BOYS' AND GIRLS' EXPERIENCES ON SCHOOL WELL-BEING IN LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Kayan Campbell

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University of Tampere

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Supervisor: Anne Konu, University Lecturer

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ABSTRACT

Relevance of the topic

The well-being of pupils in our society has been declining. The boys and girls are involved in activities that are not having a good impact on their growth and development both at home and at school. This situation has caused poor pupil-pupil relationship, poor teacher-pupil relationship and a decrease in life satisfaction. Hence, the pupils' health and well-being are being affected. This need to be addressed by rectifying the problem. The boys and girls tend to have a different view on many aspects of life, and it is possible that their views on school well-being may differ. Hence, the need to study boys' and girls' experiences on well-being in lower secondary school to help in their growth and development.

Objective: To examine boys' and girls' experiences on school well-being in lower secondary schools.

Methods:

The current study consisted of 100 pupils from lower secondary schools in different parts of Finland. The data was collected from 2014 to 2015 and included both boys and girls. The survey was focused on school well-being and the data was collected through School Well-being evaluation tool. The pupils had to express their views about the best features in their schools and the things in their schools that need improvement. The questionnaires on school well-being were filled on the internet in their schools. The thematic analysis

approach was used, which is a qualitative method that involves six stages of analysis to produce the results.

Results

The boys' and girls' experiences on school well-being in lower secondary schools were quite similar in some areas. Their experiences on the best features in the schools and things in their schools that need improvement had some differences. The girls' best features in the schools were mainly facilities in the schools and food whereas the boys were mainly community and lessons. The girls were dominant for improvements in facilities and temperatures whereas the boys were dominant for improvement in food and feelings. Overall the pupils seemed to be satisfied with the school environment because they all had responses for the best features in their schools but not responses to things that need improvement.

Conclusion

The pupils in lower secondary school growth and development are important. A proper environment for them to develop and grow is essential. Hence, there is need to consider the experiences of both boys and girls on the best features in their schools and things that need improvement as a method for promoting school well-being.

Keywords: well-being, lower secondary schools, teachers, pupils, health, experiences, best features, psycho-social, thematic analysis and social relationships.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HBSC	Health Behavior in School-aged Children
MHS	Master's in Health Science
NIHW	National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL)
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SHPS	School Health Promotion Study
SWM	School Well-being Model
SWP	School Well-being Profile
WHO	World Health Organization

1. INTRODUCTION

The well-being of pupils in schools is a concern for public health. It is important that pupils in schools have appropriate environment to function well in school. The world Health Organization has encouraged a whole-school approach for the promotion of well-being in schools (WHO, 1998). For example, WHO has encouraged the health promoting school approach for the well-being of the pupils (WHO, 1998).

Researchers have studied well-being of pupils in schools. Results from these studies showed that the well-being of pupils in lower secondary schools depend on the surrounding and the community, which include school conditions, social relationships, and means for self-fulfillment and health status (Konu & Rimpelä, 2002). For example, the School Well-being Profile (SWP) is a holistic well-being evaluation done in schools (Lintonen & Konu, 2006). Allardt's theory of welfare (Allardt, 1989) was used as one base of the SWP.

Previous studies showed the importance of looking at different indicators in the environment to solve the problem of school improvement. This includes the pupils' characteristics, the schools' goals and the social atmosphere (Nevo, 1995). In another study on positive and negative factors within the psycho-social school environment in which the researchers elucidated the pupils' perspective on school well-being, negative attitudes about school were obvious. The study confirmed that pupil-pupil relationships were more positive than the teacher-pupil relationships (Haapasalo, Valimaa, & Kannas, 2010).

Furthermore, a research that was done by Health Behavior in School-aged Children (HBSC) demonstrated a relationship between school satisfaction and quality of life in the school environment. The results showed that a positive experience of school usually is a good resource for health whereas a negative experience can create a risk factor. In addition, based on a survey done in 2001 by HBSC on pupils in Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, there was evidence that all the OECD countries have an average life satisfaction with boys having a higher life satisfaction than girls (Adamson, 2007).

Another significant aspect of the well-being of the pupils is a safe environment. Violence, physical injury, psychological effects and behavioral problems contribute to the reduction in school attendance, impair concentration and cognitive development (WHO, 1999). Regarding a study done by HBSC, there was not adequately representation of the pupils' experience of violence in the OECD countries because of the lack of information from the homes on violence exposure which could facilitate an adequate representation of the results (Adamson, 2007).

The previous paragraph has shown the possibility of violence in some OECD countries. However, various studies have been done in primary and secondary schools in Finland to guarantee the maintenance of school well-being. This included the School Health Promotion Study (SHPS), which monitors the health and well-being of Finnish pupils ranging from age 14 to 20 (THL, 2017). Based on the results, the good experiences were more dominant compared to the bad experiences in their school environment. The SHPS questionnaire included school conditions and health-related behaviors with the main goal gearing at finding the major problems in the schools that need to be investigated to maintain the good well-being of the pupils (THL, 2017). None of these studies showed boys' and girls' experiences on school well-being to see if there was a gender difference. Hence, the need to study more about the well-being of pupils to see if their views about the best features in the schools and the things that need improvement are similar.

In the case of relationships, peer relationships are important to the pupils in lower secondary schools. In lower secondary schools the influence of peer interaction on the social environment and the school environment is evident. (Tuominen-Soini et al., 2008; Hofer 2007; Boekaerts et al., 2006; Giota 2006; Vedder et al., 2005). Peer relationships influence how the pupils view their school positively (Erath et al., (2008). Additionally, M. Boulton, Don, and L. Boulton (2011) discovered that peer acceptance and perceived peer support were good predictors of school liking. Hence, positive relationships in the school environment are important.

Furthermore, the need for expert teachers, who looks at the individual needs of the pupil and take them into consideration when planning the curriculum enhance good relationships in the school. The flexibility of the expert teachers makes it possible to cater for the needs of everyone in the classroom. (Berliner, 1988). Therefore, the relationships in the schools will be strengthened with this kind of teacher-pupil interaction.

The aim of this current study is to examine boys' and girls' experiences on school well-being in lower secondary schools. Thematic analysis, which is a qualitative method, was used to analyze their views about the best features in their schools and express their views about the things in their schools that need improvement. These results will add information in this important area.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition and categories of school well-being

School well-being is considered very important in the development of the pupils in Finland. In lower secondary schools boys and girls attend the same schools and it is possible that their experiences on school well-being differ. School Well-being refers to the subjective, self-evaluation of experienced health (Kostenius, 2008). School well-being relates to teaching, education, learning and achievements (Konu et al., 2002). This suggests the importance of evaluating school well-being.

The SWP came from the School Well-being Model (SWM) (Konu, Joronen & Lintonen, 2015). The SWM model involves health, quality of life, welfare and school children's well-being (Allardt 1989; Veenhoven and Erhardt 1995; Raphael et al. 1996; Konu and Rimpelä 2002). School Well-being consisted of four categories; school conditions, social relationships, and means for self-fulfillment and health status (Konu & Lintonen, 2006; Konu & Rimpelä, 2002). The purpose of SWP was for schools to use the information received from the questionnaire in their well-being evaluation, making positive changes to benefit the pupils (Konu & Lintonen, 2006). The well-being evaluation had a holistic approach. (Lintonen & Konu, 2006).

The SWM is branched off into three directions. Firstly, teaching and education, which include the development of the child's personality, talents, mental and physical abilities. Secondly, learning, which should be done with a holistic approach. Thirdly, the impact of the surrounding community on the pupil's well-being (Konu & Rimpelä, 2002). Therefore, it is important that the teachers and educational professionals are involved in the practices that promote well-being in school because it will be significant to the pupils' development and learning (Konu & Rimpelä, 2002). This section has attempted to provide a brief summary of the definition and importance of school well-being.

2.2 Different kinds of abuse in schools

Pupils in schools are suffering from violence and behavioral problems daily. It is important that pupils are healthy to benefit from learning opportunities. There are many factors that contribute to poor learning in schools. For example, violence, physical injury and behavioral problems. This is mainly because of the effect on cognitive development and impair concentration (WHO, 1999). Furthermore, the effect of violence, abuse, and displacements from the violence in schools can contribute to poor attendance and eventually a decrease in pupils' learning ability (WHO, 1999).

Evidence from the results of a study done on bullying from the OECD countries suggested that there was not an adequate representation of the pupils' experiences of violence in the OECD countries. The lack of information from the homes on violence exposure could be a result of the inadequate representation of the pupils' experiences with violence (Adamson, 2007). Based on national studies done, children are victims of violence when they witness violence at homes (Adamson, 2007). Hence, the need to get further information from outside the school environment to facilitate adequate representation of the pupils' violence experiences.

School dislike is associated with being bullied and a victim of bullying (Harel-Fisch et al., 2011). In further support of this finding, Acquah et al. (2015) noticed that loneliness is associated with school bullying. In Finnish schools, there has been a lot of work on anti-bullying being done, which is to help improve peer relationships and positive atmosphere in the school's environment. This will automatically enhance the pupils' liking of school (Boulton et al., 2011).

In addition, verbal abuse is more common among boys than girls. This results in girls having lower levels of life satisfaction with school being a major factor than boys (Moksnes & Espnes, 2017). Therefore, the schools can prevent violence in the schools with the help of members of the school community (WHO, 1999).

On the other hand, in spite of these recent findings on different kinds of abuse in schools, there are organizations that promote well-being in schools. WHO concept of developing a social and emotional environment cater for the well-being in schools (WHO, 2003). Furthermore, the revised Global School Health suggested that a health promoting school

encourages and motivate a healthy environment for learning, living, and working (WHO, 1998).

2.3 School well-being in Finland

2.3.1 THL School Health Promotion Study (SHPS)

The field of health sciences has done a lot of work on school well-being in Finland. Studies have been done in both primary and secondary schools to ensure the maintenance of school well-being. For example, there is the SHP Study which is being done every other year, which monitors the health and well-being of Finnish from age 14 to 20 (THL, 2017). The goal is to make sure that the planning and evaluation of health promotion activities in the different schools are improved gradually not decline (THL, 2017).

The SHP study showed that pupils value the quality of their education and the safety that the schools provide within the school environment. Therefore, it is obvious that the planning and evaluation in the schools are being strengthened. The majority of the pupils from lower secondary schools participated in the study. The topics for the questionnaire included school conditions and health-related behaviors (THL, 2017). In summary, it has been shown from this review that the main goal of the SHP study is geared at finding out if there are major problems in the schools that need to be investigated. This will secure and maintain the proper well-being of all students in lower secondary schools.

2.3.2 Seasonality in school well-being

Another significant aspect of school well-being is seasonality. The study about seasonality in school well-being was done by Konu and colleagues (2015) to give knowledge about pupils' variation in well-being in the different time of the year. In North America, seasonal variations were observed in mental disorder, with August-October

having the lowest symptoms (Kovalenko et al., 2000). In addition, it was observed that in Europe adolescent girls participated less in physical activities and tend to be more sedentary during winter (Gracia-Marco et al., 2013). Generally, adolescent girls were more sensitive because of the seasonal changes (Tonetti et al., 2007, 2012).

To conclude this section, the literature identifies that school well-being can be affected by seasonal changes. Seasonal changes were obvious in school-age children with regards to health and behavior (Konu, Joronen & Lintonen, 2015). It has been observed that the healthier a pupil is, the more learning is achievable (Symons et al., 1997). Regarding seasonal changes, the state of well-being of pupils during the school year will help in deciding when holidays are needed and when teaching and learning adjustments are required (Konu, Joronen & Lintonen, 2015). This may help in the positive development of school well-being.

2.3.3 Well-being vs. academic performance in Finland

As far as academic performance is concerned, academic achievements are not the main priority in Finnish schools. According to Sahlberg (2013), systematic pursuit of pupil's well-being and happiness in secure environments is more important than academic achievements in Finnish schools. Hence, the pupils are not as stressed about passing important exams, as in other countries. Finland mission for 40 years is to provide pupils with the best schools regardless of their socioeconomic background, family backgrounds and capabilities (Sahlberg, 2013). The focus is on well-being, which reduces stress. Therefore, the schools in Finland including the lower secondary schools are a good role model for other countries to follow based on the country's mission on giving safety and equality in schools.

However, despite the mission of high quality and safe schools, pupils are bullied by other pupils, some are going through depression and pupils are experiencing negative peer relationship. According to Rubin (2013), psychologists and pediatricians are concerned that this is not because of a poor school environment, but there are outside influences as well. For example, parents are not involved in their children lives adequately. Hence, the need for parents to be active participants in their pupils' lives.

2.3.4 School well-being and depression

On the question of depression, it is possible that there are misconceptions about individuals' perception of the school's environment. Teachers' perceptions about school are most time different from the pupils' experiences. Hence, the teachers may not understand the negative experiences of the pupils. The teachers may perceive the classroom environment as excellent whereas the pupils saw the environment as detestable (R. Hofman, A. Hofman, & Guldemond, 2001). According to Stornes, Bru, and Idsoe (2008), there might be an association between the social classroom structure and the teacher's emphatic interaction with the students in the classroom, which influence the motivational climate in the classroom. This could affect how the boys and girls perceive their schools' community and the environment and could lead to depression. The need, therefore, arises for the pupils' opinions to be known to the school community (Rimpelä et al., 2007, 2008).

In terms of teachers' perception, the school administrators may not see the necessity to have additional assistance in the classroom. This can result in the lack of assistant teachers in the lower secondary schools, which do not allow the teacher to see everything that the pupils are going through, whether physically or emotionally. According to Rubin (2013), in Finland, the parents and teachers need to work as a team to take better care of the pupils because with effective communication the pupils will benefit more from school. Therefore, parents could be more responsible in taking care of their children and show an interest in their school activities.

Based on research done in Finland, there are signs that pupils do not feel the need to take part in any activities, which resulted in depression especially among girls. However, the boys tend to have a negative attitude towards school compared to the girls (Rimpelä et al., 2007, 2008). Pupils' negative attitude towards school includes loneliness, being bullied, and lack of friends (Harel-Fisch et al., 2011; Junttila et al., 2010). This will indeed affect the pupil's overall well-being. Additionally, pupils see school as a central social context in that there is social learning in abundance in schools, and it builds and maintains

friendships (Hofman et al., 2001; Linnakylä & Malin, 2008). Hence, the relevance to study deeper to get more knowledge of the situation.

2.3.5 The effect of expert teachers on the pupils' school experience

With regards to learning and teaching, the pupils should have a pupil-centered teaching. In Finland, there are learning opportunities and physical activities geared at promoting healthy body and mind (Lopez, 2012). This is connected to the school curriculum which is considered one of the best in the world. The fact that Finnish schools receive full autonomy is because the head teachers and teachers are given independence in the creating of their own individual curriculum with regards to their environment (Lopez, 2012). This allows the pupils in the lower secondary schools to have a relaxed atmosphere and enjoy a high quality of teaching that applies to their individual needs. Additionally, the flexible approaches that are used in teaching provide individual emotional well-beings which create a good atmosphere for learning and teaching (Lopez, 2012).

A teacher is considered an expert because he understands the requirements of the situation much better than an average teacher. He is, therefore, flexible in fitting his decisions, actions, and interactions into the context (Ropo, 1987). These teachers can observe students individually to see their coping skills in the classroom effectively both in the learning process and behavior (Leinhardt & Greeno, 1986). This enables expert teachers to be more sensitive to the individual students' needs and hence affect the tasks given. It is obvious that the teachers in Finland are equipped with the facilities and the right atmosphere to create a good and supporting learning environment. This kind of learning environment has a major effect on the pupils' learning experiences.

To conclude this section, the literature identifies that all teachers in Finland strive towards being expert teachers. The teachers and principals in Finland are highly respected because they are well-educated in the profession. Therefore, the parents and the students trust the Finnish education system (Sahlberg, 2007). An expert teacher generally looks at the individual needs of the pupil and take it into consideration when planning the curriculum. There is room for flexibility to cater for the needs of everyone. Furthermore, expert teachers are flexible in that they can accommodate the situations they are in (Berliner,

1988). The teachers can change the curriculum to accommodate surprising and demanding situations.

2.4 Pupils' development and well-being

School life is an important part of the pupils' development and well-being. Middle schools are beneficiary to the adolescent because it allows them to develop their intellectual capacities and a sense of belonging and competence to succeed in school (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989). Despite this, the pupils' intellectual capacities and a sense of development and competence are normally not possible because of failure to provide these necessities (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989; Eccles & Midgley, 1989). In middle schools, the emphasis on learning is placed on relative ability and social comparison. However, adolescents are more sensitive to the interaction of others (Midgley, Anderman, & Hicks, 1995). In addition, the quality of relationships with teachers tends to be less satisfactory even though at this stage of life adolescents desire supportive relationships with adults (Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989).

In an article done about middle school psychology environment, the goal was to understand the correlation between adolescents' school experiences and their academic motivation and behavior during a developmental period which was characterized by normative declines in many indicators of school adjustments (Eccles, Midgley, et al., 1993; Harter, Whitesell, & Kowalski, 1992; Midgley, Anderman, & Hicks, 1995). The perceptions of academic competence, academic values, and grades tend to grow more negatively (Eccles & Midgley, 1989). This is related to the constant pressure of having good grades in most schools. However, in Finland, teaching is not focused mainly on tests, but rather on learning (Berry & Sahlberg, 2006). For example, there is no fear of failure with regards to the teaching method. Hence, the room for flexibility with the acceptance of new innovations when contributing to the success of student learning (Sahlberg, 2007).

Furthermore, even though the adolescents are encountered with school issues and other adolescents' problem that usually occurs at this stage of life, they must deal with school-related worries and concerns that normally increases during this stage of life (McGuire, Mitic, & Neumann, 1987). However, only a few studies were done concerning middle school environment which contributed to motivation and achievement in adolescents (Roeser et al., 1996). In addition, school adjustment and achievement are very effective for adolescents' continued involvement in their general well-being, in school as well as future opportunities (Eccles, Lord, & Roeser, 1996).

In terms of relationships, pupils peer interaction can affect their social environment because when the pupils are not getting along with each other, their view of the school environment will be affected. In some cases, peer interaction can affect the pupil's whole life (Tuominen-Soini et al., 2008; Hofer 2007; Boekaerts et al., 2006; Giota 2006; Vedder et al., 2005). Friendships and interaction with classmates are important for the pupil's personal growth. They need to feel that they belong somewhere especially if they do not feel that way in their homes. The lack of belongingness will affect their school work in the end. Hence, the importance of trying to know more about the pupils' experiences in every aspect of school life to better understand their situations (Lahelma, 2002).

In addition, positive peer relationships will motivate the pupils to view their schools positively (Erath et al., (2008). M. Boulton, Don, and L. Boulton (2011) discovered that peer acceptance and perceived peer support were good predictors of school liking. Thus, negative peer relationships can have negative effects on school adjustment (Buhs, 2005).

 To conclude this section, the literature identifies that social cognitive views of motivation with regards to how students obtain meaning from their experiences in achievements settings have been well known (Ames, 1992; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Eccles, 1983; Maehr & Midgley, 1991; Weiner, 1980). According to Roeser et al., (1996), students will adapt to the norms of school based on the interaction between the school and community. This will help the students to develop school related beliefs and behavior positively.

2.5 Different perspectives on well-being in school

There are only a limited number of studies done concerning well-being in the school context, for example, by Knuver and Brandsma (Knuver & Brandsma, 2003). They studied cognitive and affective outcomes in school. Affective outcomes are referred to the attitudes pupils have towards school and learning (Knuver & Brandsma, 2003). The results were that the cognitive and affective outcomes were independent (Knuver & Brandsma, 2003). Another writer, Samdal, measured pupils' subjective well-being with the use of one question, which is how do they feel about their life at present. Based on the results, student support, adequate expectations, and teacher support were the most important predictors of subjective well-being (Samdal, 1998). Additionally, the SWP done by Konu and colleagues demonstrated the need to look at the pupils' experiences of school well-being (Konu et al, 2002).

There have been researches on positive and negative factors within the psycho-social school environment. These researchers elucidated the pupil's perspectives on school well-being. Haapasalo, Valimaa, and Kannas (2010) analyzed Finnish pupils' perceptions of their psycho-social school environment and their attitudes towards school. Negative attitudes towards school were reported by many pupils. The responses suggested that pupil's relations among each other were more positive than the student's relations with teachers. The strongest correlation between different school perceptions was found between teacher-pupil relationships and school engagement (Haapasalo et al., 2010).

2.6 The Supporting School Well-being in OECD countries

2.6.1 The situation with young peoples' social and emotional well-being

The lower secondary schools in the OECD countries experience many problems with school well-being. In England, for example, the social and emotional well-being of adolescents has declined while problematic behaviors have increased (Gray et al., 2011). The fact that children spend so many hours of the day in schools, it is assumed that the schools are part of the problem which should result in an educational solution to the problem. The labor government's Every Child Matters Legislation (DfES, 2003) imposed

a duty of well-being in schools, which suggested that the schools have a major role to play in providing health, safety, enjoyment, achievement, and making positive contributions (Gray et al., 2011).

As explained earlier, the school is an important aspect of pupils' well-being. According to Gray et al. (2011), the school is a major feature in young people's perception of their well-being). In 2005, the Good Childhood Inquiry surveyed 8000 pupils in England (Pople, 2009, p. 17-18). The results stated that children chose school and education as ingredients of good life. The pupils mentioned that spending time with friends, which gives them intimacy support and pleasure are among the things they liked about school. Friendships were important because it gives social and academic support (Gray et al., 2011). Additionally, students wanted school buildings and facilities improved while other students wanted a supportive and respectful school environment. Finally, pupils saw bullying and disruptive behavior as a concern (Gray et al., 2011).

Furthermore, the results demonstrated that good experiences in schools were having teachers who were supportive and passionate about their jobs as teachers. These included providing the pupils with fun and interesting activities during the learning process (Gray et al., 2011).

Additionally, qualitative-oriented studies were done in the United Kingdom with regards to teachers. Based on the results of the pupils it is obvious that they see good teachers as crucial to their learning development. Therefore, teachers should be empathetic, reliable, and expert in their profession as teachers (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004, p.75-79).

2.6.2 The Assessment of young peoples' well-being

Turning now to the research evidence on the Changing Adolescence Program, in which Collishaw and colleagues (2004) done an adult's assessments of young people's emotion and behaviors. Both boys and girls showed a gradual rise in emotion and behaviors, with conduct behaviors being higher for boys compared to girls. However, the rise for both sexes was because of non-aggressive conduct problems, for example, stealing.

In addition, mental disorder and depression were present in the schools. Based on a study done on emotional problems, among adolescents' depression have increased both for boys and girls since mid-1980. However, there has not been any increase after 1999 (Nuffield Foundation, 2009). Another research was done on multiple informants, including teachers, parents, and students. The report suggested that one in eight boys and one in twelve girls were experiencing a mental disorder. However, an earlier study conducted by Meltzer et al. (1991), suggested a different result about mental disorder. According to Meltzer report, 10% of girls and 13% of boys showed signs of mental disorder.

Another similar study was done on pupils in a deprived area of London, which reported different results than the national estimates reported. The pupils' problems were higher compared to the previous results (Institute of Community Health Sciences, 2003). This reported higher levels of psychological distress in Eastern London compared to anywhere else, with girls having lower levels of self-reported health (Gray et al., 2011). Therefore, evidence showed that conduct disorders and emotional problems have been increasingly affecting at least 10 percent of the population in England. This varied between boys and girls.

2.6.3 Life Satisfaction and young peoples' well-being

WHO survey, the HBSC study is one of the several studies done on holistic measures of young peoples' well-being. This survey gave information about school age children, for example, peer interaction, physical activity, and eating. This promotes healthy policy and health promotion (HBSC, 2005). The study defined life satisfaction as an individual evaluation of different aspects of his life (Currie, 2008, p. 63) The survey that was done in 2001 by HBSC demonstrated that in the OECD countries life satisfaction was average, with the girls' life satisfaction decreasing more than the boys between the ages of 11 and 15 (Adamson, 2007). The results showed that pupils with a high level of life satisfaction tend to have positive school experiences whereas the pupils with a low level of life satisfaction have negative school experiences (Gray et al., 2011).

HBSC researchers believe that school satisfaction is associated with a good school environment where the pupils are emotionally stabled (Currie et al., 2008, p. 41). The

HBSC researchers further suggest that an individual with a positive experience of school has a strong possibility of having good health whereas an individual with a negative experience may lead to a risk factor for bad health. Therefore, pupils who like school can be protected against sexual risk taking, substance use, and smoking. On the other hand, disliking school can contribute to failing academically, drawn to unhealthy behaviors, having a reduced quality of life, and displaying psychosomatic symptoms (Gray et al., 2011).

Schools can play a role in their pupils' well-being (Gray et al., 2011). Resnik (2000) believed that school should have an involvement in the intentional and deliberate process. This includes providing support, relationships, experiences, opportunities which will promote outcomes for the pupils. Furthermore, supporting school involves a teacher-pupil relationship, sense of belongingness and good experiences in school (Gray et al., 2011).

Another significant aspect of life satisfaction is having a supporting community in schools. However, peer victimization is a major problem for well-being as well as other vulnerable groups in the schools. The pupils at risk should be handled very carefully because it can create significant implications for the individuals, which might lead to serious outcomes and can be potentially life-changing for the individuals (Gray et al., 2011). Hence, the need to have a supporting school to help the vulnerable pupils.

2.7 The promotion of pupils' psycho-social well-being

The report of an article by Eiri Sohlman gives an understanding of the need to see the importance of the good and bad experiences among boys and girls in lower secondary schools. The article's goal was to discuss some conceptual frameworks which can help to promote psycho-social well-being in the school setting (Sohlman, 2006). The health and well-being of children are important for their psychological and social well-being because they show the level of the children's health status (Välimaa 2004; Rimpelä 2002).

Furthermore, it is essential that new approaches and working practices be placed on school education as well as the necessity to promote school children's psycho-social well-

being (Sohlman, 2006). This will enable better development for the children. Miettinen (1999) further adds that humanistic psychology believes that growth is needed to help an individual to become healthy and happy. This is possible when the internal growth process is made possible by the individual resources being freed up (Miettinen, 1999). In addition, development is a holistic process that advances independently. This independence allows an individual to grow and influence his own life to create health and happiness. (Hirsjärvi & Huttunen 1997; Rauhala 1993.)

The holistic conception of man consists of the bodily existence, which involves the organic process; consciousness, which is being aware of himself; and situation, in which the relationships to the world in the individual's life setting or situation have an impact on his growth and development. These three work together to create a wholeness of a human being because an individual consciousness reflects his situation and organic existence, which in the end create meaningful relationships (Rauhala 1978, 1989.)

In addition, the growth of an individual is connected to his personality, which is influenced by the environment and heredity (Dunderfelt, 1993). Maslow's theory which focusses on self-actualization is connected to personality because one's personality helps them in becoming their ideal self. Maslow's hierarchy purpose was to help to explain the connection between basic individual needs and individual desires (Miettinen, 1999). It consists of five categories in which human needs are at the bottom. It is necessary that these are achieved to move up the ladder to the next level, the highest being self-actualization (Boeree, 2006). Therefore, when pupils have the right environment to satisfy their physiological needs, safety needs and social needs, they can strive towards the esteem needs and finally self-actualization as an adult.

2.8 Psycho-social aspects of well-being

2.8.1 Social factors and pupils' health

Psycho-social is concerned with the social and psychological behavior with regards to human development (Oxford English Dictionary, 2017). In the lower secondary schools, there is evidence that social factors have either a positive influence or a negative influence on the pupils (Turner, 1979; Loughry, 2003).

Psycho-social work is based on an emphasis on the healthy development of the person and this creates optimal conditions for human development. Psycho-social theorists have done their intervention with the intention of influencing human development by addressing the negative impact of social factors with regards to people's thoughts and behavior (Turner, 1979; Loughry, 2003). Furthermore, an active social environment encourages positive interaction with thought behavior and the social world behavior (Turner, 1979; Loughry, 2003). In the lower secondary schools, the need for good health among the students are important because it has an impact on their learning and development.

An example of a psycho-social theory is one developed by Erik H. Erikson in which he used both internal psychological factors and external social factors in different stages of human development. In these stages, they are challenges to be resolved to rise to the next stage (Erikson, 1982). Hence, one cannot function properly in one stage if the previous stages are not accomplished effectively. In the lower secondary schools, the pupils' experiences of both good and bad influence the next stage of their lives. It can affect them negatively or positively.

According to Erikson individuals have an impact on their own development, not only the environment or biological factor (Erikson, 1982). Therefore, the pupils can become the best they can be when the different stages in their lives are fulfilled. Erikson's psycho-social theory believes that individuals are not only dependent on biological and environmental influences, but can contribute to his or her own psychological development in every stage of life (Newman & Newman, 1991).

2.8.2 Pupils' psycho-social well-being

Pupils in lower secondary schools need to have good psychological and social well-being. Schools that have psycho-social activities tend to promote psychological and social well-being as well as the development of these pupils (Sohlman, 2006). The psycho-social environment in schools is very important because it gives the pupils support and encouragement in their development and learning (Nicholson, 1997). Health promotion for staff is also beneficiary because the staff members can be positive role models and have a good commitment to pupils' health (Nicholson, 1997).

According to Pietilä (1998), health is beneficiary to life because it provides one with choices in which all aspects of life will profit. The school and family, which are the closest to the individual's community are good places to promote health and well-being (Sohlmon, 2006). Additionally, it is important to promote mental, emotional and social health by increasing pupils' level of self-satisfaction, accomplishment, and concern for one another, which result in positive health and well-being (Sohlmon, 2006).

To conclude this section the literature identifies that positive health and well-being are maintained when the pupils are encouraged to achieve their goals with an atmosphere of love, care, and joyfulness. This will automatically prevent unhappiness, bullying, violence, and conflicts (Weare, 2000). The SWM was created to make aware of the importance of well-being in schools and the huge effect it has on psycho-social well-being in comparison to health education and health promotion (Konu & Rimpelä, 2002).

2.9 Justification

Boys' and girls' experiences on school well-being are important to study because the schools and the society will see the areas that need improvements. The fact that parents and schools will be aware of the differences between boys' and girls' experiences on school well-being will guide them in their policies relating to the school. To my knowledge, there is no qualitative study done on this topic. However, there are many quantitative studies about the topic. Therefore, a study with the qualitative method on boys and girls school experience in lower secondary schools ought to be studied.

3. MATERIALS AND METHOD

3.1 Data source and study population

The data is collected via School Well-being evaluation tool. The survey was focused on school well-being, which is a very important aspect of the children's life. The SWP was used to gather the data. The survey was collected from 2014 to 2015 from lower secondary schools in Finland. The present data consisted of different areas in Finland, both rural and urban areas. The total number of participants were 8214 pupils. 50 boys and 50 girls were chosen by 10s in that every tenth pupil from the participants was chosen from the boys' list and every tenth pupil was chosen from the girls' list for the analysis. Unanswered questions on the best features in the school, the things that need improvement and the responses in Swedish was not considered for the analysis. The students did the questionnaire on the internet and they gave their opinions on things relating to the school.

The survey consisted of both questionnaires and statements. The questionnaires were on school conditions, social relationships in schools, bullying in schools, the participation of the students' home in school related matters, possibilities for self-fulfillment in school and health status. However, the statements were used for this survey which was to respond to the questions, "What is the best features in your school?" and "What things in your school should be improved especially?"

3.2 Thematic analysis

According to van Manen (1997), writing is an important method of expressing individual's experiences. The writing of their school's experiences will be helpful because it may highlight things that the pupils will not express verbally and can bring individuals closer to their experiences. The survey on school's well-being is, therefore, an opportunity to express their experiences by writing. The results from the survey through the statements will be beneficiary to the students and the school community as well as the

parents. These results are further supported by Kostenius (2008), who elucidated that there is a need to involve the pupils to create health promotion processes in schools. Therefore, it is necessary to study further what the students consider important in a good school environment.

The method used for analyzing the data was qualitative writing because it is interesting to see what the boys and girls would say in their own words about the school situations. The statements responses were analyzed using thematic analysis. This method gives the reader knowledge about the pupils' different experiences based on the flexibility it allows for expressing their opinions.

"Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns or themes within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is a popular method in qualitative analysis, which is poorly defined (Boyatzis, 1998; Roulston, 2001). However, it is the foundation method which provides the core skills of qualitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

There are six stages in the thematic analysis. In the first stage, there is familiarizing oneself with the data by searching for meanings and patterns. It is important to read the data at least twice to help shape your patterns to find semantic themes. In the second stage, you can start generating initial code from the data, which can be semantic or latent. Semantic content is the meanings of words actually used by the participants, and latent are the words existing as potential themes. It is important to code for as many potential themes as possible with highlighters or colored pen because it might be used in the later stage. In stage three there is the validation of the codes by focusing on the broader level of themes. Hence, the codes are looked at as potential themes. In the end, some codes will be main themes, some will be sub-themes and others will be discarded (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The fourth stage is where the themes and frameworks are identified by forming patterns that have emerged from the coded data, which will be themes and sub-themes. In the fourth stage, it will be evident that some themes are not themes because they are not an adequate amount of data to support them or they might be like other themes. The fifth stage is refining and defining the themes that will be used for analysis, which will be finalized. Finally, the last stage is producing the report in which there are fully worked-

out themes with the final analysis and write-up or results of the report. This is where one convinces the reader of the validity of the analysis with the help of proof of quotations from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4. AIMS OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

General aim of the study

The aim of the study is to examine boys' and girls' experiences on school well-being in lower secondary schools**.**

Research questions

How boys and girls express their views about the best features in their schools?

How boys and girls express their views about the things in their schools that need improvement?

5. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter will look at the different stages of arriving at the themes, which will explain what happen in each stage with the different patterns and codes from the data to arrive at the final themes and sub-themes. Afterward, there will be an explanation of the themes of the best features in the schools and the things in the schools that need improvement using examples from the data to justify the themes.

5.1 The stages of the analysis

5.1.1 Collecting the data

The responses were translated into English, to Finish and then back to English. I chose 50 boys and 50 girls from the data by choosing every 10th students, and read their responses thoroughly twice. While reading, I looked for patterns, meanings, and things that are interesting, which helped to formulate ideas based on the responses. The responses in the data were related to the research questions.

5.1.2 The coding stage

In the coding stage, the popular words in the data were taken out and used meaningfully. I coded for as many potential themes as possible and then narrowed them down to initial codes. Highlighters were used on the text to be analyzed. Afterward, important texts were placed on post-it notes which will help to remember and one can always go back to the words or texts.

Patterns, meanings, and things of interest for the best features in the schools of both boys and girls included the students, teachers, relationship, facilities, and lack of bullying, comfortable, building, schoolyard, recess places, togetherness, good atmosphere, courses, canteen, team spirit, nice teachers, and community. Patterns, meanings and things of

interest for the things in the schools that need improvement included temperatures, recess, air conditioning, heating, cold, stifling air, the lack of space, improvement, nurse access, studies, support, lessons, classes, homework, food, lonely, feedback, facilities, lunch, courtyards, ventilation, and pupils' opinion. These patterns and things of interest were the foundations for the themes.

The codes from these patterns for the best features in the schools were the community, facilities, lessons, food, teacher-pupil relationship, teachers, good atmosphere, environment, expert teachers, and subjects. The codes for the things that need improvement were temperature, ventilation, air condition, food, facilities, lessons, recess, yard, community, feelings. Some of the patterns were combined to make one code and some remained the same. These codes were done using semantic content or latent content of the data.

5.1.3 Themes identification

In the third stage, the different codes in the second stage were sorted into potential themes. There were combinations of codes for the best features in the schools. Teacher-pupil relationship and the good atmosphere became good atmosphere. Food and canteen became food. Facilities, environment, schoolyard, and recess places became facilities. Subject and courses became lessons.

For the things that need improvement, there were also combinations. Air condition, temperature and ventilation became temperature. Canteen and food became food. Lack of space, improvement, nurse access, courtyards, hobbies, recess became facilities. Studies, support, and classes became expert teachers. Homework and lessons became lessons. Lack of space, nurse access, and courtyard became facilities. Lonely, pupils' opinion and feedback became feelings. It was obvious that some of these codes overlapped for best features in the schools and things that need improvement. For example, community, food, and lessons.

The themes from the pupils' answers based on the coding stage for best features in the schools were the community, good atmosphere, expert teachers, facilities, food, and

lessons. The themes for things that need improvement were temperature, food, lessons, feelings, community, and facilities. A few initial codes will form main themes, for example, community, food, facility and temperature. Tables were used to make a better relationship between the codes and the themes.

5.1.4 Refining themes

In this stage, I used the potential themes and combined a few themes into one, for example, good atmosphere and community became the community; expert teachers, teachers, and lessons became lessons. The two popular themes, community, and facilities were later broken down into sub-themes to give a more precise analysis. Therefore, the themes were refined and reviewed to relate to the data.

5.1.5 Finalizing themes

The information was consolidated and the themes were finalized here. The final themes for the best features in the school are now community, facilities, food, and lessons. The final themes for the things that need improvement are temperature, community, facilities, lessons, food, and feeling. The overall main themes are the community, facilities, lessons, food, temperature, and feeling. The sub-themes from the community are the relationship and the supporting atmosphere, and from facilities are indoor facilities and outdoor facilities. Below is a table showing how I arrive at the themes and sub-themes.

Table 1. Table showing the steps in getting the themes and sub-themes

Patterns and things of interest	Initial Coding	Themes	Finalized themes and sub-themes
	teacher-pupil relationship, good atmosphere, community,	community, good atmosphere	community
sociability, relationship, nice teachers, nice people, students, teacher-pupil relationship			relationships (sub-theme)
school community, good team spirit, good community, sense of community, lack of bullying, togetherness			supporting atmosphere (sub-theme)
	facilities, recess places, schoolyard, environment, lack of space	facilities	facilities
comfortable canteen, good study environment, good facilities, comfortable facilities, new facilities, comfortable building, nurse access			indoor facilities (sub-theme)
schoolyard, courtyards, parking lot, enjoyable yard, recess places, lack of space			outdoor facilities (sub-theme)
courses, quality of teaching, individual teaching, different subjects, homework, long classes, direct feedbacks	expert teachers, subjects, studies, support, classes, courses	lessons, expert teachers	lessons
good food, canteen, school cafeteria, poor food quality, food	Food, canteen	food	food
heating, hot, air conditioning, heating ventilation, indoor air, cold, stifling air	temperature, ventilation, air conditioning	temperature	temperature
more colorful, lonely, more attention, pupils' opinions, feedback	feelings, pupils' opinion, feedback	feelings	feelings

In the sixth stage, there are the final themes and sub-themes of the best features in the schools and the things that need improvement. They are presented in the next section.

5.2 The best features in the school

5.2.1 Community

The boy's best features about their schools fell mostly under the theme, community, with majority suggested that this was a good part of their schools. They believe that in the school existed a good team spirit where everyone worked as a team and supported each other. The sub-theme under community were condensed into relationships and supportive atmosphere.

The sub-theme, supportive atmosphere was seen in that there were a lot of team spirit being mentioned and good atmosphere. One pupil mentioned "Team spirit and supportive atmosphere." Another one mentioned, "In principle," Good community." A third pupil said, "Here is a good atmosphere and it is often comfortable." The boys also mentioned that bullying was hardly in the school because of this good team spirit which pulls them together.

The sub-theme, relationships was obvious in that the pupils mentioned the word very often. They were mostly satisfied with the teacher-pupil relationship and pupil-pupil relationship. The teachers made up this community and they saw them as nice. The relationship they had with the pupils were very good. One boy said, "Peoples' unity. Teachers and pupils have a good relationship." Another pupil said, "Atmosphere is relaxed and all the pupils get along." A third pupil mentioned, "Togetherness."

The girl's best features about the school fell mostly under the theme community, which was the same as the boys. This suggests that there was not a big difference between how girls and boys view the school community. The girls were focusing more on how nice the

teachers were whereas the boys were focusing on the overall atmosphere. One of the girls described her good experiences as "In principle, the school's community spirit with students and teachers." Another pupil suggested, "Teachers' openness and friendliness. Pupils' good team spirit and tolerance. A variety of courses and the quality of teaching." A third pupil mentioned, "Nice new teachers and comfort." This fall under the sub-theme, relationships. With regards to the sub-theme, the supporting atmosphere, one pupil mentioned, "A good atmosphere among students." Another pupil mentioned "Sense of community and security." The third mentioned, "In my opinion, the best feature of the institution is the sense of community and a good team spirit."

5.2.2 Facilities

The theme facility, has two sub-themes, indoor facilities, and outdoor facilities. Facilities relating to the best features of the schools were popular among boys and girls, with the girls taking the lead. Some of the boys mentioned indoor facilities for their best features of the schools. They did not have any good experiences on outdoor facilities.

The boys described the school as new and comfortable with adequate school facilities to make learning and being at school tolerable. For example, for good experience, one boy pupil said, "Clean and comfortable study and living areas." Another one mentioned, "Comfortable facilities." The third mentioned, "The new facilities and sofas." This suggests that the environment where they went to school was well equipped with the right equipment and rooms to make learning a success and promote good health.

The girls were keen on mentioning the comfort of the environment compared to boys. For example, one girl pupil mentioned, "The cozy canteen and teachers take care of their students." A second pupil mentioned, "Comfortable recess places." A third pupil mentioned, "Study facilities, chairs, and tables are well suited for studying. Most of the classrooms are also of suitable size."

The girls were concern about outdoor facilities. For example, one girl mentioned, "comfortable recess places." Another mentioned, "Enjoyable yard spaces." The boys did not comment directly on outdoor facilities for best features in their schools. However, one

boy mentioned, "Comfortable facilities." This could be referring to outdoor and indoor facilities. Hence, the boys tend to generalize more than the girls.

5.2.3 Food

Good experiences for food were more popular in the girls compared to the boys. For example, one of the girls said, "Food was the best." Another one said, "Good vegetarian food." A third girl stated, "The food is often good." An example from the boys relating to food was "Good school meals."

5.2.4 Lessons

The theme lesson was mentioned in both boys' and girls' responses with the boys taking the lead. For example, one pupil said, "A lot of elected courses." Another boy said, "The school offers good courses and the teachers are very brilliant." The girls' responses mainly involved quality of teaching, which was of great importance to them to learn effectively. The boys did not see the quality of teaching as a big issue, hence it was not mentioned. The theme lessons with regards to teachers were seen in that there were mainly examples of expert teachers who are flexible in their teaching method to cater for the needs of everyone in the classroom. Therefore, all students were taken into consideration when planning the lessons. For example, one pupil said "The quality of teaching." Some examples to justify the theme was from a girl, "Teachers openness and friendliness. Pupils' good team spirit and tolerance. A variety of courses and the quality of teaching." Another one from a boy pupil was "Knowledgeable teachers, good atmosphere, and enough course options".

5.2.5 Themes that were not mentioned in the best features in the school

The temperature was not mentioned as a good experience. Feeling was not mentioned as well. This could suggest that pupils did not accept these factors as best features in their schools.

5.2.6 No responses

It was interesting to see that both boys and girls had something positive to say about their school experiences. None of the pupils left out the section on the best features of their schools. They were all keen to write about the best view in their schools. Hence, it seems that schools in Finland are equipped with enough learning equipment, adequate staff, and satisfying surrounding to create these responses from the students.

5.3 Things in the schools that need improvement

5.3.1 Facilities

The theme facilities were the most dominant one for things in the schools that need improvement for both boys and girls, with the girls showing more concern. The sub-theme, indoor facilities was more popular than outdoor facilities. One girl pupil mentioned, "Chairs are hard and cause pain in the back." A few of the girls had this problem. They also were concerned about recess space and class space. For example, one girl mentioned, "Inside space; heating, ventilation and sizes of classes." For the boys, an example of indoor space was "Space could be more." Another boy mentioned, "Classes and canteen tables and chairs." Therefore, the boys had the same problem with space and different furniture in the school as the girls.

The girls were concern about outdoor facilities. For example, one girl mentioned, "Comfortable recess places." Another mentioned, "Enjoyable yard spaces." The boys commented on things that need improvement outdoor as well. One boy mentioned, "Schoolyard could be more enjoyable." Another boy mentioned, "More space for doing

physical activities during recess time, for example, tennis." Hence, the boys were more concern about facilities for doing sports that need improvement.

5.3.2 Temperature

The theme temperature was more dominant in girls than boys. Many girls had problems with the temperature especially during the winter when the classes were cold. For example, "The class temperature and indoor air." Some suggested that the heat should be raised in some classes to provide comfort for the pupils. Another example from the girls was "Heating, ventilation." The girls were interested in being warm inside compared to the boys.

5.3.3 Food

The theme food was popular in the responses with the boys leading in this category. For example, one boy said, "The quality of the school food." Another one said, "Lunch time waiting! Today it takes 10-15 minutes to get the food." Hence, the boys were frustrated with the food situation. This situation was consistent and the boys believed the school should invest more money in food. In this way, everyone would be satisfied. The girls had less concern about the food. However, a few wanted more options for lunch.

5.3.4 Feelings

The theme feelings came about in the things that need improvement with the boys having more responses in that area compared to girls. An example from the boys was "The pupils are listened to but feel that their opinions are not considered." The girls' responses to things that need improvement with feeling were less than the boys. An example from a girl was, "Teachers should pay more attention to the quieter pupils." Another interesting example from the girls was "School needs to be more colorful throughout the winter."

This suggests that the winters were dark and pupils are likely to be depressed during this time. Hence, changing the environment to be more colorful could make everyone more cheerful and have a brighter day.

5.3.5 Lessons

The theme lesson was obvious for both boys and girls. An example from one girl was "Different courses from teachers should have the same amount of work". Hence, there should be a lack of bias in the courses, the work should be consistent. An example from a boy was "Individual teaching in which all pupils learn."

5.3.6 Community

The girls were the only ones who mentioned this theme, community as a factor of things that need improvement. There were two responses to this theme. For example, "In principle, the school's community spirit with pupils and teachers". The second one was "Togetherness." These small amounts of complain about the community suggest that there is a strong teacher-pupil relationship in the schools, which was good. The schools are very united and they support each other.

5.3.7 No responses

In the things that need improvement section, there were a few blank spaces or I don't know answers. For example, "I do not know." There was a slight difference in the no response indicator from both boys and girls. The boys had more no responses compare to the girls. The fact that the pupils did not respond could be an indicator that they found nothing negative to say about their schools, which was a good sign. These pupils could have been happy with the way things were at their schools.

6. DISCUSSION

This chapter will discuss the findings and the results of the best features in the schools and the things that need improvement. Afterward, the results of this study will be compared to the findings of past studies to recognize similarities and differences between them.

6.1 Main findings of the study

The aim of this study was to examine boys' and girls' experiences on school well-being in lower secondary schools**.** The overall results showed that boys and girls express their views about their schools in a different manner. Overall, the best views in their schools were more dominant than the things in their schools that need improvement.

6.1.1 The best features in the school

The boys' and girls' best features about the school were mostly connected with the theme community. They both seemed to enjoy the supportive atmosphere where there was a good team spirit. There were a good teacher-pupil relationship and pupil-pupil relationship. This created a relaxing atmosphere and a sense of community. The boys and girls were contented with the school atmosphere and the fact that they all get along. Hence, there was a lack of bullying in the school and the pupils felt safe in the school environment. Furthermore, a social relationship is important for the well-being of pupils because of the sense of belongingness it brought to their lives. This suggests that they are contented in being in the school because they feel welcome there. This is very important in some of these pupils' lives especially if they are not coming from a loving healthy home. The fact that team spirit was evident in their responses suggested that their school was a peaceful place and they always felt welcome.

Facilities were dominant in the responses for both boys and girls. The pupils were satisfied with the facilities particularly indoor facilities. They enjoyed comfortable rooms with new facilities. The other themes, food, and lessons were not popular among boys nor girls. However, they were mentioned among some students with the girls having more comments on the best features with regards to food and the boys having more for lessons. The girls' best features in their schools were associated mostly with facilities in the school and the food situation. Girls at this age tend to be keener in eating vegetables compared to boys. Hence, they are not bothered at the kind of food if it is something that they can eat and it is healthy. As far as the boys were concerned the best features in the schools were associated with community and lessons.

6.1.2 Things in the schools that need improvement

The pupils' themes for things that need improvement were mainly to do with the facilities and temperatures in the schools. Both boys and girls were concerned about the ventilation, indoor air and the temperature of the rooms. The girls were more concerned about the heating situation compared to the boys. Indoor facilities were of more concern to the girls than boys and outdoor facilities were of more concern to the boys than girls. The other themes lessons, feelings, food, and community, needed improvement for both boys and girls.

The girls wanted improvements in community with regards to relationships. However, the boys did not believe the school community needs improvement. The boys were comfortable with the school community with regards to the relationship and school atmosphere. The theme, feelings came about because of the responses mainly from the boys who were concerned about not being heard by the teachers and their opinions not being met. However, this was only a small amount of pupils with this problem. The boys were also concerned more about the food compared to the girls. Finally, there were many blank spaces for the things that need improvement in the schools. This could suggest that there were more good experiences with their school than bad experiences. The pupils were satisfied with the school community where everyone was united as a family. There was a good pupil-pupil relationship and teacher-pupil relationship.

6.2 Relation to previous studies

6.2.1 Bullying and disruptive behavior

Based on the results from this study bullying was not a major factor in schools. The students were satisfied with the support from everyone in their schools and the good team spirit. However, based on other studies, particularly one done by Acquah and colleagues (2015), they notice from their results that loneliness was predicted by school bullying. Having a positive atmosphere in schools can increase the possibility of the pupils liking school (Boulton et al., 2011). Furthermore, in a childhood inquiry done in England, there was the indication that bullying and disruptive behavior were a concern to the pupils (Pope, 2009, p. 17-18).

However, in Finland, the School Health Promotion Study monitors the health and well-being of pupils in the schools, so that many interventions in Finland could contribute to the increased safety of every pupil in schools with regards to bullying. An example of one such intervention is Kiva Koulu, which is an anti-bullying program with many positive developments with regards to pupils' safety (THL, 2017).

Previous research has found that there is a difference between boys and girls conduct disorder. The boys were higher than the girls, but both showed a rise which was basically because of stealing (Collishaw & colleagues, 2004). However, in the present study, there was no conduct disorder mentioned as a bad experience. The focus was on the good support system that exists within the schools. Moreover, the good relationships in the school had an impact on the pupils' behavior towards each other.

6.2.2 The School Well-being Evaluation

The SWP which was done by Konu and colleagues (2015) was effective in portraying results that will benefit the pupils and the school. Somewhat similar study on SHPS was

done by THL in Finland with regards to school conditions and health-related behaviors (THL, 2017). The results showed that the pupils had more positive experiences to say about their school compared to negative experiences. Therefore, the schools in Finland have good conditions to maintain good health and well-being among their pupils. Both studies showed successful results because they showed that there are more positive experiences in the schools compare to negatives (THL, 2017, Lintonen & Konu, 2006). The present study showed similar results in that the good experiences in the pupils' schools were dominant compared to the bad experiences.

Furthermore, individuals' experiences may affect the different stages of their lives. Both the internal psychological factors and the external social factors can affect individuals' lives (Erikson, 1982). Therefore, it is important that the pupils have a supportive environment and internal factors that encourage health-relevant behaviors to have a positive outcome in life. The pupils in the present study had the opportunity to develop in a healthy way because most of their needs were being met. This included having a supportive community and good facilities in the schools.

6.2.3 Seasonal effect on learning and well-being

The current study results showed that temperature was one of the main factors that contributed to bad experiences in schools because the majority of the pupils complained about the class temperature and the class being cold in the winter. This contributed negatively to the pupils' learning ability and their total well-being. A study was done on seasonality in school well-being in which the results showed that the adolescents in Europe were less active during the winter season and are more sedentary (Garcia-Marco et al., 2013). Another study showed that mental disorder was more common in most seasons with fewer symptoms from August to October in North America (Kovalenko et al., 2000). These two studies are similar in the fact that they both affect the well-being of the pupils. In addition, the present study showed that the students were cold and need to have a more comfortable environment to learn during the winter season. The previous study showed that the fact that they are more sedentary during a certain part of the year and have symptoms of a mental disorder in most time of the year, will affect their learning

(Garcia-Marco et al., 2013, Kovalenko et al, 2000). In the current study, it was obvious that the temperature had a major effect on the pupils' well-being and learning.

Furthermore, dark and long winters may contribute to both boys and girls feeling depressed. Previous research has found that there has been an increase in depression for both boys and girls, with boys showing more signs of depression (Nutfield Foundation, 2009). Studies have shown that Finnish pupils are less likely to be stressed and have anxiety problem compared to other countries (OECD, 2004). Signs of depression was not mentioned in the present study but mainly boys showed their frustration of the teachers not taking their opinions seriously, hence, lack of motivation to learn**.**

6.2.4 Pupils' learning development

In the present study, based on the pupils' expression, the quality of teaching was excellent and they were mostly expert teachers in the classrooms who cater for the needs of individual students. The teachers are not mainly focused on academic success but instead used a flexible approach to help in positive learning (Lopez, 12012). However, previous research done in the US suggested that middle school did not contribute successfully to adolescents' development in that the focus was mainly on relative ability and social comparison in learning. There was not the presence of flexibility to teach the pupils taking into consideration their needs (Midgley, Anderman, & Hicks, 1995). Furthermore, based on research done on qualitative-oriented studies in the UK relating to teachers, it suggested that the pupils like good teachers because it helps in their learning development (Gray et al, 2011). Hence, in support of the present study teachers should be expert in their profession because it is beneficiary to both the pupils and the teachers.

In addition, the HBSC study demonstrated the importance of taking holistic measures when working with pupils (HBSC, 2005). The holistic approach involves taking into consideration individuals' situations and relationships which influence their growth and development. The survey results showed the connection between the high level of life satisfaction with positive school experiences and low level of life satisfaction with negative school experiences (Gray et al., 2011). The present study showed the presence

of positive school experiences in which the pupils were satisfied with the method of teaching and the good teamwork that were present in their schools.

6.2.5 Relationships in school

The present study suggested that good pupil-pupil relationship and teacher-pupil relationship were dominant in the schools in Finland. The pupils had a sense of belongingness and had a supportive environment. A study done in the US showed similar results. Pupils will adapt to the school condition when there is a good relationship between everyone in the school, including, principal, staff, teachers, and pupils (Roeser et al., 1996). Therefore, adaptation to a school condition is influenced by the type of relationship among the school community. This is consistent with the well-being studies done in Finland which showed the presence of a good support system in the schools which cater for the needs of the pupils. In addition, previous studies demonstrated that relationships in schools are essential to the well-being of the pupil. Samdal, 1998, did a study on student's well-being, and this showed similar results. Teachers' support and adequate expectations were the most important factors of subjective well-being.

The acceptance and support of peer contribute to pupils' motivation to come to school because they feel a sense of belongingness (M. Boulton, Don, & L. Boulton, 2011). Another research suggested that the negative attitudes pupils had towards school was because pupils-pupils' relationship was more positive compared to the pupils-teacher relationship (Haapasalo, Valimaa, and Kannas, 2010). In addition, based on a childhood inquiry done in England, there was the indication that spending time with their friends was considered the most positive thing in the pupils' school because it gave them support and pleasure (Pope, 2009: 17-18). In the current study, both boys and girls viewed the school community as the most popular best feature in their schools. The majority of the pupils experienced positive relationships and a supporting atmosphere in their schools. Moreover, the results from the study indicated a consistent pattern of a supporting atmosphere and good relationships. Hence, this will have an effect on positive health and well-being because of the atmosphere of love and care which are dominant in the school environment (Weare, 2000).

6.3 Ethical issues

In this study, there was no need for a statement from the ethical committee, because the data was collected from schools and it was a part of the school program to check on the well-being of schools. However, participation was voluntary for pupils. Additionally, guardians consent was not needed because of the age and development level of the pupils. Pupils' names were not mentioned, hence, there was the protection of data with identifiers and privacy. The schools get information on the school results, the grade level result, and the class result. The written statements which were used for the qualitative analysis are kept in a safe place and are not given to general use. The research was done with honesty, reliability, and confidentiality and ethical guidelines were observed.

6.4 Strengths and limitations of the study

In this section, the strengths and limitations will be discussed. The major strengths of this study were the fact that the results were similar to many previous studies done in Finland which demonstrated the best features in the Finnish schools being more dominant than the things that need improvement. Additionally, the study population was from 50 girls and 50 boys which show the lack of gender bias. Furthermore, both boys and girls were analyzed in the same manner in all stages of the analysis.

The current study has several limitations. Firstly, the results can be biased in that the pupils can be writing their responses concerning their experiences on school well-being dishonestly. There was no way of telling whether their responses were accurate. This could affect the validity of the results. Secondly, in the current study, the pupils were chosen randomly with every tenth pupil from the participants was chosen from the boys' list and every tenth pupil was chosen from the girls' list for the analysis. This suggested that the ones who were omitted could have made some difference with the results, which would affect the accuracy of the results.

Thirdly, there were few participants who did not respond to the features in their schools that need improvement. This basically could affect the results. Finally, the questionnaire was done in different areas of Finland, which could suggest that the pupils' opinions of their schools could vary when taking into consideration whether the pupils lived in the rural areas or the urban areas of Finland. The pupils' priority of features in schools could be different because individuals are influenced by their environment.

7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, boys and girls experiences with their schools were mainly positive. The study was about examining boys' and girls' experiences on school well-being in lower secondary schools. The boys and girls have mainly similar opinions about the best features of their schools. However, there was a slight difference about the things in their schools that need improvement. The most popular factor in the schools concerning the best features was the community, which includes supportive atmosphere and relationship. The most popular factor in the schools concerning things that need improvement was facilities. This includes indoor facilities and outdoor facilities. Facilities in the schools were a big concern for everyone. The current findings from this study give a better understanding to the schools, families and the bigger community in general on the best features of the schools and the things in the schools that need improvement. This will be useful in maintaining the strengths of the schools and work on improving the weak areas of the schools, which will in the end help in the well-being of the pupils.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

9. REFERENCES

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