adolescent delinquency, drug use, teen pregnancy, violence, depression and suicide (Scales et al., 2004).

2.8.3 The Design of the Assets Model

The most readily understood measure of child well-being derived from the assets framework is the total asset level score (Scales, 2014). This composite measure is comprised from the forty assets. The distribution of total asset levels amongst a large, diverse population of American children in middle childhood is displayed in Figure 2 (Scales, 2014). The results showed that while approximately two thirds of the sample reported good levels of well-being, one third experience less than optimal asset levels (Scales, 2014).

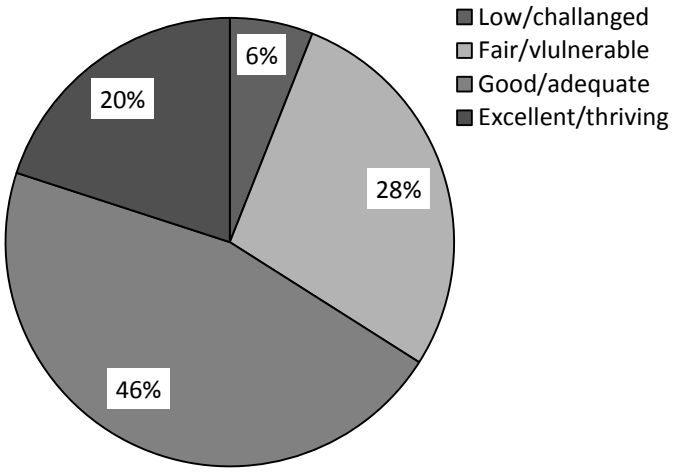

Figure2. *The Percentage of Developmental Assets in US Sample (Scales, 2014, p.1663)*

The forty developmental assets are divided into eight categories, four of which depict internal strengths and the remaining four describing external supports (see Table 4). The internal assets consist of the values and self-perceptions needed to develop self-regulation. They must be

grown or nurtured through emphasising temperament and developing character strengths, values and skills (Scales, 2014). They cannot be built so directly as the external assets which are essentially provided by adults. External assets are developed through safe relationships and opportunities to develop social and academic competence (Scales, 2014).

The Developmental Assets approach has a five tier ecological framework (see Table 5). This ecological framework and the development of assets across contexts is a central principle of the assets approach which essentially involves community development and relationship building. This process is supported by The Five Circles of Action Strategies (Scales et al., 2004). Herein Scales and colleagues (2004) propose that community development is supported by; engaging adults from across the community, mobilizing young people to develop their assets, activating sectors of the community including schools, businesses and health care organisations, invigorating and developing programmes available to all children, and influencing civic decision makers to leverage resources.

Table 4. *Assets and Positive Youth Development* (Search Institute, 2005, p. 5)

ASSET CATEGORIES	POSTIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTIONS
Internal Assets	
Commitment to Learning	The extent to which youth appreciate the life-long importance of learning and believing in their capabilities
Positive Values	The extent to which youth have developed guiding values to support healthy life choices including responsibility, empathy and self-control
Social Competency	The extent to which youth have developed the ability to effectively interact with other, solve social difficulties and cope with new situations
Positive Identity	The extent to which youth believe in their own self-worth and ability to control things in their life
External Assets	
Support	The extent to which youth feel surrounded by people who care, love, appreciate and accept them
Empowerment	The extent to which youth feel valued, valuable and safe
Boundaries and Expectations	The extent to which youth feel that they are provided with clear rules and boundaries, consistent consequences and encouragement to try their best
Constructive Use of Time	The extent to which youth feel that they have opportunities to develop new interests and learn new skills outside of school with other adults and youth

Table 5. *Context Areas of the Assets Framework* (Search Institute, 2005, p.6)

THE DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS FRAMEWORK
Context Areas
***Personal assets* –** Individual psychological and behavioural strengths such as self-esteem, valuing honesty, taking responsibility, planning ahead, managing frustration, enjoying reading and feeling in control of one's life.
Social assets – Assets based on social relationships with one or more people outside of the family, such as friendships, positive peer and adult role models, resisting pressure from others, resolving conflicts peacefully, being sensitive to others and feeling valued by others.
Family assets – Positive family communication and support, clear family rules, quality time at home, advice and encouragement from parents, and feeling safe at home
***School assets* –** Clear and fair school rules, encouragement from teachers, a caring school environment, feeling safe at school, caring about school, being motivated to learn, and being actively engaged in reading and learning
***Community assets* –** Activities and involvements in the larger community such as sports, clubs, groups and religious activities, creative activities such as music and the arts, having good neighbours, accepting others and helping in the community

2.9 Motivations, Research Aim and Objectives

Child well-being is an ambiguous yet central construct in current educational policy. In order to develop meaningful and complete local child well-being policy, a mandatory requirement for all schools by 2015 (ERO, 2013), researchers must develop understanding of what well-being means to children. Such research is the responsibility of local directives rather than government level initiatives (Ben-Arieh, 2010). The field of Educational Psychology has much to offer our National child well-being movement and the current case study explores one framework child well-being that complements our ecological, strength-based principles (ERO, 2013; MoSD, 2002).

The overarching aim of this research is to describe and measure the well-being of local children in middle childhood in such a way that it enables cross-national comparison. This aim was construed in response to the literature review which identified; a) a lack of international and national research pertaining to the well-being views of children in middle childhood; and b) New Zealand's limited participation and poor performance in cross-national comparisons. The objectives of the current case study, as listed in Chapter One, are:

1. To identify what well-being means to local children in middle childhood
2. To examine the key dimensions of well-being as identified by the children
3. To integrate the well-being dimensions identified from the children's contributions with the Developmental Assets data
4. To identify asset levels and enable cross-national comparison of child well-being levels

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Ethics

A low risk ethical application was filed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee on November 21st, 2013. Ethical considerations were discussed with both supervisors prior to the ethics application. The Screening Questionnaire to Determine the Approval Procedure (Massey University, 2013) was completed with the support of both supervisors so as to identify the level of risk presented by the project. Following this process a low risk application form was submitted to the Ethics committee. The study involved no deception and no harm to participants was foreseen.

The study adopted both Massey University's Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluation Involving Human Participants (Massey University, n.d.) and the New Zealand Psychological Society's Code of Ethics (2002). Participants were told that all information would be stored anonymously, that they were free not to answer any question and that although they had been opted into the study by the Principal that they could remove themselves at any point. No children opted themselves out of the study.

A procedural alteration, which included the well-being discussions becoming a small group or individual discussion rather than a whole class activity was proposed, by my managing secondary supervisor, to meet its 'low risk' ethics status. This alteration occurred after the second whole class well-being discussion.

3.2 Design

A mixed methods approach is recommended for studying child well-being (Jones & Sumner, 2009; McAuley & Rose, 2014). This is defined as the combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods allowing for a better understanding of the research problem than either approach alone would achieve (Clark & Creswell, 2011). This case study employed a convergent, parallel mixed methods design. It was convergent in that the well-being discussions and assets data were conducted and analysed separately before being integrated during the discussion section of this thesis (Clark & Creswell, 2011). The semi-structured discussions were conducted in parallel with the assets questionnaire; the focus groups were always held first, followed by the completion of the questionnaires. Both methodologies were equal in dominance (QUAN + QUAL).

3.3 Measures

Semi-Structured Interview Guide.

The focus group discussions had a semi-structured format (see Table 6). The interview guide, which included five questions, was developed from three questions designed by Fattore and colleagues (2007). The first question “what does well-being mean to you?” was adjusted from its original form to include “or being well” and “feel like”. During the pilot (discussed in Section 3.4.2) these insertions provided additional anchors for the children to explore the topic. The second question “what people, places and things make you feel well” was adjusted from its

original form and separated into three individual questions. During the pilot this supported the children to provide more thorough answers. The third question retained its original form (Fattore et al., 2009).

Table 6. *The Interview Guide*

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**
Summary questions	1. What does wellbeing or 'being well', mean, or feel like to you? 2. Tell me about a time in your life when things were going really well?
Components of well-being questions	3. Tell me about people that make you feel well? 4. Tell me about places that make you feel well? 5. Tell me about things that make you feel well?

Developmental Assets Profile Questionnaire.

The Developmental Assets Profile - Preteen (see Appendix A) builds on the strong psychometric properties of the assets framework (see Appendix B). It contains 58 items which provide measures of the forty developmental assets (see Table 7). Scored by participants' according to a four-point scale; not at all or rarely, somewhat or sometimes, very or often and extremely or

almost always, the raw scores were translated, during the analysis, into a composite total asset score, eight asset categories and five ecological asset levels.

Table 7. *The Developmental Assets Framework (Scales et al., 2004, p.21)*

THE DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS MODEL
External Assets
Support
1. **Family support** – Family life provides high levels of love and support
2. **Positive family communication** – Parent(s) and child communicate positively
3. **Other adult relationships** – Child receives support from adults other than her or his parent(s)
4. **Caring neighbourhood** – Child experiences caring neighbours
5. **Caring school climate** – Relationships with teachers and peers provide a caring, encouraging school environment
6. **Parent involvement in schooling** - Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school
Empowerment
7. **Community values children** – Child feels valued and appreciated by adults in the community
8. **Children as resources** – Child is included in decisions at home and in the community
9. **Service to others** – Child has opportunities to help others in the community
10. **Safety** – Child feels safe at home, at school, and in her or his neighbourhood
Boundaries and Expectations
11. **Family boundaries** – Family has clear and consistent rules and consequences and monitors the child's whereabouts
12. **Schools boundaries** – Schools provides clear rules and consequences

13. **Neighbourhood boundaries**- Neighbours take responsibility for monitoring the child's behaviour
14. **Adult role models**- Parent(s) and other adults in the child's family, as well as nonfamily adults, model positive, responsible behaviour
15. **Positive peer influence** – Child's closest friends model positive, responsible behaviour
16. **High expectations**- Parent(s) and teachers expect the child to do her or his best at school and in other activities

Constructive Use of Time

17. **Creative activities**- Child participates in music, art, drama, or creative writing two or more times per week
18. **Child programs** – Child participates two or more times per week in co-curricular school activities or structured community programmes for children
19. **Religious community** – Child attends religious programmes or services one or more times per week
20. **Time at home**- Child spends some time most days both in high-quality interaction with parent(s) and doing things at home other than watching TV or playing video games

Internal Assets

Commitment to Learning

21. **Achievement motivation** – Child is motivated and strives to do well in school
22. **Learning engagement** – Child is responsive, attentive and actively engaged in learning at school and enjoys participating in learning activities outside of school
23. **Homework**- Child usually hands in homework on time
24. **Bonding to adults at school** – Child cares about teachers and other adults at school
25. **Reading for pleasure**- Child enjoys and engages in reading for fun most days of the week

Positive Values

26. **Caring**- Parent(s) tell the child it is important to help other people
27. **Equality and social justice**- Parent(s) tell the child it is important to speak up for equal

rights for all people

28. **Integrity**- Parent(s) tell the child it is important to stand up for one's beliefs
29. **Honesty**- Parent(s) tell the child it is important to tell the truth
30. **Responsibility**- Parent (s) tell the child it is important to accept personal responsibility for behaviour
31. **Healthy lifestyle**- Parent(s) tell the child it is important to have good health habits and an understanding of healthy sexuality

Social Competencies

32. **Planning and decision making**- Child thinks about decisions and is usually happy with the results of her or his decisions
33. **Interpersonal competence**- Child cares about and is affected by other people's feelings, enjoys making friends, and, when frustrated or angry, tries to calm her or himself
34. **Cultural competence**- Child knows and is comfortable with people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and with her or his own cultural identify
35. **Resistance skills**- Child can stay away from people who are likely to get her or him in trouble and is able to say no to doing wrong or dangerous things
36. **Peaceful conflict resolution**- Child attempts to resolve conflict nonviolently

Positive Identity

37. **Personal power**- Child feels She or he has some influence over things that happen in her or his life
38. **Self-esteem**- Child likes and is proud to be the person She or he is
39. **Sense of purpose**- child sometimes thinks about what life means and whether there is a purpose for her or his life
40. **Positive view of personal future**- Child is optimistic about her or his personal future

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3.4 Procedures

The researcher briefly introduced the study at a Year 5/6 assembly a week before the pilot began. It was presented again in more detail at a Year 5/6 staff meeting the same week. The aim of both introductions was to provide appropriate information to develop interest and understanding of the study.

3.4.1 Participants: Selection and Composition

All students were opted into the study by the school Principal who had attained support from the Board of Trustees. All children were then given an information sheet with an opt-out section for their parents (see Appendix C). Parents had two weeks to return the paperwork to the school office if they wished to remove their child from the study. One parent did remove their child from the study and this child went to the library while the study took place.

All participants were enrolled at a large primary school in the South Island of New Zealand. Surrounded by mountains, the school is located in an aesthetically appealing area. All local schools have a decile 10 ranking. This decile 10 ranking, attributed by the Ministry of Education for funding purposes, means that the school's socio-economic community is ranked within the top 10% of New Zealand's population. The chosen school, the largest of the local primary schools, was one with which the researcher had a long-standing work relationship with.

The well-being views of 81 participants (41 female and 40 male) from 5 composite Year 5/6 classes, all of whom attended a single local primary school, were gathered during semi-

structured discussions. The assets questionnaire was completed by 131 participants (64 female and 67 male) from the same Year 5/6 classes. The ages ranged from 9 to 11 years old, with the average age being 10 years old.

3.4.2 Pilot

The pilot occurred on March 17th 2014, one week before the main study commenced. The head of middle school was involved in the administration of the pilot. The teacher read the DAP questions out loud to the class and identified words that required further definition, such as the word conflict. The teacher also advised students to use a ruler to support visual tracking of the questionnaire items. A few children struggled to keep up with the pace of administration and needed additional support from the researcher, and time at the end to complete the questionnaire. The DAP pilot data was included in the main study whereas, due to audible recording difficulties within the classroom context, the whole class well-being discussions from the pilot class and the following class was not.

3.4.3 Main Study

On entry into each classroom the researcher reintroduced the study, outlined the format and detailed the two activities involved. The researcher detailed the five questions involved in the well-being discussion to inform participants and reduce any anxieties as to the unknown. After the well-being discussions were completed students were told that the questionnaires would

be distributed to students at their desks and completed with the support of the researcher who would read all questions out loud.

Administration of the Semi-Structured Interviews.

Participants were asked to raise their hand if they wished to discuss well-being in small groups, rather than one-to-one. These participants were asked to call out their names, one after the other, so that they could be identified on the researcher's role sheet. The remaining participants were identified as preferring to discuss well-being individually. The students were told that once the first group of six had finished discussing well-being that they would return to the classroom to get the next group or individual. Whilst the well-being discussions were underway the participants were told that those who remained in the classroom were expected to continue with their classwork under the supervision of the teacher.

The well-being discussions occurred around a large central table in the middle school office. The participants sat on padded 'adult' chairs and the recording device was placed in the middle of the table. Participants were informed of their right not to answer any question and consent was sought for the conversations to be recorded. Participants were asked to speak in turns moving in a clock-wise direction around the table so that everyone could have the opportunity to provide an audible answer. For some groups multiple cycles of input allowed the children to develop their verbal well-being accounts. The duration of the semi-structured interviews ranged from three minutes to nineteen minutes and were recorded on a smart phone using a recording application called Rode.

Administration of the DAP Questionnaires.

The questionnaires were given out to participants at their desks. They were asked to put their name at the top of the page next to name/ID and were told that they would be given a number to protect their identity during the analysis (i.e., questionnaires were scored anonymously). The instructions were then read out loud. After the first three questions had been completed students were asked to raise their hand if they were still unsure about the answer format. In cases where additional support was required, the option of working through the questionnaire with the support of the classroom teacher was available. Such support was accepted by three participants in one class. For the rest, the survey questions were read out loud with approximately a 10 second gap between questions. A short break was provided half way through the questionnaire. Throughout the administration both the researcher and the classroom teacher answered questions pertaining to questionnaire items.

Across the five classes there were a small number of children who, due to other commitments, were not available to participate in the study alongside their classmates. An additional group was organised to gather data from these participants.

3.5 Data Coding

The well-being discussions were thematically analysed according to the six step procedure outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006). The first stage involved verbatim transcription of the

participants' views. These transcripts were then repeatedly read allowing the researcher to become more familiar with their contents.

The second stage involved the generation of thematic codes. As the transcripts closely followed a simple question/answer format, key semantic features from each focus group and one-to-one discussion were extracted and maintained separately whilst collating them under the appropriate question headings. This process allowed the researcher to start identifying patterns of meaning, at the semantic level (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The initial coding process was very much data-driven in that themes were generated directly from the transcripts rather than being interpreted relative to pre-existing theories or frameworks. Previous research did however provide an initial guide for interpreting the data. According to Miles and Huberman (1994) this process of identifying potential codes from previous research encourages the researcher to tie the raw data to relevant conceptual and theoretical knowledge. The codes, generated through cycles of review, were redefined and discarded over the course of the analysis.

The next two stages included searching and reviewing codes, and defining and naming themes. The researcher used a colour-coded system to track text segments and develop codes. Initially 21 themes were identified, each with a number of associated codes. These were further refined through the process of review. A number of thematic maps were constructed to determine the relationship between themes.

At the end of stage five, three main themes and five independent themes were identified. The identification of three main themes was supported by a thematic frequency count and the co-occurrence rates. All eight well-being themes were then discussed with the co-rater.

The inter-rater reliability check was calculated for twenty percent of the transcripts (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The first three extracts, from the first three semi-structured interviews pertaining to question one, were used to teach the co-rater about the codebook (see Appendix D) and how to apply the colour-coded text segmentation strategy. The co-rater was then left to rate a pre-selected sample of text from across the five questions. The single co-occurrence of themes within a focus group or one-to-one discussion was then identified (i.e., single item thematic coding) and compared to the researcher's own thematic coding. A yes/no tally was kept for every agreement or disagreement in the coding. The total number of agreements was then divided by the total number of comparisons to yield an inter-rater reliability agreement of 86.5%.

3.5.1 Definition of Thematic Categories

The thematic analysis process identified eight themes within the children's well-being accounts. These included emotional health, relationships, interests, safety, values, accomplishment, special events and the environment. Each of these themes are defined in the following text:

Emotional Health.

This included positive thoughts, emotions and self-esteem, for example happiness and pride. Fun and play were considered central components of emotional health. The inclusion of 'comfort foods' was questioned on the basis of whether it threatened the internal consistency of the theme. However, the descriptions of comfort foods were understood by the researcher to reflect emotional health. Statements of absence such as not feeling sick were also included within this theme.

Relationships.

The relationships theme detailed key relationships and commentary on the important qualities of these relationships (e.g., supportive, helpful). Personal power statements (e.g., "sometimes being well is just doing things that I like doing") were included in this theme as agency is a function of co-regulation with adult caregivers (Scales, 2014). Statements of absence (e.g., "when my dad still lived with me, I don't see him much") and negative valence were also included (e.g., "you are kind of almost happy with the friends you have").

Interests.

This theme focused on activities of interest and the associated sense of well-being. Interests were detailed across music, art, literacy, dance, sports, technology, nature (including animals and weather). Interests were also related to personal possessions (e.g., toys). The inclusion of

nature as an interest required careful differentiation with statements detailing environmental sites of wellbeing, for example the supermarket. The inclusion of personal possessions and want satisfaction (e.g., “when I got my Nintendo”) also potentially challenged the internal consistency of the theme. However, ultimately both were considered reflections of interests. Statements of absence were also included in this theme.

Safety.

The safety theme included statements denoting the satisfaction of basic physiological needs (i.e., food, water and sleep) and security needs. Statements pertaining to both physical and emotional safety were included. Bullying, a threat to the emotional and potentially physical safety of all children was included in this theme. The absence of bullying, detailed by many children as key to their wellbeing, was also included in the safety theme.

Values.

The values theme included statements referring to positive values and well-being. The semantic nature of these values made them straightforward to code with two possible exceptions; health and inclusion, both of which were referred to directly and indirectly, for example “[being] energetic” and “when your friends let you join in and play”.

Accomplishment.

The accomplishment theme constituted of well-being statements that explicitly detailed the development of competence. Although general accomplishment statements were made, explicit accomplishment statements were only made within the context of sports. With sports also coded under the interests theme, sports-related items coded under the accomplishment theme had to contain explicit reference to accomplishment.

Special Events.

The participants described special events as times when they felt particularly well. This included family holidays, getting pets, celebrations, shows and awards. Awards were included in this theme, rather than in the accomplishment theme, as they were primarily considered a special event.

Environment.

Well-being experiences were explicitly reported across the home, school and community contexts. This theme was somewhat problematic in that it interacted with every theme and somewhat represented more of an underpinning framework. However, the central role of explicitly mentioned well-being sites led to the environment being maintained as an individual theme. This theme was particularly challenging to distinguish relative to the interests theme of nature. This challenge was resolved by referring to the semantic coding principle underpinning

the analysis. All explicitly detailed environmental contexts were coded under the environment theme and all statements pertaining to interest in nature were coded under the interest theme.

3.5.2 Scoring Procedures for the Assets Questionnaire

The asset questionnaires were screened to identify any cases in which the questionnaire items had not been properly understood or were inaccurately completed by participants. Two questionnaires were removed during the screening procedure, one which had a significant amount of extreme responses and the second which contained a significant number of blank items, the significance of both was determined by the directions in the DAP manual. All remaining questionnaires were scored according to the instructions in the manual.

The data entry and analysis process was guided by a formatted Excel worksheet provided by the Search Institute, the designers of the Developmental Assets questionnaire. This worksheet required all raw data to be double entered to ensure accuracy. All asset scores were then computed through the formatted Excel worksheet. Measures of central tendency were computed with SPSS.

3.5.3 Mixed Methods Integration

The assets data and the thematic data were integrated during the discussion. Both sets of data were ranked. The asset categories ranked relative to strength and the thematic data according to frequency.

3.5.4 Ethnicity Data

The school's ethnicity data was used in the study. These records detailed ethnicity groupings to include Australian, Brazilian, British/Irish, Chilean, Chinese, European, Fijian, Filipino, German, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Nepalese, South African, Thai, Vietnamese, NZ European and Māori. These ethnicity groupings were re-categorised during the analysis to include NZ European, NZ Māori, European, Asian, South American, South African and Pacific Islands.

Chapter Four: Results

The thematic analysis of participants' well-being views is now presented, followed by the assets data.

4.1 Child Well-Being Views

The participants mainly discussed well-being in terms of emotional health, relationships and their interests. The identification of these three overriding themes was supported by both their higher prevalence (see Appendix E) and co-occurrence rates (see Appendix F). Other themes including safety, accomplishment, values, special events and environment provided interdependent and dynamic contributions to the children's sense of well-being. Eight themes in total were used to frame the results.

Emotional Health.

Emotional health was a central component of the participants' well-being accounts. The positive emotional terms used to describe well-being included happy, excited, bubbly, joyful, relaxed, peaceful and comfortable.

Researcher: What does well-being mean or feel like to you?

Participant: When you are happy and can't stop smiling

Participant: [Being] comfortable, happy and loved

The experience of fun and play was central to many participants' experiences of well-being.

Researcher: What does well-being mean or feel like to you?

Participant: Being well to me means being happy and playing games

Participant: Playing with my friends at the beach, the fun and it carries on for ages

Some participants linked the experience of well-being to self-esteem.

Researcher: What does well-being mean or feel like to you?

Participant: Happy and well, proud

Participant: Being a superstar

A small number of participants related emotional health and well-being to 'comfort' foods. Such foods included ice-cream, ice-pops and chocolate.

Researcher: Tell me about things that make you feel well

Participant: My grans chocolate fudge

For many participants the absence of both sickness and negative emotions was part of what well-being meant for them.

Researcher: What does well-being mean or feel like to you?

Participant: Being well for me is not being sick and netball

Participant: Feeling well is like when you are happy and there is nothing wrong

For other participants negative emotions were part of their lives and integrated within their well-being experiences.

Researcher: What does well-being mean or feel like to you?

Participant: Happy and sometimes angry

Participant: Just feeling fine but a bit jittery sometimes

Relationships.

All participants talked about relationships which were relevant to their well-being. Key relationships included family, friends and teachers. The participants' definition of family were broad and included parents, siblings, grandparents, aunties and uncles, cousins, pets and blended family relations. Some participants differentiated between best friends and classmates when talking about their relationships with peers. Overall both were considered important by

participants' for their sense of well-being. Other relationships of importance, detailed by a few participants, included people from their native country, people that cooked for them and their babysitter.

Researcher: Tell me about people you feel well around

Participant: My cat, my horse, my friends and best mates, Korean people, my family

Some participants commented on relevant qualities of these relationships. Explicitly detailed relationship qualities included love, niceness, supportiveness, kindness, cooperativeness, helpfulness, togetherness/belonging, inspiration, reliableness, respect, fun and freedom. Statements pertaining to personal power and agency, both of which occur within the context of relationships with adult caregivers, were threaded into some well-being accounts.

Researcher: Tell me about people you feel well around

Participant: My family and friends that are helpful and kind

Participant: My good friends because they make me laugh a lot

Participant: People you can actually rely on, lots of my friends and teachers

Some participants integrated the absence of key relationships and negative valence into their experience of wellbeing.

Researcher: Tell me about a time in your life when things were going really well

Participant: When my dad still lived with me, I don't see him much

Researcher: Tell me about a time in your life when things were going really well

Participant: [When] you are kind of almost happy with the friends you have

Interests.

Participants discussed well-being in terms of doing things that interested them. Their interests included music, art, literacy, dance, technology, nature (including animals and weather), sports and personal possessions (e.g., surfboard or toys).

Researcher: Tell me about things that make you feel well

Participant: Playing my favourite sports and listening to my favourite songs

Participant: Drawing, it makes me happy

Participant: I can relax when I have got a computer

Participant: I like running in the rain and snow dumps

Some participants explicitly talked about well-being alongside the material satisfaction of their interests.

Researcher: Tell me about a time in your life when things were going really well

Participant: When I got my Nintendo

Participant: When I got my bike

When engaging in activities of choice some participants described the experience of an all-consuming, timeless and joyful sense of well-being.

Researcher: What does well-being mean or feel like to you?

Participant: [Well-being is being] happy and never want it to end, can't stop doing it

Researcher: Tell me about things that make you feel well

Participant: Reading a book somewhere, I feel like I'm in the book

Participant: The nature, it fascinates me

Some participants expressed absence and negative valence regarding interests and choices.

Researcher: Tell me about a time in your life when things were going really well

Participant: When I was back in China. Well, sometimes being well is here. But sometime when I am in New Zealand I don't really find anything to do

Safety.

Participants talked about well-being in relation to satisfaction of their basic physiological human needs, including food, water and sleep.

Researcher: What does well-being mean or feel like to you?

Participant: Feeling glad that you are well and not an African because they don't get food and water

Basic physical and emotional security needs, across contexts, were threaded into many well-being accounts. These were discussed with negative valence by some participants. In particular, the absence of bullying (i.e., knowing that you were not being bullied) was pertinent to many participants' sense of well-being.

Researcher: What does well-being mean or feel like to you?

Participant: Maybe like safe and happy and loved and you know that you're not being bullied

Researcher: Tell me about a place where you feel well

Participant: [At] home and my safe spot where no one can get me

Values.

Positive values were threaded into many participants' well-being accounts. Values explicitly detailed included; health, inclusion, gratefulness, persistence, confidence and freedom.

Researcher: Tell me about things that make you feel well

Participant: Exercise and water and eating the right foods and keeping clean

Participant: Feelings good is having friends to play with and probably respecting others

Participant: When you finally find a way to achieve things

The absence of inclusion was involved in many participants' experiences of bullying.

Participant: They don't say horrible things when the teacher is close but they just sort of disinclude me

Accomplishment.

Many participants identified 'doing well' and accomplishment, as part of their well-being experience. Accomplishment was talked about in a general sense and also within the context of sports.

Researcher: What does well-being mean or feel like to you?

Participant: That you've accomplished something and you're really happy about yourself and what you've done

Participant: When I've done something and I feel really happy with the job I've made

Participant: When I learnt how to do a backwards walkover in gymnastics

Special Events.

Participants' described special events as times of particular well-being. Family holidays were repeatedly identified as well-being inputs due to the family time and activities involved.

Researcher: Tell me about places where you feel well

Participant: Fiji, I feel excited there and I wonder about what's going to happen next

Participant: When I went to Rainbow's End and Sky Tower with my family

Other special occasions that positively impacted the well-being of many participants included local outings, getting pets, celebrations, shows, awards and interactions with nature or animals. The latter of these is particularly important due to its theoretical connection with spirituality (Benson et al., 2012). Celebrations particularly valued by participants included birthdays, Easter, Christmas and April fools.

Researcher: Tell me about places where you feel well

Participant: I really like full moons

Participant: When I rode an elephant

Environment.

Participants reported well-being experiences across the home, school and community contexts. This reflects the ecology of child development. Environmental contexts were explicitly linked to the experience of positive emotions, relationships and co-regulation, the pursuit of interests, the experience of safety, the appreciation of values, the enjoyment of special events and personal accomplishment.

Researcher: Tell me about places where you feel well

Participant: My house because my house is fun and I get to do what I want

Participant: Playing on the playground at school

Participant: The event centre where I play, score and swim

4.1.1 Summary

Well-being to local children in middle childhood was described relative to eight dynamic themes. Three of these themes, including emotional health, relationships and interests were discussed more frequently and co-occurred with each other more often. These themes were

identified to be main themes. Absence and negative valence within these main themes and the safety theme were integrated within some participants' experience of wellbeing. Accomplishment, special events and values existed only on a positive continuum. All of the aforementioned well-being themes were discussed across home, school and the community contexts.

4.2 The Assets Data

The DAP manual suggests a top-down approach to data processing. Therefore, the following data analysis explores the central tendencies of the total asset score first, followed by the eight individual asset categories before finally detailing asset levels across ecological contexts.

4.2.1 Total Assets Score

Key features of the total assets score are presented in Table 8. The mean score of 42 had a standard deviation of 7.04 and scored at the low end of the good range (see Table 9). The large dispersion of scores within the first two quartiles is illustrated by the box-and-whisker diagram in Figure 3. There was one statistical outlier. This participant reported a very low total asset score of 15.

Table 8. *Key Features of the Total Assets Data*

DESCRIPTIVE DATA		VALUES
N of Participants		131
Mean		42
Median		42
Mode		48
Standard Deviation		7.04
Skewness		-.53
Range		36.75
Percentiles	25	38
	50	43
	75	48

Table 9. *Classification Ranges*

SCORE RANGES	CLASSIFICATION
51-60	Excellent asset levels, thriving
41-50	Good moderately high asset levels, adequate
31-40	Fair relatively low asset levels, vulnerable
30-0	Low asset levels, challenged

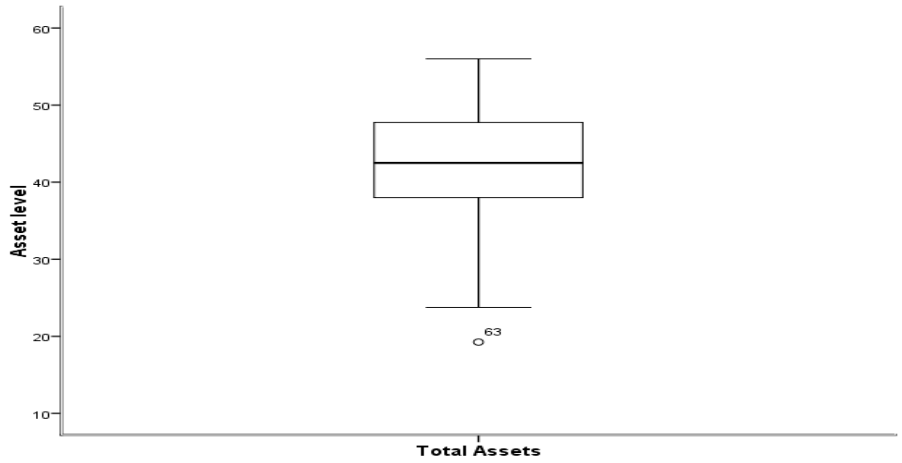

Figure 3. *The Dispersal of Total Asset Levels across Quartiles*

The number of participants who reported total asset scores in the low, fair, good and excellent ranges is presented in Table 10. One in three participants (48/131) reported total asset levels in the low to fair but vulnerable range. The remaining two thirds of the participants (82/131) reported asset levels in the good range or above. The percentage of participants' who scored within the low, fair, good and excellent range is illustrated in Figure 4.

Table 10. *The Prevalence of Total Asset Levels*

TOTAL ASSET LEVEL CLASSIFCATIONS	**NO. OF PARTICIPANTS**
Excellent/thriving	10
Good/adequate	67
Fair/vulnerable	39
Low/challenged	9

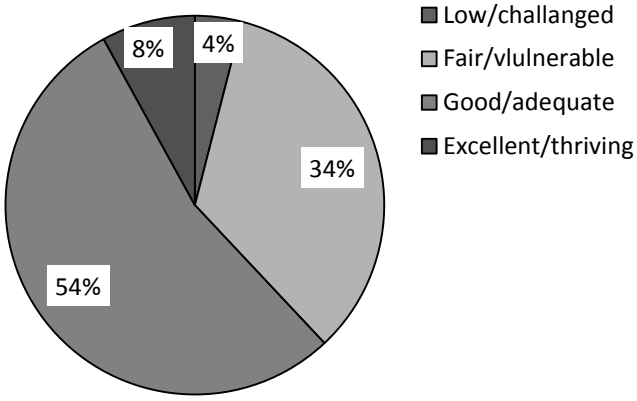

Figure 4. *The Percentage Distribution of Total Asset Levels*

4.2.2 Asset Category Scores

The eight asset categories are positive identity, social competency, positive values, commitment to learning, constructive use of time, boundaries and expectations, empowerment and support. Five asset categories scored in the good range with the remaining three asset categories in the fair range (see Figure 5 and Table 11). The spread of scores within and across the eight asset categories is displayed in Figure 6. The largest dispersal and the lowest mean occurred in the constructive use of time asset category.

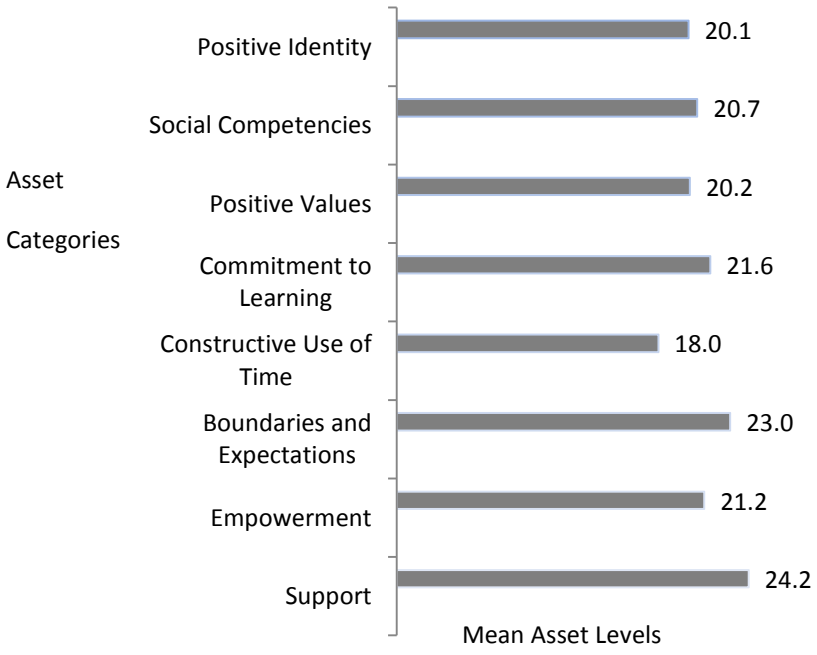

Figure 5. *Mean Assets Scores Across Categories*

Table 11. *Classification Ranges*

SCORE RANGES	CLASSIFCATIONS
26-30	Excellent asset levels, thriving
21-25	Good moderately high asset levels, adequate
15-20	Fair, relatively low asset levels, vulnerable
0-14	Low asset levels, challenged

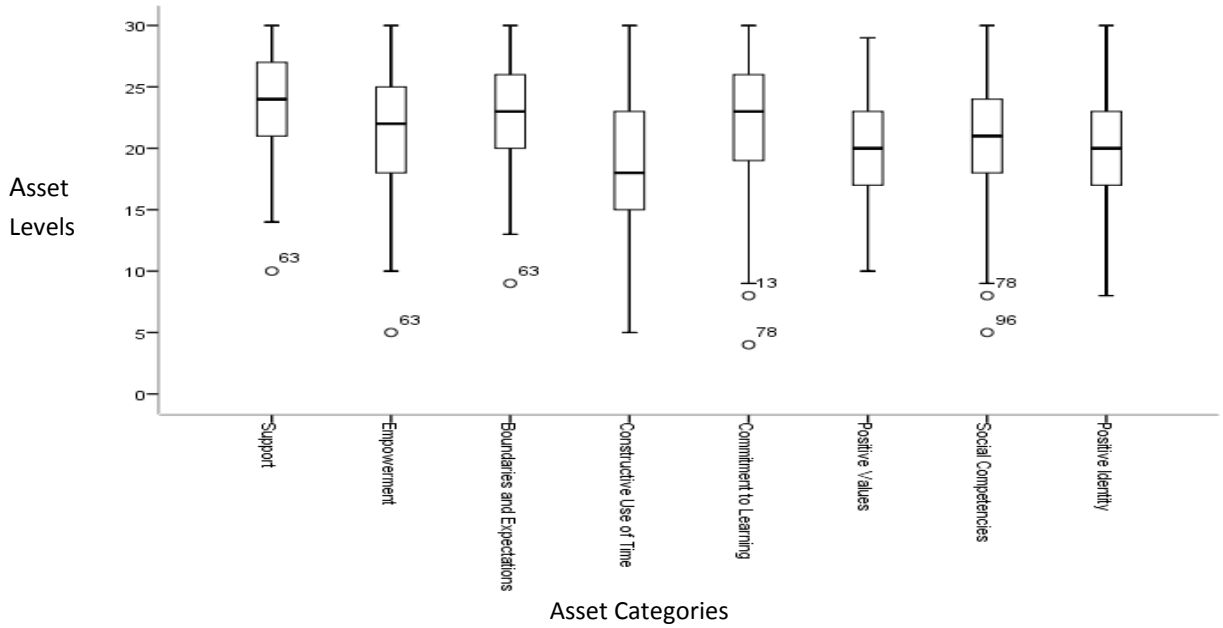

Figure 6. *The Dispersal of Asset Category Scores across Quartiles*

The percentage of participants reporting low, fair but vulnerable, good and excellent asset levels across the eight asset categories is displayed in Table 12. In three categories, including constructive use of time, positive values and positive identity, over 50% of participants reported asset levels to be in the low to fair but vulnerable levels. Strong asset categories included support and boundaries and expectations with over 70% of participants reporting asset levels in the good to excellent range.

Table 12. *The Percentages of Asset Levels across the Eight Asset Categories*

DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS	**LOW/CHALLENGED** (Range: 0-14)	**FAIR/VULNERABLE** (Range: 15-20)	**GOOD/ADEQUATE** (Range:21-25)	**EXCELLENT/THRIVING** (Range: 26-30)
External Assets				
Support	2%	15%	34%	49%
Empowerment	9%	28%	46%	17%
Boundaries & Expectations	5%	23%	38%	34%
Constructive Use of Time	22%	47%	24%	7%
Internal Assets				
Commitment to Learning	13%	24%	36%	27%
Positive Values	7%	47%	36%	11%
Social Competencies	11%	36%	37%	16%
Positive Identity	10%	44%	36%	10%

Selected demographics, including gender, year group and ethnicity were analysed relative to the eight asset categories (see Table 13). According to the assets manual, mean differences of

three points or less are insignificant. Therefore the largest gender difference, which occurred in the commitment to learning asset category, with boys scoring three points lower than girls, should not be considered significant. There were no significant differences across year group or ethnicity. The limited size of the South American and South African samples prohibits valid inclusion of group comparisons.

Table 13. *Mean Asset Category Scores across Selected Demographics*

	DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS DATA								
	Sample Size	**Support**	**Empowerment**	**Boundaries & Expectations**	**Constructive Use of Time**	**Commitment to Learning**	**Positive Values**	**Social Competencies**	**Positive Identity**
Total sample									
	131	24	21	23	18	21	20	20	20
Gender									
Female	64	25	22	24	19	23	21	22	20
Male	67	23	21	22	17	20	19	20	21
Year									
Year 5	58	25	21	23	19	22	20	21	20
Year 6	73	24	21	23	18	21	20	21	20
Ethnicity									
NZ Euro	83	25	21	23	18	22	20	21	20
NZ Maori	11	23	21	23	18	22	21	18	19
Asian	19	22	21	23	18	23	20	21	21
South American	2	20	20	23	14	14	18	16	15
South African	1	23	17	21	10	14	19	20	20
Pacific Islands	10	25	23	22	17	21	22	22	21
European	5	25	22	23	18	23	19	20	17

4.2.3 Ecological Asset Scores

The participants' asset levels were analysed according to the perceived strength of assets across personal, social, family, school and community contexts (see Figure7 and Table 14). Asset levels across family and school environments were in the good range. Asset levels within personal and social contexts boarded the good range. Asset levels at the community level were comparatively weaker, scoring in the fair but vulnerable range and also exhibiting a greater dispersal (see Figure 8). Within the school context there were an increased number of statistical outliers with six participants reporting asset levels below the first quartile (see Figure 8). These students are at heightened risk of not thriving within the school context, both now and in the future.

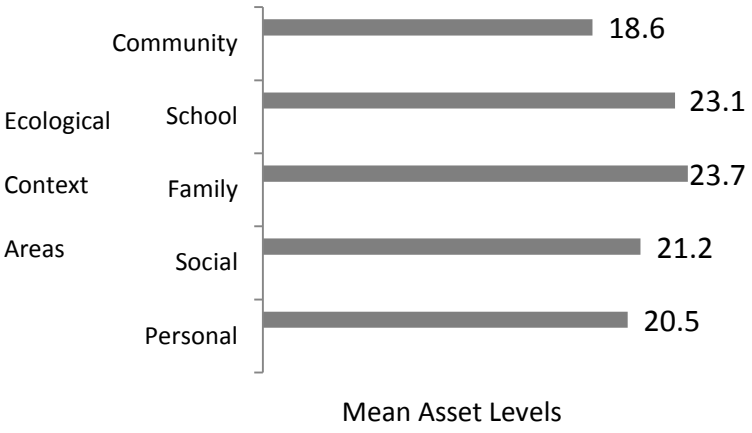

Figure 7. *Mean Asset Scores across Contexts Areas*

Table 14. *Classification Ranges*

SCORE RANGES	CLASSIFICAITON
26-30	Excellent asset levels, thriving
21-25	Good moderately high asset levels, adequate
15-20	Fair, relatively low asset levels, vulnerable
0-14	Low asset levels, challenged

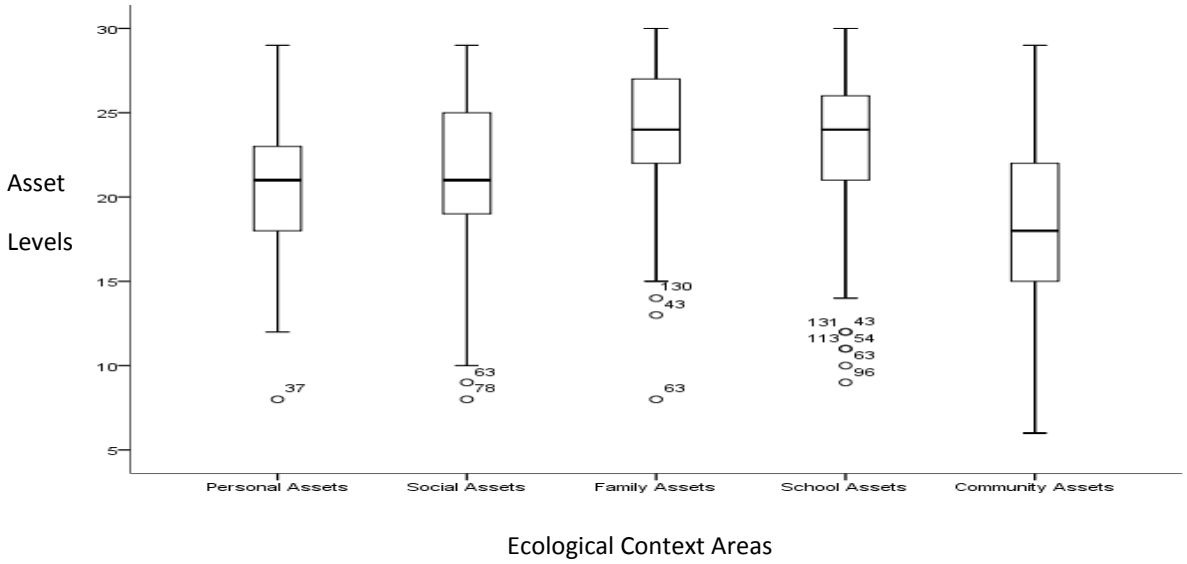

Figure 8. *The Dispersal of Ecological Asset Scores across Quartiles*

4.2.4 Summary

Local children in middle childhood reported good levels of well-being assets. However, as a group their total assets score were at the low end of the good range, with one in three participants reporting total asset scores in the low to fair but vulnerable range. The asset categories of support and, boundaries and expectations were frequently experienced at good levels while constructive use of time, positive values and positive identity scored in the fair but vulnerable range. Well-being assets provided by family and school context areas were in the good range. Comparatively weaker well-being input, scoring in the fair but vulnerable range, was reported at the community level. There were no significant effects of gender or age.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The current case study explores the meaning of well-being to local children in middle childhood, with the overarching goal of completing a strength-based cross-national comparison. The mixed methods design allows subjective well-being to explored from two perspectives; firstly through a thematic analysis of the focus group and one-to-one discussions; and secondly using the objective assets framework. The discussion begins by presenting a model of the well-being themes and their interconnections. The main interconnections are herein discussed. The full narrative associated with each theme is presented in the following text which integrates the thematic and assets data. Herein the strengths and weaknesses of the eight well-being asset categories are discussed alongside the comparatively ranked well-being themes. Finally a cross-national comparison of child well-being is presented before concluding with the case study's strengths and limitations.

5.1 Child Well-Being Views: Themes and Interconnections

The meaning of well-being, according to the children's contributions, can be understood according to eight interconnected themes. These themes and their interconnections are displayed in Figure 9. The main themes through which local children talked about well-being are relationships, emotional health and interests. The interconnections between these dimensions are represented by the three overlapping circles in Figure 9. The themes of safety,

accomplishment, values and special events provide independent contributions to the children's sense of well-being. These themes, along with the three overarching themes, occur within and across ecological contexts are represented, in Figure 9, by these themes being located within the environmental circle.

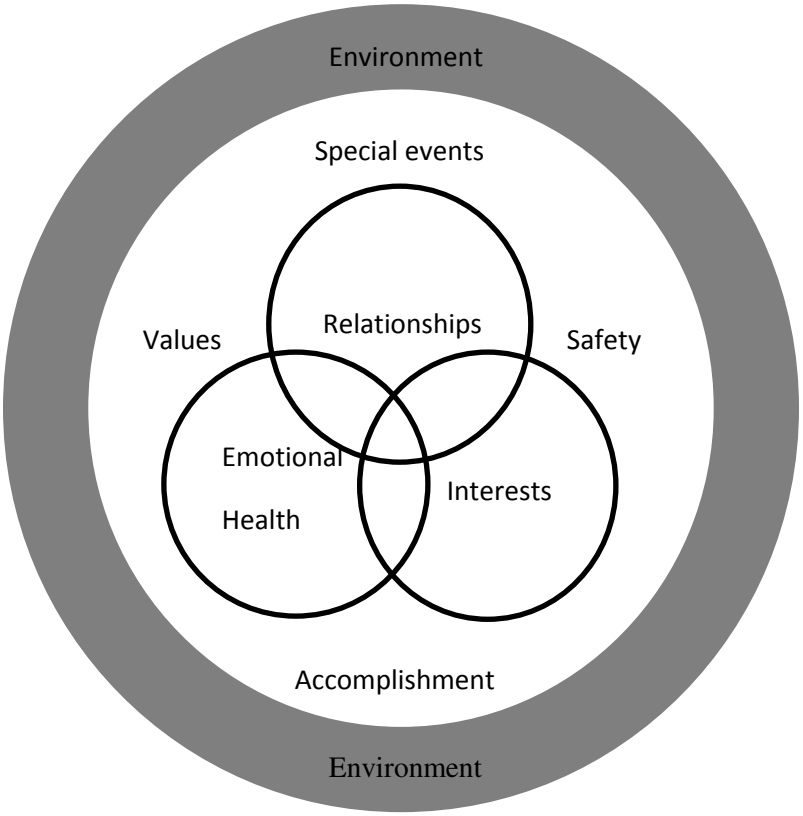

Figure 9. *A Model of Well-Being for Local Children in Middle Childhood*

The main well-being components of emotional health, relationships and interests have a central influence on the meaning of well-being for local children in middle childhood. This concurs with cross-national research stating that child well-being hinges on; a) happy family dynamics in

which interactions are secure and consistent; b) good friends; and c) having lots to do, particularly outdoors (UNICEF, 2011). Whilst the primary influence of both relationships and emotional health are well established (McAuley & Rose, 2014), interests, although considered an independent dimension of child well-being are not consistently detailed as a main factor of child well-being (Fattore et al., 2009). This may reflect the larger ages ranges included in the subjective child well-being studies (see Table 15) and the age-specific well-being views of local children in middle childhood. The central importance of interests to the well-being of children in middle childhood is supported by Chen (2011) who reported that 90% of the narratives from children in middle childhood pertained first and foremost to leisure activities, followed by relationships and then achievement.

Researcher: Tell me about people you feel good around

Participant: My family and my best cousin

Researcher: What makes her your favourite cousin?

Participant: We are the same age and like the same stuff and we're nice to each other and happy

The remaining themes of accomplishment, special events, values, safety and the environment also reflect the international research on subjective child well-being (see Table 15). All eight themes are discussed in the following text integrating them with the assets data (see Table 16).

Table 15. *Integration of the Case Study and Subjective Child Well-Being Literature*

MORGAN (2010)	**FATTORE ET AL., (2009)**	**DEX & HOLLINGWORTH (2012)**	**MILIFFE (2014)**
Feeling healthy (44%)	**Main themes**	**Quality of relationships**	**Main themes**
Feeling loved (24%)	Significant relationships	**Self and Freedoms**	Relationships
Having a home (23%)	& emotional life	Health	Emotional health
Enjoying activities and	**Central independent themes**	Education	Interests
having fun (21%)	Positive sense of self,	Choices	**Independent themes**
Feeling happy (19%)	agency and security	Psycho-social	Values
Feeling safe (17%)	**General themes**	**Quality of Environment**	Safety
Having cared for (17%)	Physical environment	Home, school and neighbourhood	Special events
Having a family (14%)	Material & economic resources		Accomplishment
Having friends (14%)	Physical health		Environment
Having support (11%)	Activities		
	Social responsibility		
	Adversity		

Table 16. *Integration of the Assets Data and Child Well-Being Views*

	DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS CATEGORIES		**CHILD WELL-BEING VIEWS**
Rank	**Asset Strength**	**Rank**	**Thematic Frequency**
1	***Support***	1	***Emotional Health***
	Being loved & cared for		Positive emotions & self-esteem
2	***Boundaries and Expectations***	2	***Relationships***
	Clear expectations, consistent consequences		Key relationships & their qualities & agency
3	***Commitment to Learning***	3	***Interests***
	Life-long learning & believing in their capabilities		Activities of choice
4	***Empowerment***	4	***Special Events***
	Feeling valued and safe		Personal & social celebrations
5	***Social Competency***	5	***Safety***
	Effective interaction, decision making & coping		Basic physiological & safety needs
6	***Positive Values***	6	***Values***
	Guiding values		Positive values
7	***Positive Identity***	7	***Accomplishment***
	Self-esteem & agency		The joy of learning, engagement & attainment
8	***Constructive Use of Time***		
	Opportunities to develop new interests outside of school		

5.2 Integration of the Assets Data and Child Well-Being Views

The participants' well-being views are integrated with the assets data to create richer and more pragmatic understanding of child well-being than either method alone would allow (Clark & Creswell, 2011). Translating both sources of subjective child well-being data into rankings allows for relative comparisons to be made between the strength of assets and the prevalence of well-being themes (see Table 16). The integration of these data sources is most relevant for the top three assets and well-being themes. The integration is also insightful relative to cross-comparisons between the weakest assets and comparable well-being themes. Each asset category will now be described along with the comparatively ranked well-being theme.

Rank 1: Support and Emotional Health

Support, the strongest well-being asset, is the most foundational asset category for healthy child development (Scales et al., 2004). The support asset category describes home, school and community factors that support youth to try new things and develop new skills. As a group, the participants report their support to be at the top of the good range (24.2 out of 30, good range 21-25), with 83% of participants' reporting adequate to thriving levels. This high level of perceived support provides a firm grounding for all the well-being themes.

The support asset category contains comparative strengths and weaknesses (see Appendix G). Parental support is a strong asset with 74.4% of participants reporting that they have parents who often to almost always want them to do their best and help them do it. Such

family support is consistently associated to positive child outcomes including academic achievement, positive peer relationships, effective family communication, healthy behavioural adjustment and greater mental health (Scales et al., 2004). The comparatively weakest asset is in the community context with two out of three participants reporting that they often to almost always felt that they had neighbours who cared about them.

The most frequently discussed well-being theme, emotional health, pertains to hedonia and feeling good. Participants described a range of well-being emotions including positive feelings of high arousal, such as excitement and joyfulness, and positive feelings of low arousal, such as being peaceful and relaxed. The absence of negative thoughts and emotions are central to many participants' understanding of well-being. Some participants discussed, with negative valence, the absence of relationships, interests and safety. Having to process positive and negative emotions is therefore part of many participants' well-being experience. This reflects the reality that, "for most people, childhood is a mixed experience where periods of sadness and loss are balanced with moments of happiness and achievement" (Cleaver, Unell & Aldgate, 2012, preface). The ability to process negative emotions is central to the development of resiliency (Fattore et al., 2009), mental and emotional health (Durie, 1994).

Research: What does well-being, or being well, mean or feel like to you?

Participant: You're not making bad, angry thoughts and doing bad things, you're not saying put downs, you'll be saying 'nice work'

Researcher: Tell me about a time when things were going really well for you

Participant: Now that my parents aren't together and arguing all the time

Rank 2: Boundaries and Expectations, and Relationships

Boundaries and expectations, the second strongest asset category, are provided by adults and include the rules, standards and norms that guide choices and regulate behaviour (Scales et al., 2004). Participants report good levels of input in the boundaries and expectations asset category (23 out of 30, good range 21-25) with 72% reporting adequate to thriving levels. The strength of this asset category underpins all of the well-being themes.

The boundaries and expectations asset category includes six assets of varying strengths and weaknesses (see Appendix G). Strong assets include family monitoring, with 93.1% of participants reporting to often to almost always experience this, and teacher encouragement, with 92.3% of participants often to almost always experiencing this. The weakest asset within this category was located at the community level with only 53.5% of participants' reporting that they often to almost always felt they had neighbours who watched out for them. Positive neighbourhood boundaries are associated with higher academic achievement, social competence and prosocial behaviour, and decreased behavioural problems and affiliations with deviant peers (Scales et al., 2004).

Relationships were the second most frequently discussed component of well-being. Family was consistently talked about, defined by participants as including blood relations, pets and step-relations. The well-being input that participants receive from family time reflects previous research (McAuley & Rose, 2014) and pertains to the loving component of well-being (Allardt,

1993). Many participants also identified friends, teachers and adults in the community as being important to their well-being. This need for relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000) reflects the social dimension of well-being (Durie, 1994; Maslow, 1954: WHO, 1998).

Researcher: Tell me a place you feel well

Participant: Auckland

Researcher: Why Auckland?

Participant: My auntie and uncle live there and I get to walk down to Countdown with them every day and get an 'Up and Go'

While discussing relationships participants identified particular relationship qualities of relevance. These include love, support, togetherness, respect, trust/reliableness, freedom, helpfulness, co-operation, inspiration and fun. The latter four, not explicitly identified within the current literature base (see Table 17), may represent relationship qualities of particular relevance for those in middle childhood. This assertion is supported by the increasing sense of agency and social interaction that occurs during middle childhood (Scales et al., 2014).

Table 17. *Relationship Qualities of Relevance to Child Well-Being*

Dex & Hollingworth, 2012	**McAuley & Rose, 2014**	**Miliffe, 2014**
Loving	Doing things together	Love
Accepting	Trust	Respect
Caring	Agency & free time	Togetherness
Listening		Co-operation
Supportive		Reliableness
Togetherness		Helpfulness
Praise		Fun
Respect		Inspirational
		Freedom

Rank 3: Commitment to Learning, and Interests

The third strongest asset category is commitment to learning, describing the critical self-perceptions, values and skills that underpin academic engagement and achievement (Scales, et al., 2004). The group average, which was at the low end of the good range (21.6 out of 30, good range 21-25), indicates that while most assets are fairly strong, there is also room for improvement. Almost two thirds of the participants' (63%) experience input levels in the adequate to thriving range.

The commitment to learning asset category includes five assets of varying strengths and weaknesses (see Appendix G). An asset strength is achievement motivation with 93.7 % of participants reporting that they often to almost always experience this. Achievement motivation is associated with increased behavioural competence and willingness to engage with challenging academic tasks, greater likelihood of seeking teacher's help with difficult tasks, higher grades and less antisocial behaviour (Scales et al., 2004). Another strong asset is engagement in learning with 90.8% of participants reporting that they often to almost always experience this. Engagement in learning is associated with higher grades, increased social competence and reduced antisocial behaviour (Scales et al., 2004). Reading for pleasure is a comparably weaker asset with 71.3% of participants often to almost always reporting this, The 28.7% of participants' who rarely or only sometimes reading for pleasure are at developmental risk of lower levels of basic achievement, lower reading achievement, reduced reading fluency and reduced enjoyment of reading (Scales et al., 2004).

The interests of local children in middle childhood are central to their experiences and understanding of well-being. Interests include music, art, literacy, dance, technology, sports and nature, the latter of which includes the outdoors, the weather and animals. Some participants' communicated feelings of total absorption when engaging in particular interests such as literacy, technology, nature and sports. Participants' high asset scores in achievement motivation and engagement in learning support them to grow their interests and develop competence, autonomy and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000), herein supporting a positive sense of being (Allardt, 1993).

Rank 4: Empowerment and Special Events

The empowerment asset category describes the extent to which young people perceive themselves as resources, able to make valuable contributions to society and safe from harm (Scales et al., 2004). The group score, which is in the low end of the good range (21.4 out of 30, good range 21-25) indicates that although empowerment assets are frequently experienced, they could be strengthened. In total 63% of participants report adequate to thriving levels of empowerment.

The empowerment asset category includes four assets of varying strengths (see Appendix G). Safety is a comparative strength with 87% of participants often or almost always feeling safe at home. The weakest asset is children as resources with 65% of participants reporting that they are often or almost always given important things to do at home, at school and in the community. Providing children with opportunities to be useful is linked with increased academic achievement, self-esteem, problem-solving ability and pro-social behaviour along with fewer discipline problems (Scales et al., 2004).

Special events, which ranked fourth in the thematic frequency count, were identified by the participants to provide independent, positive contributions to their sense of well-being. Including holidays, birthdays, Christmas, Easter, April Fools, awards, shows, local outings and getting new pets, special events provide distinct well-being inputs to contribute to the ongoing balance of pleasure over pain (Soutter et al., 2011).

Researcher: Tell me about a place where you feel well

Participant: When I went to his holiday house

Researcher: What was good about that for you?

Participant: Because I got to be by the sea and on the beach and Tim was there

Rank 5: Social Competency and Safety

The social competency asset category, ranking fifth, describes ability to develop positive relationships and ability to cope with challenging situations (Scales et al., 2004). Although most social competency assets are experienced regularly, the mean score boarders the good range (20.7 out of 30, good range 21-25) indicating that there is room for improvement. In total 53% of participants report adequate to thriving levels of social competency.

The social competency asset category includes five assets of varying strengths and weaknesses (see Appendix G). Cultural competence was a comparative strength with 87.6% of participants reporting that they often to almost always accept those who were different from themselves. Interpersonal strengths were another comparative strength with 85% of participants reporting to often to almost always being aware of the feelings and needs of others. Such interpersonal competence is associated with decreased behaviour problems and anxiety and higher levels of prosocial behaviour, academic achievement, problem-solving ability and expectations of enjoyment (Scales et al., 2004). Comparatively weaker assets include; a) peaceful conflict resolution skills with only 56.9% of participants reporting they often to almost always express their feelings in proper ways; b) resistance skills with 65.1% of participants

reporting they often to almost always say no to things that are bad for them; and c) conflict resolution with 64.4% of participants reporting that they often to almost always solve conflicts without anyone getting hurt. With relationships being the second most frequently discussed theme, the lower levels of socio-emotional skills reported by some participants may negatively impact their children's social well-being (Durie, 1994).

Many participants identified safety as an independent component of their well-being. This was talked about with both positive and negative valence. The most prevalent threat to participants' sense of safety was bullying. Many participants explicitly linked the absence of bullying to their well-being. The removal of disabling conditions, such as safety needs, is essential for the growth of social and self-esteem needs and self-actualisation (Maslow, 1954). The development of positive school culture attends to this (MoE, 2011).

Researcher: Tell me about a place you feel well in

Participant: At home because if anything does go wrong it won't be too big a problem

Researcher: Tell me about a time when you felt well

Participant: My first time to New Zealand and not getting bullied here

Rank 6: Positive Values and Values

Positive values, ranking sixth in the assets categories, reflect moral commitments that direct behaviour. The fair but vulnerable group average (20.2 out of 30, fair but vulnerable range 15-

20) indicates that participants are, on average, receiving less than optimal levels of input. Less than half of the participants (47%) experience adequate to thriving levels of positive values, which are, directly or indirectly, related to higher academic achievement, problem-solving ability, self-esteem, and decreased rates of early smoking and alcohol use (Scales et al., 2004).

The positive values asset category identifies six assets of varying strengths and weaknesses (see Appendix G). Strong assets include: a) Caring, with 91.6% of participants often to almost always thinking that it is important to help other people; and b) a healthy lifestyle for which 87% of participants often to almost always reporting eating good food and exercising. Equality and social justice are weaker assets. Herein 53.4% of participants often to almost always help to make the school and neighbourhood a better place, 48.9% of participants often to almost always do things for others in their community and 39.6% of participants' often to almost always help fix world problems, such as giving money to those who need it. The value of integrity was particularly low with only 34.2% of participants often to almost always telling other people what they believe in. This finding possibly reflects the wording of the question with participants potentially valuing honesty but not being explicitly aware of their general belief system, how to use it to manage their behaviour and having the confidence to publicly assert it.

Values were also identified as an independent component of the children's sense of well-being. Their guiding values include health, inclusion, gratefulness, persistence, confidence and freedom. The value of health, the underpinning concept of well-being (Durie, 1994; WHO, 1998), was identified by many participants. It was defined as including healthy food, drinking

water, daily exercise and keeping clean (i.e., showering and brushing your teeth). Gratitude is a value of particular importance due to its link to spirituality (Benson et al., 2012), as is inclusion as it relates to participant' experiences of bullying. The direct convergence between the values theme and the positive values asset category confirms values as a central component of child well-being for local children in middle childhood. Further to this, with less than half of the children reporting adequate to thriving levels of positive values, explicit development of the children's guiding values, in particular health, gratitude and inclusions may be appropriate.

Rank 7: Positive Identity and Accomplishment

The positive identity asset category measures children's self-esteem and the extent to which they feel they have control over the things that happen to them (Scales et al., 2004). This is central to and overlaps with participants' emotional health, the most frequently discussed well-being theme. The positive identity asset category scored in the fair but vulnerable range (20.1 out of 30, fair but vulnerable range 15-20) with under half of the participants' (46%) reporting adequate to thriving levels of positive identity.

The positive identity asset category includes four assets of varying strengths (see Appendix G). Self-esteem was a comparative strength with 91.5% of participants often to almost always reporting to like who they are. Positive views of the future are a comparatively weaker asset with only 56.2% of participant believing that they can often to almost always influence what happens in their life and future. In addition, approximately two thirds of the group could often to almost always find good ways to handle difficult situations (60.3%) and be disappointed

about something but not get too upset (67.5%). Self-efficacy and problem-solving skills are central components of resilience (Masten et al., 1999) and emotional health.

The experience of accomplishment provides an independent source of well-being for local children in middle childhood. Such eudaimonia depicts the human need to develop competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000) which supports self-esteem to develop (Maslow, 1954) and the ongoing experience of well-being (Allardt, 1993). Sports, previously identified as having particular importance to child well-being (McAuley & Rose, 2014) were most frequently discussed in relation to the experience of accomplishment.

Researcher: Tell me about a time in your life when things were going really well

Participant: When I was really nervous before a race and I ended up getting through it and I was quite happy about it

Rank 8: Constructive Use of Time

Constructive use of time is the participants' weakest asset category. The group average is in the fair but vulnerable range (18 out of 30, fair but vulnerable range 15-20) with only 31% of participants reporting adequate to thriving levels of opportunities, outside of school, to discover their interests and develop skills. The underdevelopment of this asset contrasts with main theme of interests.

The constructive use of time asset category includes four assets of varying strengths (see Appendix G). A comparative strength is participation in sports activities, clubs or other groups

with 80.6% of participants' reporting to often to almost always be involved in such after-school activities. Only 24.8% of participants' report that they often to almost always do things in a religious place, like a church. This low score may reflect the secular nature of New Zealand society. There is no religious education within the New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 2007). Spirituality is only taught within instruction in Māori culture (MoE, 2007). Ka Hikita (2013), which argues for cultural and spiritual strengths of Māori to become a central thread within education, aims to develop Māori cultural giftedness (Bevan-Brown, 2005) and the spiritual well-being of all children (Durie, 1994).

Ecological Assets

The ecological underpinnings of child well-being are described by both the thematic data and the assets data. Within participants' well-being discussions, they talked about their experiences of positive emotions, relationships, interests, safety, values, special events and accomplishment across the home, school and community contexts.

Researcher: Tell me about places where you feel well

Participant: Playing on the playground at school

Participant: The event centre where I play, score and swim

The assets data objectively identifies relative strengths and weaknesses across environmental context areas (see Table 18). The family and school environments provide the strongest well-being inputs with both scoring in the good range with respective scores of 23.7 out of 30 and 23.1 out of 30 (good range, 21-25). The community level provides the weakest ecological well-being input with participants reporting a fair but vulnerable score of 18.6 out of 30 (fair but vulnerable range, 15-20).

Table 18. *Ecological Assets*

Rank	**Ecological Context Areas**
1	*Family*
2	*School*
3	*Social*
4	*Personal*
5	*Community*

5.2.1 Summary

The asset strengths of support, boundaries and expectations, and commitment to learning have semantic connections to the main well-being themes of emotional health, relationships and interests. The latter two of these well-being themes, emotional health and interests, are also semantically related to the asset categories of positive identity and constructive use of time.

There is a discrepancy here between the frequency at which these predominant well-being themes are discussed and the weakness of the underpinning asset categories. Under half of the participants reported adequate to thriving input levels in the positive identity asset category and under a third of participants' reported adequate to thriving experiences in the constructive use of time asset category.

Participants discussed well-being across contexts and the assets data objectively describes the strengths and weaknesses of well-being inputs across ecological sites. Areas of asset strengths include family and school contexts. The well-being inputs experienced at the community level are comparatively weaker, scoring in the fair but vulnerable range. This argues for community development, a central tenet of the assets approach (Scales et al., 2004).

5.3 Cross-National Comparison of Child Well-Being Levels

The developmental assets model, linked to the largest youth development framework in the world, has been completed by over four million adolescents from across sixty diverse countries (Scales, 2014). The global value of the assets approach, adopted by both Save the Children and World Vision International, has consistently shown that higher asset levels are consistently associated with better well-being outcomes (Scales et al., 2012).

The middle childhood adaption of the developmental assets framework was piloted on 474 children in the 4^{th} to 6^{th} grade (i.e., aged between 9 to 11 years old) from across the US (Scales et al., 2011). The average total assets score for this US population is 44, which indicates well-

being levels are at the low end of the good range (see Table 19 and Table 20). This is similar to the current case study in which the total asset score is 42, which is also at the low end of the good range (see Table 19 and Table 20). Two thirds of the participants in both samples report adequate to thriving levels of developmental assets, with one third of participants' in both samples reporting impoverished well-being levels (see Figure 10 and Figure 11).

Table 19. *Cross National Total Asset Scores*

SAMPLE	**TOTAL ASSETS SCORE***D*
US	44
NZ	42

Table 20. *Asset Level Ranges*

SCORE RANGES	**CLASSIFICAITON**
51-60	Excellent asset levels,
41-50	Good moderately high asset levels, adequate
31-40	Fair relatively low asset levels, vulnerable
30-0	Low asset levels, challenged

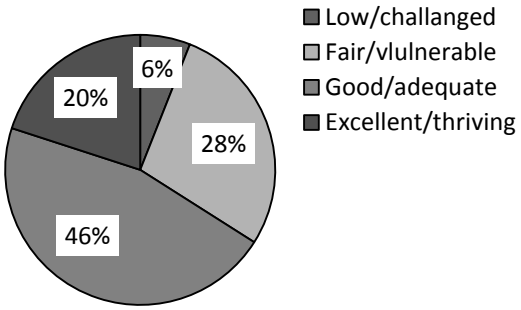

Figure 10. *The Percentage Distribution of Total Asset Levels across the US Sample*

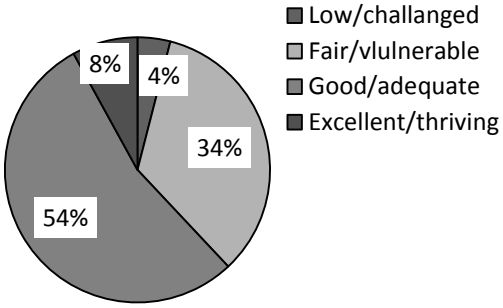

Figure 11. *The Percentage Distribution of Total Asset Levels across the NZ Sample*

While children across both samples report good levels of wellbeing, there is variability in the distribution of scores between the samples. Approximately two thirds of both samples report well-being levels in the adequate to thriving range. However, the American sample reports over double the thriving behaviour of the New Zealand sample. This may reflect a cultural artefact of American society which values, in relation to wellbeing, high arousal emotions (Vazquez & Hervas, 2013). It may also reflect the sampling strategy of the American study which gathered participants from a nation-wide Salvation Army youth programme. The Christian underpinnings of the Salvation Army context will likely have influenced responses to, in particular, religious items in the questionnaire.

Whilst both US and NZ samples report well-being levels in the good range, their group scores are both at the low end. In particular, one in three participants, in both samples, report well-being levels in the challenged to vulnerable range. This indicates that there is similar room for improvement across both samples.

5.4 Strengths and Limitations

There were a number of strengths in the current case study. The large number of participants supports the validity of conclusions drawn relative to local children's well-being. The use of two subjective child well-being methods allowed the components of well-being to be identified through the children's views as well as permitting objective measurement. This thesis, which is therefore grounded in the children's views, empowers their agenda (UNCRC, 1989) and "right to have their views considered on matters that affect them" (MoSD, 2002, p.10).

The assets approach identifies components of child well-being that, regardless of risk or adversity, increase positive developmental outcomes and decrease developmental risk of negative outcomes (Masten et al., 1999). It is a well-resourced framework that complements our National policies and principles (ERO, 2013; MoE, 2013; MoE, 2011; MoE, 2007; MoSD, 2012;). Although a small number of questionnaire items require cultural re-adjustment, the asset approach presents an "evidence-based practice [that may be] adopted by schools in partnerships with families and communities" (Nobel et al., 2008) to respond to the urgent need to develop New Zealand's child well-being (D'Souza et al., 2012).

The current case study offers an age-specific contribution to the national literature on subjective child well-being. According to Dex and Hollingworth (2012) it is critical to develop our understanding of how age differentially impacts the meaning and components of subjective well-being, particularly for those aged between 8 to 16 years old. Whilst the current case study largely reflects the international research on subjective child well-being (Dex & Hollingworth, 2012; Fattore et al., 2009; Morgan, 2010), the sematic nature of the themes, along with their

interconnections, offers a unique and pragmatic understanding of local child well-being in middle childhood.

Two items in the assets questionnaire, which proved to be inappropriate within the local cultural context, potentially limit the validity of the assets data. Firstly, the question "I say no to cigarettes, alcohol and other drugs" was confusing for many participants. Many children, having never been exposed to such situations, found the answer option of rarely to semantically represent their experience. Many children found it hard to fathom answering almost always when they had never accounted such as situation. The second culturally inappropriate item related to religion. Unlike the dominant Christian beliefs that permeate American society, New Zealand's culture is strongly secular, although underpinned to some extent, at least within the curriculum, by Māori spirituality or wairuatanga (MoE, 2007). The questionnaire item asking participants' "how often do you do things in a religious place, like a church" therefore proved to be culturally inappropriate.

The sample population within this case study, derived from one location in a secondary urban area of New Zealand, cannot be generalised to the population at large. Although the sample is representative of the general population in the local town, the single sample site, which was a decile 10 school (i.e., representing the top 10% of the socio-economic spectrum), lacks socio-economic diversity.

The focus group discussions were subject to a number of potential limitations. The semi-structured format and interview guide will have influenced the scope of discussions and the themes derived. In addition, the inexperience of the researcher may have limited the extent to

which themes were explored during discussions. Further to the researcher's inexperience, the questions in the interview guide were not rigidly adhered to. This potentially limits the validity of the thematic data.

The thematic analysis was conducted at a semantic level limiting deeper analysis of the material. This decision, to tie analysis to surface features of the text rather than engage in latent interpretation of underlying psychological phenomenon, was informed by the researcher's lack of experience in thematic analysis and the single-person nature of the analysis. To have further confirmed the validity of the well-being themes they could have been discussed with a small, representative group of participants.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

The current case study explores subjective well-being for local children in middle childhood with the overarching goal of completing a strength-based cross-national comparison. The aim, to identify what well-being means to local children was achieved through integrating the thematic data and assets-based data, herein providing a more complete and pragmatic understanding of child well-being than either method alone could provide (Clark & Creswell, 2011; McAuley & Rose, 2014).

The most relevant components of well-being for local children in middle childhood include relationships, emotional health and interests. This is congruent with international research (UNICEF, 2011). The key dimensions of relationships and emotional health are well established (Dex & Hollingworth, 2012; Durie, 1994; Fattore et al., 2009). The relationship qualities underpinning well-being for local children in middle childhood include love, helpfulness, support, togetherness, reliableness, respect, fun, inspiration, freedom and co-operation. The latter four relationship qualities are of specific value to the well-being of local children in middle childhood (Dex & Hollingworth, 2012). Interests, a main component of well-being for local children, are infrequently experienced by the majority of participants' in the after-school context. The development of local well-being policy to increase all children's access to music, art, literacy, dance, technology, sports and nature, would move their views to centre stage (ERO, 2013; McAuley & Rose, 2014; UNCRC, 1989).

Values are a key component of the well-being experiences of local children in middle childhood. Their guiding values include health, inclusion, gratitude, persistence and confidence. Health, defined by the children as eating healthy food, drinking water, exercising regularly and keeping clean, is central to many children's understanding of what it means to be well. Inclusion is also pivotal value to many children's well-being as exclusion relates to their experiences of bullying. Another value of particular relevance is gratitude. This, along with the experience of awe when interacting with nature, relates to local children's spiritual well-being (Benson et al., 2012). This is a cornerstone of health and well-being in New Zealand (Durie, 1994). With previous research identifying a lack of spiritual undertones within the well-being narratives of secondary school students (Soutter et al., 2012b), recognising and developing participants' connection to nature and fellow mankind is central to nurturing their spiritual well-being. With less than half of participants' reporting that they often to almost always experience positive values, the explicit development of participants' belief system is key to developing their well-being (ERO, 2013).

Some participants' well-being experiences include both positive and negative affect. This reality is reflected by resiliency research (Fattore et al., 2009). The need to develop systematic well-being initiatives that can increase levels of positive well-being inputs is central to supporting the well-being of all students (ERO, 2013). Asset category strengths including support and boundaries and expectations, and ecological strengths across family and school contexts, may be used to leverage comparatively weaker asset categories including positive values, positive identity and constructive use of time, particularly within the community context

(Laija-Rodriguez et al., 2013). Such systematic development is urgently required to address the poor and inequitable child well-being outcomes in New Zealand (D'Souza et al., 2012).

Cross-national child well-being comparisons provide important direction for the development of National policy (Ben-Arieh, 2010). Previous cross-national comparisons have highlighted New Zealand's poor child well-being outcomes (Heshmati et al., 2007). Whilst New Zealand has been slow to respond to its poor and inequitable child well-being outcomes, recent policy developments identify new opportunities for local directives to develop strategies to do better (ERO, 2013). Although the sampling strategy in the current case study prohibits generalisation to the population at large, the large sample of local children in middle childhood reports comparable levels of well-being to the American sample. Both samples experience total asset levels at the lower end of the good range, with a third of participants in each sample reporting less than optimal well-being levels. This indicates similar room for improvement across both contexts, herein uniting the cross-national child-wellbeing drive. The main difference between the samples is in thriving behaviour, with American children reporting over double that of local children. This finding however may reflect cultural artefacts (Vazquez & Hervas, 2013).

Child well-being is a complex situation that has demanded the attention policy maker's (ERO, 2013; MoSD, 2012). The Government's recent White Paper on Vulnerable Children (2012) and the Māori Affairs Select Committee Inquiry into the Determinants of Well-being for Māori Children (2012) highlights the startling extent of inequality within New Zealand's society. Recent policy developments, including the Wellbeing@School initiative (MoE, 2011) and the

Well-Being for Success initiative (ERO, 2013) identify the national intention to do better. However, to effectively translate such policy into local level initiatives requires multi-disciplinary collaboration. Models of collaboration, drawing together local resources, are being developed by researchers from across the world who have united under the shared language of child well-being.

6.1 Recommendations

The underpinning recommendation of this case study is to advocate for children's rights and put forward their agenda (UNCRC, 1989; ERO, 2012). This will involve presenting the thesis to the school Principal and the Year 5/6 teachers who supported the study. Future research would make small cultural readjustments to the assets questionnaire and trial it across diverse socio-economic and geographical areas. A future pilot study would look to collaborate with the Search Institute to explore the utility and efficacy of the assets framework in an intervention study. Such an endeavour is suggested to respond to the well-being needs of all children and, in particular, the most vulnerable.

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Appendix A: Developmental Assets Profile Questionnaire

DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS PROFILE

Self-Report for Ages 9 to 11

NAME / ID: _____ **TODAY'S DATE:** Month: ___ Day:____ Year:____

SEX: ☐ Male ☐ Female **AGE:** _____ **GRADE**:_____ **BIRTH DATE:** Month: ___ Day:____ Year:____

RACE/ETHNICITY (Check all that apply): ☐ Māori ☐ Pakeha ☐ European ☐ Asian

☐ Pacific People ☐ Other (*please detail*):_____

INSTRUCTIONS: Below is a list of positive things that you might have in *yourself, your family, friends, neighborhood, school, and community*. For each item that describes you **now or within the last 3 months**, check if the item is:

Not At All or Rarely **Somewhat or Sometimes** **Very or Often** **Extremely or Almost Always**

If you do not want to answer an item, leave it blank. But please, try to answer all the items the best you can.

Note. The word "parents" means 1 or more adults who are responsible for raising you.

	Not at all or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
1. I tell other people what I believe in.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. I can shape and influence what happens in my life and future.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I like myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I say no to things that are dangerous or bad for me.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I enjoy reading or being read to.	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I make friends with other people.	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. I care about school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. I do my homework.	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. I say no to cigarettes, alcohol, and other drugs.	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. I enjoy learning.	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. I show my feelings in proper ways.	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. I feel good about my future.	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. I ask my parents for ideas when I need help.	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. I can be disappointed about something, but not get too upset.	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. I find good ways to handle things that are hard in my life.	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. I think it is important to help other people.	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. I feel safe at home.	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. I plan ahead and make good choices.	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. I stay away from bad people and bad things.	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. I solve conflicts without anyone getting hurt.	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. I feel that people like and respect me.	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. I take responsibility for what I do.	☐	☐	☐	☐
23. I tell the truth, even when it is not easy.	☐	☐	☐	☐
24. I accept people who are different from me.	☐	☐	☐	☐
25. I feel safe at school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
26. I try to learn new things.	☐	☐	☐	☐

PLEASE TURN OVER AND COMPLETE THE BACK

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Note. The word "parents" means 1 or more adults who are responsible for raising you.

	Not at all or Rarely	Somewhat or Sometimes	Very or Often	Extremely or Almost Always
27. I think about what I want to do in my life when I grow up.	☐	☐	☐	☐
28. I am told to try things that might be good for me.	☐	☐	☐	☐
29. I do chores at home and help make family decisions.	☐	☐	☐	☐
30. I help to make my school, neighborhood, or community a better place.	☐	☐	☐	☐
31. I do things at a religious place, like a church.	☐	☐	☐	☐
32. I do healthy things like eat good food and exercise.	☐	☐	☐	☐
33. I am told to help others.	☐	☐	☐	☐
34. I am part of a sports activity, a club, or another group.	☐	☐	☐	☐
35. I help fix problems in the world, such as giving food to hungry people or giving money to those who need it.	☐	☐	☐	☐
36. I am given important things to do at home, at school, or in my community.	☐	☐	☐	☐
37. I respect other people.	☐	☐	☐	☐
38. I want to do well in school and my other activities.	☐	☐	☐	☐
39. I am aware of other people's feelings and needs.	☐	☐	☐	☐
40. I am involved in creative activities like music, theater, or art.	☐	☐	☐	☐
41. I do things for others in my community.	☐	☐	☐	☐
42. I spend time at home doing things with my parents.	☐	☐	☐	☐
43. I have friends who set good examples for me.	☐	☐	☐	☐
44. I have a school that gives students clear rules.	☐	☐	☐	☐
45. I have adults who are good role models for me.	☐	☐	☐	☐
46. I have a safe neighborhood.	☐	☐	☐	☐
47. I have parents who want me to do my best and help me do it.	☐	☐	☐	☐
48. I have good neighbors who care about me.	☐	☐	☐	☐
49. I have a school that cares about kids and helps them learn.	☐	☐	☐	☐
50. I have teachers who help me do my best.	☐	☐	☐	☐
51. I have other adults in my life – who are not my parents – who care about me.	☐	☐	☐	☐
52. I have a family that sets clear rules for me.	☐	☐	☐	☐
53. I have parents who talk to me about doing well in school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
54. I have a family that gives me love and support.	☐	☐	☐	☐
55. I have neighbors who help watch out for me.	☐	☐	☐	☐
56. I have parents who are good at talking with me about things.	☐	☐	☐	☐
57. I have a school where every student has to follow the same rules.	☐	☐	☐	☐
58. I have a family that knows where I am and what I am doing.	☐	☐	☐	☐

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY!

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Appendix B: Psychometric properties of the DAP

Validity

The validity of the developmental assets framework is demonstrated by its ability to identify critical positive well-well-being puts, its alignment with other well-being approaches and its strong correlation with both current and future well-being outcomes (Scales, 2014).

The concurrent validity of the developmental assets profile was assessed using the original assets survey, the Attitudes and Behaviours survey (A&B) which has been used with over four million youth. The DAP total assets score and the total number of assets derived from A&B survey showed a strong linear correlation of $r=.82$, $p<.001$. The DAP total asset scores increased systematically alongside the number of assets identified on the A&B survey. Across both surveys asset levels and corresponding categories ran in parallel. For example, youth who had between 0-10 assets on the A&B survey had, on average, total asset scores on the DAP in the challenged range (0-29). The DAP category scales and asset counts from the A&B show a moderately ($r=.62$) high convergence.

Participants who reported higher scores on both the A&B survey and the DAP exhibited reduced levels of ten indices of risk behaviour. Those who scored in the low range on the external assets reported average risk behaviour patterns of 3.2 for males and 2.8 for females.

For youth who scored in the thriving range on the external assets an average of 0.5 risk behaviour patterns were reported by males and 0.3 for females.

Thriving behaviour, the indicators of which include school success, affirmation of diversity and leadership, increases successively alongside the asset scale. Those in the excellent range reported between 6 to 8 thriving indicators. Males in the vulnerable category reported an average of 2.2 thriving behaviours and 2.6 for females. The internal assets explain 18% of the variation in student's academic grades.

Reliability

The reliability of the DAP, also detailed in the technical summary in the manual, was based off detailed two large field studies each with over a 1000 participants aged between 9 to 18 years old. The internal consistency of the DAP was relatively high with an average of .81 for the eight asset categories. The internal consistency was .95 for the internal assets, .93 for the external assets and .97 for the total assets. The two week test-retest reliability was acceptable with an average of r=.79 for the eight asset category scales. The internal assets score has a test-retest reliability of r=.86 and the external assets score had a test-retest reliability of r=.84. The test-retest reliability was r=.87 for the total assets score.

Appendix C- Information Sheet for Parent

Child Well-Being Case Study

Outline

This case study aims to gather children's views on well-being and identify strengths which support their wellbeing.

Researcher Introduction

My name is Anastasia Miliffe and I am due to complete my Masters in Educational Psychology this year. I have an undergraduate degree in Psychology and a postgraduate diploma in Education. I have worked with children with autism and specific learning difficulties for eight years whilst residing in Queenstown.

Project Relevance

In recent years child well-being has become an important topic for international and national policy makers, as well as for educators. The United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) documents child well-being trends across the world. In the last international comparison New Zealand ranked poorly alongside the other 29 wealthy countries (29/30 for health and safety behaviours and 24/30 for risk behaviours). In response to these reports the government has created several positive youth development initiatives with the goal of creating greater well-being for a greater number of children and young people.

The Education Review Office (ERO) recently published a draft document detailing nine key indicators of child well-being (Well-being For Success: Draft Evaluation Indicators for Student Wellbeing, 2013). These indicators will provide a framework for schools to collect well-being data and respond to the well-being needs of students. ERO is currently asking for feedback on the draft indicators before they publish the final version in 2015 for all primary and secondary schools to use. Now is therefore an important

time to start discussions about well-being and to develop greater understanding of student's strengths in New Zealand so that meaningful outcome measures and programmes can be established.

Project Goals

The three main goals are to identify; a) what well-being means to local children in the middle childhood age-range; b) how happy they are; and c) what internal and external assets support them to 'flourish'.

Project Description

A class discussion will aim to identify what well-being means to the children. Three types of questions will be asked; 1) what does well-being mean to them; 2) what factors are important for their sense of wellbeing; and 3) what internal processes support their wellbeing.

I have chosen to measure well-being through measuring the children's well-being strengths. Assets (i.e., student strengths) are measured in The Developmental Assets Profile which looks at four external assets (support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time) and four internal assets (commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies and positive identity) are measured. This measure of child well-being has cross-cultural validity and has been used in both research and practice across the world (e.g., North America, Central and South America, Africa, Europe, the Middle East and Asia). Research has repeatedly shown that higher asset levels in middle childhood are linked to lower levels of risk behaviours and higher levels of thriving behaviours in adolescence (Scales, Sesma & Boltstrom, 2004).

Finally, to develop a better understanding of how happy QPS children are with their lives they will be asked to rate their satisfaction with life on a 10-step ladder.

Data Analysis

The children's well-being views will be thematically analysed and compared to the assets data. The overarching aim to use the assets data to make a cross-national comparison.

Participants Identification and Recruitment

Dr. Bird agreed to allow all Year 5 and Year 6 students to participate in the study. If you do not want your child to be included in the study please sign this below form and return it to the school office by the 17th March.

Invitation to Participate and Participant's Rights

The school board has consented to the involvement of Queenstown Primary School in the case study. I would therefore like to invite you and your child to participate in this study. You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, your child has the right to; decline to answer any particular question; withdraw from the study; ask any questions about the study at any time during participation; provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher; and access to the summary of findings when the project is concluded. For any further details please email me at anamiliffe@gmail.com

Low-Risk Ethics Consent

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judge to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher, Anastasia Miliffe, is responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish o raise with someone other than the research, please contact either of my supervisors, Jill Bevan-Brown (J.M.Bevan-Brown@massey.ac.nz) and Hal Jackson (H.Jackson@massey.ac.nz) or Professor John O'Neill, Director (Research Ethics) either by telephone 06 350 5249 or email humanethics@massey.ac.nz

Project Procedures

Data collection will take up to 45 minutes.

Data Management

All participants will be given a number and the data analysed anonymously. The paperwork will be collected and kept securely for three years afterward.

Opt-Out Return

If you **DO NOT** want your child to be involved in the study **please return** the form below to the 'respondent's box' at the school office by the 17th March, 2014.

I_____ do not wish my child _____ to participate in the study.

Signature_____ Date _____

Appendix D: Codebook

Codes	Code descriptions	Well-Being Themes	Example Dialog
EH	1 Emotional health - Good thoughts e.g., comfortable & proud - Positive emotions - Positive balance of positive & negative emotions - NOT feeling bad, sick, guilty, bad thoughts - Self-esteem - Feel-good food e.g., chocolate & ice cream - Play, fun & games	Emotional health - Defined as emotional health and self-esteem. For some it involves balancing positive & negative emotions and for others the absence of negative emotion	- When you are happy and can't stop smiling - Just feeling fine but a bit jittery sometimes - Feeling well is like when you are happy and there is nothing wrong really. - Being a superstar - Happy, healthy, fresh & proud - Punching something
PR	2 Positive Relationships Key relationships - Family including relations and pets - Friends, including classmates and best friends - Teachers - Others – babysitter, cooks, people from national country	Relationships - Key relationships, the valued qualities of relationships and personal power	- Family and friends and cousins and my dog - My family my pony my dog my best friend - People who inspire me, my mum my dad

	Relationship qualities - Inspiration - Kind - Reliable - Helpful - Supportive - Co-operative - Personal power		my sister and my friends and professional skiers - People you can actually rely on, lots my friends and teachers - Sometimes being well is just doing things that I like doing
V	3 Values - Inclusion - Healthy - Gratefulness - Persistence - Confidence - Freedom	Values - Positive values	- Feeling included - Exercise and water and eating the right foods and keeping clean - I feel grateful and safe and good environment. - When I was really nervous before a race and I ended up getting through it and I was quiet happy about it
AG	4 Accomplishment & growth - Developing competence - Competition	Accomplishment - Learning and achievement	- When you're done with it and it's really nice - That you've accomplished something and you're really happy about yourself and

			what you've done - When I learnt how to do a backwards walkover in gymnastics - when I started getting good at running - When I finally did the jumps at gorge rd – the big jumps
IN	5 Interests & engaged choices - Feelings of flow - Activities - Music - Art - Dance - Literacy - Technology - Personal possessions/toys - Nature/animals/weather - Sports - Want satisfaction	Interests - Activities of choice - Include dialog on nature and the surrounding environment that does not specifically detail an environmental context.	- Happy and never want it to end, can't stop doing it - Enjoying what I am doing maybe – sometimes I don't really like it [schoolwork] but sometimes I am just so into it and I know what I'm doing and it is fun - Reading relaxes me - Writing makes me feel happy - I can relax when I have got a computer - The garden, flowers and nature surrounding me - Getting fresh air - When I got my Nintendo

S	6 Basic needs - Physiological; Food, water and sleep - Safety; emotional and physical	Safety - Basic needs	- Eating healthy food - Relax and sleep on my bed - At home because if anything does go wrong it won't be too big a problem - I got bullied here and one day I just had enough so I told one of the teachers even though I was a bit scared and then we solved the problem with another teacher
E	7 Environment - Home - School - Community	Environment - Environmental sites and influences on wellbeing - Include material and explicit environmental	- *My house* because my house is fun and I get to do what I want - *Home*, I feel happy because I am with the rest of my family - Playing on the playground *at school* - the *event center* where I play, score and swim - *Pony club*
SE	8 Special events - Birthday - Easter - Christmas	Special events - Personal and social celebrations	- Getting my medal at cricket, for most improved - When I got my first pet

- April fools
- Parties
- Awards
- Holiday
- Theme parks

Appendix E: Thematic Frequencies

Code	Brief definition	Raw frequencies	Frequency rankings
Emotional Health	Positive emotions, self-esteem, a balance of positive over negative emotions and the absence of negative emotions	56	1
Relationships	Key relationships & relationship qualities, & personal power/agency	53	2
Interests & choices	Activities of choice	45	3
Environment	Environmental sites and influences on wellbeing	41	4
Special events	Personal and social celebrations	25	5
Safety	Basic needs	19	6
Values	Positive values	18	7
Accomplishment	Learning and achievement	13	8

Appendix F: Thematic Co-Occurrence Matrix

	Emotional health	Positive relationships	Interests	Safety	Special events	Accomplishment	Values	Environment
Emotional health	-	24	29	17	14	8	16	24
Positive relationships	24	-	22	12	17	4	8	26
Interests	29	22	-	12	15	7	8	27
Safety	17	12	12	-	8	2	8	12
Special events	14	17	15	8	-	4	2	18
Accomplishment & growth	8	4	7	2	4	-	4	6
Values	16	8	8	8	2	4	-	6
Environment	24	26	27	12	18	6	6	-

Appendix G: Questionnaire Response Frequencies

Frequency	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost always
External Assets				
Support				
Q13 – Advice	3.85%	17.69%	41.54%	36.92%
parents	(5)	(23)	(54)	(48)
Q47 – Parents	0.0%	1.6%	24.0%	74.4%
help	(0)	(2)	(31)	(96)
Q48- Good	12.3%	20.8%	36.9%	30.0%
neighbours	(16)	(27)	(48)	(39)
Q49- Caring	0.8%	5.4%	25.6%	68.2%
school	(1)	(7)	(33)	(88)
Q51- Adult	3.8%	9.2%	25.2%	61.8%
support	(5)	(12)	(33)	(81)
Q54- Family	3.8%	9.2%	25.2%	61.8%
support	(5)	(12)	(33)	(81)
Empowerment				
Q17-Safe at	2.3%	10.7%	32.8%	54.2%
home	(3)	(14)	(43)	(71)
Q21-Feels	4.6%	23.1%	51.5	20.8%
valued	(6)	(30)	(67)	(27)
Q25- Safe at	7.0%	19.4%	38.0%	35.7%
school	(9)	(25)	(49)	(46)
Q29-Family	6.2%	23.8%	41.5%	28.5%
tasks	(8)	(31)	(54)	(37)
Q36-Useful	2.3%	28.2%	47.3%	22.1%

roles	(3)	(37)	(62)	29
Q46-Safe	3.9%	10.9%	30.5%	54.7%
neighbourhood	(5)	(14)	(39)	(70)
Boundaries &				
Expectations				
Q43-Peer role	3.8%	17.6%	43.5%	35.1%
models	(5)	(23)	(57)	(46)
Q44-Clear	0.8%	11.0%	42.5%	45.7%
school rules	(1)	(14)	(54)	(58)
Q45-Adult role	0.0%	9.4%	27.3%	63.3%
models	(0)	(12)	(35)	(81)
Q50-Teachers	1.5%	6.1%	26.7%	65.6%
encourage	(2)	(8)	(35)	(86)
Q52-Clear	3.1%	12.3%	36.9%	47.7%
family rules	(4)	(16)	(48)	(62)
Q53-Parents	3.8%	11.5%	35.9%	48.1%
Encourage	(5)	(15)	(47)	(63)
Q55-	19.4%	27.1%	33.3%	20.2%
Neighbours	(25)	(35)	(43)	(26)
monitor				
57 Q57- Fair	19.4%	27.1%	33.3%	20.2%
school rules	(25)	(35)	(43)	(26)
Q58- Family	0.0%	6.9%	31.3%	61.8%
monitors	(0)	(9)	(41)	(81)
Constructive				
Use of Time				
Q31-Religious	60.5%	14.7%	9.3%	15.5%
activity	(78)	(19)	(12)	(20)
Q34-Sports,	7.0%	12.4%	15.5%	65.1%

club, group	(9)	(16)	(20)	(84)
Q40-Creative	17.7%	17.7%	21.5%	43.1%
activities	(23)	(23)	(28)	(56)
Q42-Time at	4.6%	18.3%	45.0%	32.1%
home	(6)	(24)	(59)	(42)
Internal Assets				
Commitment				
to Learning				
Q5-Enjoys	7.0%	21.7%	31.8%	39.5%
reading	(9)	(28)	(41)	(51)
Q7-Cares	6.3%	18.8%	39.8%	35.2%
about school	(8)	(24)	(51)	(45)
Q8-Does	7.7%	13.1%	40.0%	39.2%
homework	(10)	(17)	(52)	(51)
Q10- Enjoys	7.7%	17.7%	45.4%	29.2%
learning	(10)	(23)	(69)	(38)
Q26- Engaged	1.5%	7.6%	37.4%	53.4%
learning	(2)	(10)	(49)	(70)
Q28-	1.6%	23.4%	46.9%	28.1%
Encouraged	(2)	(30)	(60)	(36)
new				
Q38-	0.0%	8.6%	28.9%	64.8%
Motivated	(0)	(11)	(37)	(83)
Positive Values				
Q1-Stand up	12.4%	53.5%	26.4%	7.8%
for beliefs	(16)	(69)	(34)	(10)
Q9-Avoids	10.2%	3.1%	6.3%	80.5%
alcohol	(13)	(4)	(8)	(103)
Q16-Values	0.8%	7.7%	23.1%	68.5%

helping	(1)	(10)	(30)	(89)
Q22-Takes	1.5%	13.0%	45.8%	39.7%
responsibility	(2)	(17)	(60)	(52)
Q23-Values	3.1%	16.3%	55.0%	25.6%
honesty	(4)	(21)	(71)	(33)
Q30-Helps	6.1%	40.5%	36.6%	16.8%
community	(8)	(53)	(48)	(22)
Q32-Healthy	1.5%	11.5%	36.2%	50.8%
habits	(2)	(15)	(47)	(66)
Q33-	3.1%	24.0%	43.4%	28.7%
Encouraged to	(4)	(31)	(56)	(37)
help				
Q35-Help solve	17.6%	32.8%	29.0%	20.6%
problems	(23)	(43)	(38)	(27)
Q37-Respects	0.0%	8.4%	33.6%	58.0%
others	(0)	(11)	(44)	(76)
Q41-Serving	10.7%	40.5%	34.4%	14.5%
others	(14)	(53)	(54)	(19)
Social				
Competencies				
Q4-Avoids	10.1%	24.8%	24.0%	41.1%
unhealthy	(13)	(32)	(31)	(53)
Q6-Builds	3.8%	20.8%	35.4%	40.0%
friendships	(5)	(27)	(46)	(52)
Q11- Expresses	8.5%	37.7%	37.7%	16.2%
feelings	(11)	(49)	(49)	(21)
Q18-Plans	3.1%	26.2%	45.4%	25.4%
ahead	(4)	(34)	(59)	(33)
Q19- Resists	6.9%	9.2%	23.7%	60.3%

pressure	(9)	(12)	(31)	(79)
Q20-Resolves	3.9%	31.8%	35.7%	28.7%
conflicts	(5)	(41)	(46)	(37)
Q24-Accepts	0.0%	14.0%	31.0%	56.6%
others	(0)	(18)	(40)	(73)
Q39-Sensitive	2.4%	12.6%	49.6%	35.4%
to others	(3)	(16)	(63)	(45)
Positive				
Identity				
Q2-Feels in	3.8%	40.0%	40.8%	15.4%
control	(5)	(52)	(53)	(20)
Q3-Postive self	2.3%	6.2%	40.0%	51.5%
esteem	(3)	(8)	(52)	(67)
Q12-Good	0.8%	15.5%	40.3%	43.4%
future	(1)	(20)	(52)	(56)
Q14-Manages	3.9%	28.7%	54.3%	13.2%
frustration	(5)	(37)	(70)	(17)
Q15-	2.3%	37.4%	38.9%	21.4%
Overcomes	(3)	(49)	(51)	(28)
challenges				
Q27-Sense of	1.5%	22.1%	35.1%	41.2%
Purpose	(2)	(29)	(46)	(54)