



Aino-Maria Ervelä
Diaconia University of Applied Sciences
Master's Degree Program in
Community Development and Conflict Resolution
Master of Social Services
Thesis, 2020

YOUTH PERSPECTIVE IN SCHOOL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Asset-based research in Tiistilä Secondary school



ABSTRACT

Aino-Maria Ervelä

Youth Perspective in School Community Development, Asset-based research in Tiistilä Secondary School

67 p., 4 appendices.

November 2020

Diaconia University of Applied Sciences

Master of Social Services

Master's Degree in Community Development and Conflict Resolution

The aim of this thesis was to benefit the school community in Tiistilä secondary school (Espoo, Finland) in their future development and to increase the pupils' participation in school community development. This thesis aims to provide answers to the questions of: How do the pupils in Tiistilä secondary school experience their school community? and What kind of hopes and ideas do the pupils have for change and improvement of the school community, and how can the existing assets be utilized to achieve that change?

Positive Youth Development, Good relations and Sense of community are presented in the theoretical framework to describe the relevance of community relations for youth development. By offering the pupils opportunities to participate and influence in their community a stronger sense of community can be achieved, Good relations can be fostered and Positive Youth Development can occur. Asset-based approach is chosen in order to recognize and utilize the capacities of both individuals and the community.

Mixed methods and triangulation were used in data collection and data analysis. The data was collected by using both quantitative (online-survey) and qualitative methods (workshops). All the pupils in the secondary school on grades seven to nine, were asked to answer the online survey, and the peer support pupils of the school were invited to participate in two workshops.

76 percent of all the pupils replied to the online survey. The main findings of the research show that pupils in Tiistilä secondary school recognize assets within their school community in human, social, cultural and physical capitals. The importance of social relations together with the school atmosphere and the sense of community, was emphasized as the assets of the school community, but also as issues that caused worries amongst the young people and as issues that the pupils wanted to improve. Racism, smoking, bullying, violent behaviour and loneliness were the five most worrying aspects of the school community indicated by pupils. The desired changes and ideas for improvement the pupils suggested related to strengthening a safe and an equal school atmosphere and a comfortable school environment. Ideas for achieving the desired change involved organizing discussions about discrimination, teaching pupils non-violent conflict resolution skills, organizing more activities, increasing adults' role in supervision and making contributions to the physical facilities of the school.

The findings of this research are presented for the school community as suggestions. The responsibility to implement the presented ideas lies within the schools.

Keywords: Asset-based community development, mixed methods research, school community, youth participation

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	4
2 YOUTH AS PARTICIPATING COMMUNITY MEMBERS.....	6
2.1 Positive Youth Development	6
2.2 Good relations model.....	9
2.3 Sense of community.....	11
3 ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (ABCD).....	13
3.1 Identifying community assets	13
3.2 Forms of community capital in a school community	14
4 SCHOOL AS A COMMUNITY FOR YOUTH.....	17
4.1 School institution in a Finnish society	17
4.2 Pupils' well-being in school	19
4.3 School atmosphere	20
5 METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS DESCRIPTION	22
5.1 The purpose of the research and research questions	22
5.2 Planning the research	23
5.3 Methodology	25
5.4 Data collection	25
5.5 Data analysis	27
5.6 Validity and reliability of the research	28
5.7 Ethical views on the research.....	30
6 FINDINGS	32
6.1 Pupils' experiences in the school community.....	32
6.2 Assets of the school community	37
6.3 Challenges in the school community	42
6.4 Desired changes and ideas for development in the school community	47
6.5 Action plans proposed by the peer support pupils.....	50
7 DISCUSSION	54
7.1 Addressing the worrying aspects of the school community	55
7.2 Utilizing the assets of the school community	60
8 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	64
8.1 Conclusions.....	64
8.2 Recommendations.....	65
8.3 Views on the process	66
REFERENCES.....	68
APPENDIX 1. Plan of the first workshop for peer support pupils	74
APPENDIX 2. Questions of the online-survey translated into English.....	75
APPENDIX 3. Content analysis of the qualitative data.....	78
APPENDIX 4. Template for action plan proposals	80

1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research is to benefit the school community in Tiistilä secondary school in their future development and to increase the pupils' participation in school community development. By offering pupils opportunities to participate in and influence their community, a stronger sense of community can be achieved (Evans 2007). By using an asset-based approach to community development, this research aims to provide answers to the following questions; 1) *How do the pupils in Tiistilä secondary school experience their school community?*, 2) *What kind of hopes and ideas do the pupils have to change and improve the school community, and how can the existing assets be utilized to achieve that change?*

Tiistilä secondary school is a public school located in Espoo, in the second largest municipality of Finland. I got to know Tiistilä secondary school through my work at Espoo family social work starting in 2018. Since that I have been part of a multi-professional network that operates in the region. This network consists of actors such as local youth services, the library, NGOs, the parish and the police, and has organized activities, such as theme days, parental evenings and youth clubs. These activities have often been planned as a reply to a worry raised by the employers. These worries have related to the well-being of the youth community for example when violent behaviour has emerged or the behaviour in social media has been considered alarming.

I realised that my awareness of the pupils' realities and thoughts about their daily youth community was limited despite my participation in the activities of this regional network. In contrast to my limited awareness, youth workers, school staff and library workers interacted with the youth much more in their natural environments, which allowed them to grasp a better understanding of the youths' school community. My position as the family social work representative was different by nature as I mostly worked with those youth who were clients in the family social services, and the interactions mostly took place in formal meeting settings. I wanted to contribute more in the regional development to better understand the youth perspective, and to offer the youth more opportunities to participate in the development process.

To ensure that the voices of the pupils of the Tiistilä secondary school are heard in the future development, I conducted a participatory research that enabled the pupils to share their own experience and thoughts. I presented my draft idea to the school principal in February 2020, who recognized the need for more knowledge and we agreed for cooperation in organizing this research as my Master's thesis. The pupils' experiences of the school community were considered as valuable and useful for planning, organizing and developing the school community.

This thesis aims to better understand the pupils' experience of their school community as well as to identify strengths and weaknesses of their school community. Pupils were asked what they would want to change or improve, and to suggest ideas for achieving the desired change. The data collected was analysed using mixed methods, including both quantitative (online survey) and qualitative methods (workshops). By using an asset-based approach to community development, the aim of this thesis is to identify the assets of the school community and to help the school utilize these assets in creating the desired changes. (Green & Haines 2016.) The findings of this research are presented for the whole school community as suggestions for improvement but the responsibility to implement the presented ideas lies within the schools.

2 YOUTH AS PARTICIPATING COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Youth is an important phase of each individual's development. The values and behaviour patterns that one starts in adolescence can continue throughout one's life. In this chapter the main concepts of Positive Youth Development, Good relations and Sense of community are presented. These concepts were chosen to describe the relevance of community relations for youth development. Participation is an important aspect of being part of a community as well as a right that is determined in laws and treaties. Positive Youth Development, Good relations or Sense of community do not occur without opportunities to participate.

Participation is one of the guiding principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDESA 2013). Through active participation, young people are empowered to play a vital role in their own development as well as in that of their communities. Active participation can also help young people to learn vital life-skills, develop knowledge on human rights and citizenship and to promote positive civic action. To participate effectively, young people must be given the proper tools, such as information, education about and access to their civil rights. (UNDESA 2013.) The Finnish Constitution determines that children must be treated equally as individuals and they must be able to influence matters concerning themselves according to their level of development (A 731/1999). The same principle applies in the Finnish school settings, and the Basic Education Law (A 628/1998) regulates that the education providers must promote pupil's participation, and make sure the pupils have opportunities to participate in school activities and development, and opportunity to express their opinion in issues related to the status of pupils.

2.1 Positive Youth Development

The research and discussion around youth work has earlier focused much on problems, and on identifying risks and prevention methods. In the early 1990s Karen Pittman presented the phrase "Problem-free isn't fully prepared" and started to lead the focus of youth work from fixing and preventing problems into building and strengthening

the assets that result in a healthy and productive adolescence and adulthood. Development can occur in different areas. For example, in cognitive area of development moving from problem free to fully prepared would mean that instead of just aiming to reduce school drop outs, the goal is to increase high academic motivation. Later Pittman and fellow researchers suggested to move forward from “Problem-free isn't fully prepared” into “Fully prepared is not fully engaged.” It was no longer expected that young people would be just prepared to act and learn, but that they would already act and learn. For example, instead of reducing the school drop outs, the pupils’ engagement here would mean fostering peer tutoring, critical problem solving and engaging in school decision making. (Pittman, Irby, Tolman, Yohalem & Ferber 2003.) Curran’s and Wexler’s literature review (2017) about School-Based Positive Youth Development gives evidence on how research about youth is not only focusing on adolescent risk and prevention anymore, but also on the protective factors and strengths.

The idea of Positive Youth Development (PYD) is based on Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological systems theory of human development, which suggests that all human development should be looked through the relationships with communities and the wider society. Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) theory offers an ecological framework that consists of five systems; individual, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. Individuals live in an active interaction within the surrounding community. Individuals both influence and are influenced by the different levels of the environment and cannot be examined separate from the surroundings. The process of PYD involves mutually influential and beneficial relations between individuals and their contexts. These relations are described as individual↔context relations. (Lerner 2017, 1184.)

Positive Youth Development (PYD) emerges from the assumption that every young person has the capacity and potential for positive development (Lerner, Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, Phelps, Naudeau, Gestsdottir, Ma, Alberts, Smith, Simpson, Christeansen, Warren & von Eye 2006). There is a growing number of definitions for PYD. Pittman (2014) emphasizes that PYD is an intentional pro-social approach that: *“focuses on engagement and strengths, providing young people with opportunities and supports, that are grounding into relationships”*. In her presentation, Pittman (2014) uses the definition by the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs which claims that;

“PYD is an intentional, prosocial approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive; recognizes, utilizes, and enhances young people’s strengths; and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strength.”

In defining positive youth development (PYD) it is crucial to discuss what are the desirable outcomes and what is defined as positive development. In PYD a model of five Cs is often presented. The Five Cs are: Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character and Caring. The Cs are considered to present those characteristics that youth need in becoming a successful and contributing member of the society. The five Cs are also linked to the positive outcomes of youth development programs. (Weiner, Lerner, Easterbrooks, Mistry & Weiner 2012, 381.) If the five Cs are achieved, the 6th C, Contribution, can be achieved. The 6th C involves contributions to self, family, community and civic society (Weiner et al. 2012, 375).

Lerner (2018) emphasizes the meaning of character development and defines it as the foundation on which the other four Cs can be built on as the basis for enabling a young person to contribute positively to their own lives and to their families, schools, and communities. Lerner (2018) believes that promoting character virtue development serves as the foundation for thriving youth and flourishing civil society.

Numerous researchers and practitioners have studied and discussed the kind of youth development programs and community-based programs that are the most efficient and successful in supporting the development of the 5 Cs. Lerner et al. (2006) introduced the “Big Three”, a design of effective positive youth development programs. In order to achieve positive youth development, the youth development programs should involve the three components of;

1. Opportunities for youth participation in and leadership of activities; that
2. Emphasize the development of life skills; within the context of
3. A sustained and caring adult-youth relationship. (Lerner et al. 2006, 11.)

Although these components are presented as a list, in order to effectively promote character and the other Cs, these components must be simultaneously and integratively

present (Lerner 2018, 270). These components of effective positive youth development programs are similar to the basic inputs presented by Pittman et al. (2003) to promote youth development and engagement: Services, Opportunities and Support.

The key hypothesis of the PYD model is that when the strengths of youth, and the resources and assets for positive development are recognized in the young people's communities the lives of all youth can be enriched (Lerner 2017, 1184).

2.2 Good relations model

The idea of Good relations model can be seen to have roots in similar thinking than Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory of human development, which suggests that all human development should be looked through the relationships with communities and the wider society. The model of Good relations is one way to look at the interaction between individuals and different groups of society, and it is connected to the promotion of equality between people (yhdenvertaisuus.fi. equality.fi. What are good relations?). How the relations between population groups influence everyone in the society is presented in figure 1.

The policies linked with good relations aim to increase interaction between population groups. The increased interaction prompts in turn people's sense of security, attitudes and participation (yhdenvertaisuus.fi. equality.fi.). Like positive youth development, well-being of people is also supported by fostering the relationships in a community.



FIGURE 1. Relations between population groups influence everyone in the society (yhdenvertaisuus.fi. equality.fi.).

Fostering good relations in a society between different population groups, is an important way to promote equality among people (yhdenvertaisuus.fi. equality.fi. What are good relations?). The idea of improving relations between population groups is often associated with interactions between people from different ethnic backgrounds, but it covers even a broader phenomenon. There are different prejudices towards different groups of people, that reflect the existing atmosphere of the surrounding society. (Ekholm, Tuokkola & Luhtasaari 2018, 9.)



FIGURE 2. Indicators on good relations. (yhdenvertaisuus.fi. equality.fi. What affects good relations?)

The model of Good relations identifies four indicators as represented in Figure 2; attitudes, safety, interaction and participation. The four indicators impact each other and create the good relations between population groups (yhdenvertaisuus.fi. equality.fi. What affects good relations?). Attitudes constitute the first domain of the model. Attitudes are formed based on what people think of others, and how they believe they are seen by others. In order for good relations to exist attitudes must occur and simultaneously these attitudes are shaped by the good relations. Attitudes are strongly linked to social capital of a community, and can be measured by indicators such as feeling respected, valuing diversity, trust and admitted prejudice. Attitudes affect the emotional and physical sense of safety which is the second domain of the model. (Wigfield & Turner 2010, 35-41.)

Positive interactions start with the feeling of safety which means that good relations cannot be experienced on individual nor communal level without that feeling. The feeling of security also has a continuous interaction with the other domains. Peoples' attitudes (domain 1) towards others, and especially towards those who are considered to be different, affect their experience about safety (domain 2), which in turn impacts their behaviour in terms of interaction (domain 3). (Wigfield & Turner 2010, 66.)

Attitudes to others (domain 1), perception of security (domain 2) and the experience of interaction (domain 3) can determine participation (domain 4), which is also seen as a result or outcome of people's experience of good relations. Through interaction an individual becomes a member of a community. The fourth domain of the model includes both participation and influence. (Wigfield & Turner 2010, 141-152.) Interaction creates participation, which adds safety and through these factors atmosphere of positive attitudes is promoted (Ekholm et al. 2018, 9).

2.3 Sense of community

When talking about communities and the individual \Leftrightarrow context relations, an important concept is the sense of community, which reflects on the subjective experience and feeling a person has about being part of a community. A classic definition for sense of community proposed by McMillan & Chavis (1986) has four elements, 1) membership, 2) influence, 3) integration and fulfilment of needs, and 4) shared emotional connections. These are presented in figure 3. The need for participation is inevitable for these four elements to occur.

Membership means the feeling of belonging, and this feature also has boundaries meaning that there are people who belong and the ones who don't. Influence means the influential relationship between the member and the group and vice versa, and refers to a sense of mattering. The third element, integration and fulfilment of needs, means that the member's needs are met and satisfied by being a member of the community. The last and fourth element, shared emotional connections, means that the members have shared and will share history and similar experiences. (McMillan & Chavis 1986, 9.)

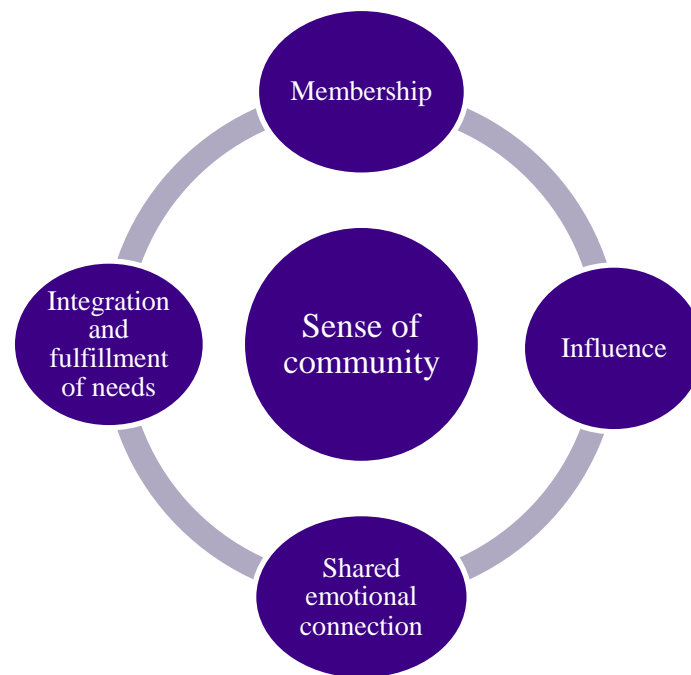


FIGURE 3. Elements of sense of community (McMillan & Chavis 1986, 9).

In Evans's study (2007) the idea of the sense of community theory is presented - people have a tendency to feel more attracted to groups in which they feel to have a chance to influence. Unfortunately, there are many contexts where young people find themselves to have no voice or no influence. The findings show that young people feel a stronger self-described sense of community in contexts where they experience voice and resonance, power and influence, and adequate adult support and challenge. (Evans 2007.) These findings that the youth described as the features of context for strong sense of community, are much aligned to the features of the Big Three design for effective youth programs that foster positive youth development.

3 ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (ABCD)

The guiding principle of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) is that every community has a huge amount of assets and resources that can be used to build the community and solve problems (Foot & Hopkins 2010, 20). This approach brings together the concept of Positive Youth Development (PYD), the model of Good relations and the concept of sense of community which were presented in the previous chapter. In the light of these theories presented, the assumption is that having youth as participants in the asset-based school community development process, positive development for the young people themselves and for their ecological environment is likely to take place.

The idea of community development is to help communities to learn to help themselves and to improve the quality of life of the community members. This is done by utilizing the community assets that reinforces the capacity of the residents. The asset-based approach in community development presents a similar shift of approach that was earlier described in Positive Youth development. Instead of starting with a needs-assessment, the ABCD approach focuses on identifying the strengths and resources of the community which can be used in the development planning. The model does not leave the needs of the community without notice, but the primary focus of this approach is on the goals and strengths of the community. After the initial detection of strengths, the focus is shifted to the problem-solving. In other words, before naming what you need, you need to first know what you already have. The asset-based approach to development can be better understood as a method than as a single theory of community social change. (Green & Haines 2016, 8-14.)

3.1 Identifying community assets

Aistrich & Absetz (2013) concluded the positive impacts of youth participation in their study to promote health in Finland. Including youth at the different phases of development has several benefits for the whole community. For example, young people might have different perspectives than adults about the assets and organizations that have power and are able to influence the change. Youth also have their own social networks

where it is possible to find new partners for the development. Youth need to have an active role in the community but they need adults to facilitate the opportunities (Curran & Wexler 2017.)

There are different methods and approaches for discovering and identifying the assets in communities. One commonly used tool is creating an asset map, in which the participants make a map of the skills and resources in their community. Creating an asset map is not only about collecting data and information but can also be an empowerment tool and a process that can help the participants to discover hidden assets and new possibilities in a community. In creating an asset map, Foot & Hopkins (2010, 20) categorises actual and potential assets into six levels, the assets of individuals, associations and organizations, and the physical, economic and cultural assets. Another commonly used categorization for community assets, introduced by Green & Haines (2016, 16) includes seven levels of assets: physical, human, social, financial, environmental, political and cultural.

3.2 Forms of community capital in a school community

To better suit the school setting, the categorization of asset mapping was narrowed down to four categories: social capital, human capital, cultural capital and physical capital. By doing this the environmental assets are seen as part of the physical capital, and the political assets as part of the cultural capital as the cultural capital also involves the aspects of the school's operating culture. The cultural capital and the operating culture in the school community include both physical and social aspects. As the meaning of school atmosphere and sense of community in school has a strong connection to pupil's well-being and school experience (Schaps 2003; Ahonen 2008), they were added as the fifth category of community assets. This was situated in the middle of the map, as atmosphere and sense of community are structured from, and influenced by the surrounding assets. The framework for mapping assets in the school community is presented in figure 4. The different categories are introduced in more depth below.

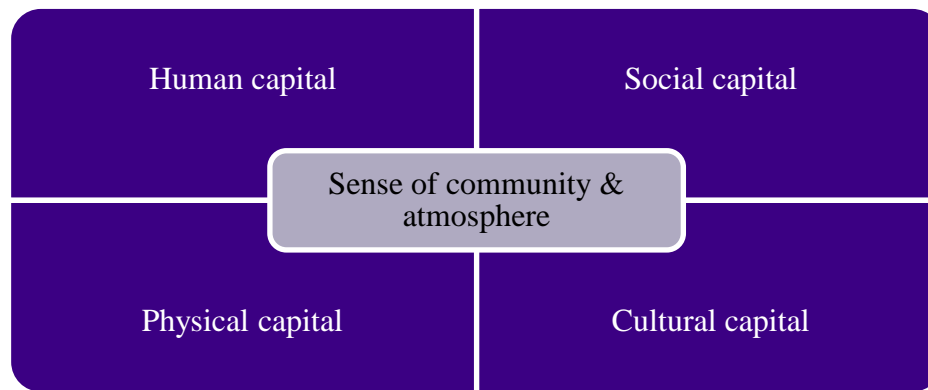


FIGURE 4. Framework for mapping assets of the school community.

Human capital represents the talents, skills and knowledge of the individuals. The assumption behind asset-based community development is how every single person has capacities, abilities and gifts. People with their gifts and capabilities are the most fundamental building block of a community (Green, Moore & O'Brien 2006, 13). When these capacities of a person are used and expressed, the person feels valued, powerful and well-connected to the people around them, and this strengthens the whole community (Kretzmann & McKnight 1993, 13). A good community fosters every individual to express their own individuality, and the diversity of individuals brings the energy that builds the community (Paasivaara & Nikkilä 2010, 37).

Social capital refers to social relationships within the community and can also refer to the trust, norms and social networks that are established (Green & Haines 2016). In a school community, social capital can be measured in relations and cooperation between peers, in relations between pupils and teachers and between other members of the school staff. Social capital is considered as an asset that also fosters the development of the other forms of community capital (Green & Haines 2016, 165).

In community development cultural capital are the beliefs, traditions, history and ethnicity of the community. For example, arts, events and activities can be used as a cultural capital. Cultural capital can occur in both community of place and community of interest, and different places for example can be utilized to promote arts. The physical capital in this context means the stock of buildings and infrastructure of the locality. (Green & Haines 2016.) In a school community, cultural and physical capital consists of the school conditions. This includes both the customs and traditions of the school and its operating culture which presents the cultural capital, and the school facilities

such as the school building, school environment, time schedules, group divisions, breaktimes and school lunch, which are considered to be the physical capital.

The fifth category sense of community and atmosphere refers to experiences of being accepted and feeling part of the school community. Atmosphere is also linked to the feeling of safety which is essential for pupils' participation and learning. The role of school atmosphere will be explained more detailed in the next chapter.

4 SCHOOL AS A COMMUNITY FOR YOUTH

School is one of the most important communities in the lives of young people. As this thesis focuses on school community development, this chapter presents school both as an institution in a Finnish society and as a community for youth. In addition, the School Well-being model is presented to describe which factors affect pupils' well-being in school. The role of school atmosphere is also presented as it strongly relates to pupils' experience about feeling good about going to school.

4.1 School institution in a Finnish society

A school is an institution that reflects on the surrounding society and plays a major role in it. School as an institution and as a physical building has different and multilevel roles, and impacts on individuals and on the wider community and society level as well. School is not only a place where civilization is provided and new information and skills are learned, but also a place for social and mental development. In the present time the emphasizes of what skills are learned in schools, has been on good basic skills such as reading, writing and mathematics, but also in active citizenship, information skills, and on communication and collaboration. These skills are seen as necessary in a global and diverse society. (Mäensivu 2002, 3-4.)

Gibson & Blandford (2005) define school communities as communities within a community. Functioning within a community creates the need for the school to create an identity that reflects the community's location and desired direction. Like every community, each school has their own culture which is determined by individual and collective beliefs and values. When talking about the school as a community and the school culture it is critical to keep in mind that the school community does not consist of only like-minded people who all share the same beliefs and identities, but instead schools are collections of individuals within a shared culture. The school culture can appear in many forms like in the existing practices and rituals, in communications as stories and slogans, in physical forms like the location and style of the school buildings and in common language such as phrases that are common to the school. (Gibson & Blandford 2005, 34-36.)

For the wider community and society level, school as an institution has an important role in maintaining and building security, stability and balance. School buildings are important public buildings in their surrounding communities and reflects on the surrounding society, its values and attitudes. Schools' task is also in promoting the sense of community in its region. (Mäensivu 2002, 3-4.)

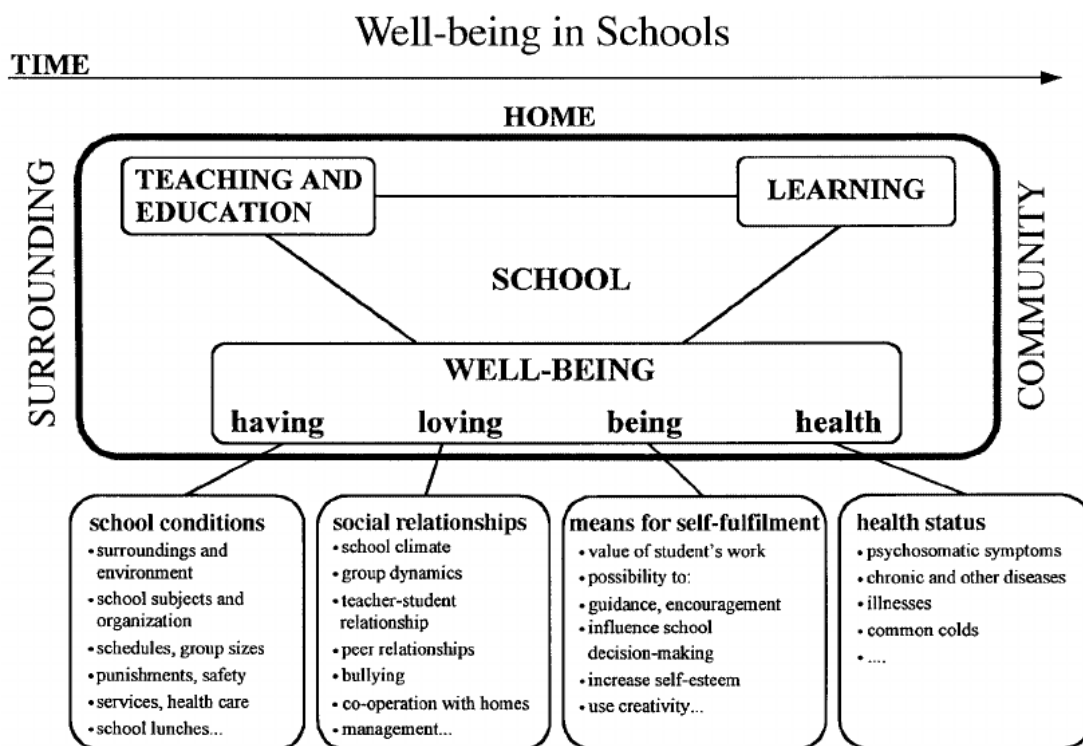
The right for participation and the right for a safe school environment are regulated in the Basic Education Law (A 628/1998). Sense of community and opportunities for participation are considered as the building blocks for a safe and secure school. But it goes both ways, in order for a pupil to participate and express his/her own ideas, the group and environment must be safe enough. (Salovaara, Hokonen & Honkonen 2011, 17, 41-42, 68-69.) The feeling of being safe is one factor for enabling the learning process in a school setting (Salovaara et al. 2011). Threats for security and feeling safe at school can be for example bullying, racism and school violence.

Participation in a school setting has been researched and the conclusion is that participation, especially the lack of it, is often found as an issue that should be developed. Promoting participation and inclusion has been recognized in political will, and in concrete actions. (Kiilakoski 2016, 41.) The peer support scheme is a good concrete example of how youth participation is supported in Finnish schools. In 1972 The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare (MLL) started peer support activities in Finnish secondary schools. The system is based on the idea of peer support where the peer supporter is an ordinary pupil that voluntarily works to help other pupils with the aim to strengthen the school community. Peer supporters act for example by organizing games and theme days for other pupils in the form of non-formal learning and support the newcomers by providing information about school services and activities. In serious situations such as school bullying, peer supporters can inform the school staff about the on-going situation. The peer support scheme is a dialogue between the young and the adults, and aims to enable pupils to be active participants in decision making processes. This scheme aims to benefit the whole school community by addressing the common concerns and making sure that the voice of the young people is heard and acted upon. (MLL. Tietoa MLL:sta. Welcome to the Mannerheim League For Child Welfare / MLL. Peer Support Scheme 2019.)

4.2 Pupils' well-being in school

Building the sense of community in schools has multiple benefits for the pupils' well-being (Schaps 2003; Ahonen 2008). A school with a strong sense of community and good atmosphere can motivate pupils in their studies, foster enthusiasm for postgraduate studies, develop social and emotional competencies, and act as a protective factor to avoid disruptive behaviours such as use of drugs and violence. (Schaps, 2003; Ahonen 2008, 197, 209.) The positive effects of sense of community to well-being has been researched in other setting as well than the school setting. In for example a work setting, the sense of community is a supporting factor for health, well-being, learning and performance. (Paasivirta & Nikkilä 2010, 37.)

The affecting factors to the well-being of pupils' in school communities have been recognized through research. Konu (2002) created a model to present the pupils' well-being in a school community, which is based on Allardt's (1976) sociological model of well-being. Konu's definition of the school well-being is composed of four categories; school conditions (having), social relations (loving), means for self-fulfilment (being) and health status. These are presented in Picture 1. School conditions (having) include the physical environment, the school building, school safety, and other matters related to the learning environment such as timetables, class divisions and school lunch. Social relationships (loving) are formed of the social environment, social atmosphere and the relations between pupils and teachers, and also between school and the surrounding community including the relations between the school and the pupils' homes. Bullying is a sign of social relations not working well. Means for self-fulfilment (being) are seen as all pupils having possibilities to study according to their own capacities. This also refer to having opportunities to participate and affect issues related to oneself and the school. Every pupil should be considered to be an equal part of the school community and have a chance to gain positive experiences about learning, and to receive positive feedback and encouragement. Health is considered to be a separate part of well-being, which involves both physical and mental illnesses. Health is also seen as an asset, that helps achieving the other areas of well-being. (Konu, 2002, 43-46.)



PICTURE 1. The School Well-being Model (Konu & Rimpelä 2002) in Konu, Alanen, Lintonen & Rimpelä (2003).

The school well-being model involves the features from the Big three design; opportunities to participate, learning life skills and teacher-student relationships. The social relations and caring adult-youth relations are emphasized in both models, which indicates that teacher's encouragement to express opinions and to share experiences is proven to support the participation of pupils in the learning community. (Rasku-Puttonen 2008, 16.)

4.3 School atmosphere

The well-being of pupils' in a school setting also reflects pupils' experiences about the school atmosphere. In Ahonen's research (2008, 207), school atmosphere had the biggest correlation than any other variables with pupils' experience about feeling good about going to school. Similar indicators that Konu identified as the categories in the model for pupils' well-being in school, can be seen as the building blocks for school atmosphere.

The Good relations model, as presented before, fits well in a school community as a tool to promote equality, the well-being and the positive youth development of pupils. Salovaara et al. (2011) link together the interactive relationships between security, participation and sense of community in a school setting, and define these as subjective feelings and experiences, that are the structure for the school atmosphere.

In Moisio's master thesis (2017), she studied the experiences pupils on grades 7 to 9 had about school atmosphere. 678 pupils from four schools in Rovaniemi region took part in the study. The findings show that the atmosphere of the school was structured through feeling good at school, the feeling of acceptance in peer relations and the feeling of safety. Moisio (2017, 98) sees atmosphere as a phenomenon that relates to communality since an individual cannot experience atmosphere without the presence of others. In experiencing atmosphere, the meaning of social relations is emphasized. Good atmosphere is part of a wider concept of well-being, and in a school community good atmosphere supports the well-being of its members. (Moisio 2017, 2.)

Based on the findings of her study, Moisio (2017) claims the importance of supporting peer relations, communication skills and actions against school bullying. The school atmosphere improves when enough time is invested in getting to know each other and by offering pupils opportunities to participate during school days. Teachers and pupils can improve the school atmosphere by using different kind of functional methods and by organizing activities and events. These findings follow the principle of the Good relations model - the atmosphere of attitudes is influenced by increasing interaction and participation.

As a conclusion, achieving good relations leads into sense of community which in turn fosters the good atmosphere in school, which again fosters the well-being of pupils. This chain of thought is relevant and an interesting starting point for the research setting of this thesis.

5 METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS DESCRIPTION

In this chapter I introduce Tiistilä secondary school as the community of research, the research purpose and the research questions. I describe the whole research process and introduce the methods used in collecting and analysing the data. The validity and reliability of the research are also examined, and ethical views discussed at the end of this chapter.

5.1 The purpose of the research and research questions

Tiistilä school is a school in Espoo that includes both a primary and a secondary school and all together has approximately 720 students in grades 1–10 and in pre-school education. The primary and secondary schools are located close together in the same courtyard. (Espoon kaupunki. Tiistilän koulu.) This research will focus on the secondary school, where the number of pupils according to principal Mirja Pirinen (personal communication, October 27,2020) is 349.

The purpose of this research is to benefit the school community in Tiistilä secondary school in their future development and to increase the youth participation in school community development. This research aims to produce new information about the assets and the worrying aspects the youth themselves see in their school community, and to utilize this knowledge in brainstorming new solutions for practice and creating new ideas for development and improvement of the school community.

The research questions for this research are:

- 1) How do the pupils in Tiistilä secondary school experience their school community?

The focus of this question is to find out what the pupils define as the existing assets in their school community, and what do the pupils experience as the worrying aspects in the school community.

- 2) What kind of hopes and ideas do the pupils have to change and improve the school community, and how can the existing assets be utilized to achieve that change?

The second research question aims to involve the youth in visioning and planning the change of their community. What are the objectives they would like change in their school community, and what kind of ideas they come up with to utilize the assets they have defined?

5.2 Planning the research

In February 2020 I contacted the principal of Tiistilä secondary school and suggested to conduct an asset-based research about their school community with a participatory approach. The value of the research was recognized immediately by the school and the co-operation started. The principal, vice principal and the teacher in charge of the peer support activities took part in the planning process. The research plan contained two workshop sessions with peer support pupils and an online survey for all the pupils in the secondary school. The different phases of the research are presented in figure 5.



FIGURE 5. The research process included two workshops and an online-survey.

Only after I had started to make my research plan, I found out about a major change the school was about to face. The current school building had been decided to be tear down and replaced with a new bigger school and kindergarten building. The current school building has a long history and the first parts of the building were completed in 1970's. Building a new school is going to have a big impact not only on the school community, but also to the community of the neighbourhood around. For the three years' time of construction the school will need to move in to an evasive mode. (Espoon kaupunki, Tilapalvelut-liikelaitos 2019, 4-5.)

In the planning phase of constructing of the new school, the idea of supporting the sense of community in school has been considered. The new school spaces are to be built as transformable spaces, which will be partially openable and connectable spaces that support the sense of community. (Espoon kaupunki, Tilapalvelut-liikelaitos 2019, 8, 13, 14.) However, a school is a special combination of physical and social place. The places in a school building that might have been designed to be accessible and communal, only get their real meaning after the people of the school are situated in it. (Hoikkala & Paju 2013, 29, 82.) By first discussing this topic with the school principals, we decided to involve questions related to the demolition of the school building in the online survey to find out pupils' thoughts about this big change they were about to face.

I applied a research permit from the city of Espoo, and it was granted in May 2020. The data collection took place during the fall semester 2020. The principal informed the pupils, their guardians and teachers of the school about the research, and the teachers were involved in collecting the consent forms from the pupils' guardians and facilitating the lessons where the pupils replied to the online surveys. The peer support pupils were invited to the workshops to take part of the planning of the online survey and to discuss the results and to plan action for development.

The ongoing COVID-19 situation had some effects on the research setting and in organizing the workshops. This decreased the level of pupils' participation and shifted the focus of the research more from the workshops to the results of the online survey.

5.3 Methodology

This research is a participatory research and it has an asset-based approach to community development (ABCD). As the aim is to provide new information that could be utilized in creating action, some principles of an action research are also involved. The research is based in triangulation as mixed methods are combined to collect and analyse data. Triangulation means combining different types of data and is used to add the credibility of the interpretation (Ivankova 2015, 208).

Participatory research includes different approaches and trends. In general, participatory research refers to the partnership and co-operation between the researcher and the stakeholders in different parts of the research including planning, data collection and analysing and sharing the results. Participatory research is often used to combine research and development activities. (Keskitalo, Vuokila-Oikkonen, Karvinen & Launonen 2016, 229.) According to Chevalier & Buckles (2013) participatory research aims to collaboratively produce information while action research aims to change the practice by using the collaboratively produced information (Keskitalo et al. 2016, 230). The research setting of this thesis aims for both.

An action-based research includes identifying the problem, developing an action plan and implementing, evaluating and monitoring the action (Ivankova 2015, 37). This research follows some principles of an action research but leaves out the phases of implementing, evaluating and monitoring the action. The purpose of this research is to provide information of the existing assets and challenges in the school community, and facilitate the peer supporter pupils in creating new ideas for development. These steps create the base for future action and community development efforts. After the results and recommendations of the research are presented, the school holds the responsibility in deciding on the future action, implementations and evaluations, which would complete the full cycle of an action research.

5.4 Data collection

Triangulation was used in the data collection and data analysis. I used mixed methods including both quantitative (online-survey) and qualitative methods (workshops) to

collect the data. Combining the quantitative and qualitative data together, a more complete understanding and a holistic view of the research phenomena is developed. (Tuomi & Sarajarvi 2009, 142-143; Ivankova 2015, 128-130.)

The qualitative data consists of the peer support pupils' comments in the workshops (N=4 & N=8), and the open-ended questions in the online survey (N=265). The quantitative data is consisted of the online survey (N=265).

First workshop

From the total of 12 peer support pupils, four participated in the first workshop. The workshop was held online whereas the plan was to have it face-to-face. The workshop did not foster a fruitful discussion, but each of the peer support pupils provided at least one or two comments about the assets and worrying aspects of the school community. Three of the participants left the online session early, and only one stayed until the end and took part in testing the online survey. No critical comments about the online survey were given, so no changes were made to the survey after the workshop. The plan of the first workshop is found in Appendix 1.

Online survey

All the pupils in the secondary school on grades seven to nine, were asked to answer an online survey. The online survey involved questions about the pupils' experiences of the school community. The online survey was completed during a theme lesson which served as an introduction to the research topic and to the sense of community. In the beginning of the lesson the teachers played a video greeting from YouTube, in which I shortly introduced myself and the research setting. In the video I emphasized the active role of the pupils and presented my role as a facilitator whose task is to collect and present their ideas and thoughts forward. After the video, PowerPoint slides guided the class to discuss more about communities, sense of community and the school as a community before the pupils started to fill in the online survey. The pupils were informed that as the survey was part of a research, participating was voluntary.

The online survey was held in Finnish and it is translated into English for the thesis (Appendix 2). The survey was categorised into seven sections, each focusing on one theme. The categories were 1. sense of community, 2. social relations, 3. cultural capital and customs, 4. physical capital, 5. development, 6. worrying aspects and 7. human

capital. The first four sections included 34 statements that the participants replied to on a Likert-scale according to the level of agreement or disagreement. The fifth part of the survey consisted of three open questions and provided the pupils an opportunity to present their own ideas for change. There was an option to skip the open questions. In the sixth part the pupils were asked to choose alternatives from a given list that presented worrying aspects in the school community, and the last section consisted of one open question that requested the pupils to name one of their personal strengths that they consider to be positive assets for the school community.

Second workshop

The second workshop was organized as a live session but by following the guidelines given from the school to prevent the spread of the COVID-19. This meant gathering in an outdoor space at an inner ward of the school. Eight peer support pupils participated in the workshop session. Two of the participants left during the break held in the middle of the session.

In the second workshop I introduced the main findings of the online survey to the peer support pupils and invited them to share their comments and thoughts on the results of the online survey. The peer support pupils were also asked to work in pairs and decide on an idea which they would prepare an action plan for. As a result of the second workshop four action plan proposals were created.

5.5 Data analysis

The quantitative data was analysed with SPSS statistics software 25. The statistical analysis was mostly performed by factor analysis, mean values and percentile figures. The comparison between the different variables is presented in frequencies, mean values, percentages with cross tabulations and one-way between-groups ANOVA.

In analysing the qualitative data, I used the principles of both data-guided and theory-guided content analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 108-117). In organizing the named positive aspects of the school community and the things in which pupils felt satisfied with, I used 16 intermediate categories based from the data to divide all the replies. In

total 157 statements were counted into these categories. From the intermediate categories, I formed five main categories following the framework for mapping assets of the school community as presented in chapter 3. These main categories are *positive atmosphere/sense of community, social capital, human capital, cultural capital and physical capital*. The combining theme of these five main categories is *the existing assets of the school community*. (Appendix 3)

In organizing the aspects in which pupils were hoping to achieve some change I used 18 intermediate categories based on the data and involved 178 statements. From these intermediate categories based on the data I formed three main categories which are *Increasing activity and participation in the school culture, improving safety and the school atmosphere and making contributions to a comfortable school environment*. Together these three categories formed the combining theme *Actions to strengthen a safe and an equal school atmosphere and more comfortable school environment*. (Appendix 3)

The findings of both quantitative and qualitative data were brought together and presented and discussed together in convergent manner. The findings are presented in chapter 7 and discussed in chapter 8.

5.6 Validity and reliability of the research

Validity and reliability are traditional means used for evaluating the methodological quality of quantitative data. Validity assesses whether the research measured what it was supposed to measure, and reliability assesses whether the instrument consistently and accurately measure the concept it claims to measure. In qualitative data, instead of testing the validity and reliability Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggests four indicators of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability to be used for assessing the trustworthiness of a qualitative data. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 136-139; Ivankova 2015, 260-265.)

The use of triangulation is considered as one research validity criteria. In the research setting of this thesis triangulation was accomplished by using mixed methods in both the data collection and the data analysis. The quantitative data formed the basis of the

research and was complemented with the qualitative findings. Triangulation can also be found in the theory of the research, in processing the different perspectives of the main concepts. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 143-149.)

The total sample of the online survey was 265 (N=265) which represents 76 % of the total amount of 349 pupils in the Tiistilä secondary school. The reliability of the factors in the quantitative data was analysed by using Cronbach's alpha.

As the concepts of school community, sense of community and assets, might feel strange and abstract to pupils, teacher-lead discussions were organized in the classrooms before pupils started to reply to the survey. These discussions aimed to provide pupils a deeper understanding of the concepts, by first asking the pupils in what communities' they consider they are part of and what kind of a community their school community is. In planning the online survey, I also tried to pay attention in writing clear instructions and in using clear expressions. Some pupils had written a criticism in the online survey regarding the limitation of number of alternatives they were allowed to choose as the worrying aspects of the school community. They said that if it would have been allowed, they would have chosen more than five of the given alternatives.

As Tiistilä secondary school is a multicultural school community, there are number of pupils who do not speak Finnish as their first language. This might have limited the participation of some pupils, or how they interpreted the questions, as the language of the survey was Finnish. The teacher in charge of peer support activities commented that in her class there was a large scatter in the level of Finnish language between pupils. Some pupils had filled in the survey in less than 10 minutes, as some struggled in understanding the questions, and some might have even left the survey unfinished because of the language barrier.

As the mother tongue or ethnicity of the pupils were not asked in the survey, it is not possible to know whether the set of respondents represent a truthful set of the pupils in the secondary school. Based on the previous reflection, it is likely that the pupils whose mother tongue is something else than Finnish, might be underrepresented in this set.

Another limitation of the survey is the fact that the gender or grade of the pupils were not asked. It is not known whether an equal number of the 7th, 8th and 9th graders responded to the questionnaire, and if boys and girls are equally represented in the data as in the school setting. This also ruled out the possibility to compare the responses based on gender or grade.

5.7 Ethical views on the research

Information about the research process was first sent to all the pupils and their guardians through the Wilma online-system. The guardians were asked to give a consent for their child's participation, and they had a right to deny their child's participation if they wanted. Before answering to the online-survey, pupils were shown a video where I shortly explained the research setting and reminded that participating to the research was voluntary. No personal data was gathered in any stage of the research, and no specific age or gender groups can be recognized from the data.

The peer support pupils received additional information from the peer support teacher and in addition to the online survey, they received an invitation to participate into two workshops. The peer support pupils and their guardians were also asked to give a consent for recording the workshop session. The purpose of the recording was to be able to check and confirm the notes made during the workshop. Some pupils or their guardians did not give the consent for recording, and for this reason did not participate in the first workshop. When planning the second workshop, it was decided that having more participants involved would be more valuable than having the workshop outcomes recorded. Instead of filming or recording the workshop, I decided to invite a colleague of mine to assist me by taking notes of the discussion during the workshop. In the second workshop the peer support pupils were also asked to write down some ideas on templates, which were collected in the end of the workshop (Appendix 4).

The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic has had some effect on the everyday school life in Tiistilä secondary school, and impacted the workshop arrangements of the research. To prevent the spread of the pandemic, the school had decided not to mix the school groups, which meant that the group of peer support pupils were also not allowed to

gather in a classroom setting. This meant changing the live session to an online meeting, which strongly decreased the level of the pupils' participation. The timing of the workshop also suffered, as originally the workshop was planned to take place during the school day, but because the distance learning and other arrangements had already had a big influence in the study-schedules, the pupils were not allowed to skip any classes and the workshop needed to be arranged after classes.

The level of pupils' participation in the online workshop after a long school day was not relatively high. Another factor influencing the level of participation, was the fact that I was just a stranger and outsider of the school community to the pupils, and the online setting kept the distance between us. In the online platform I was not able to get the pupils to participate as actively as I had thought, and the bigger role and responsibility stayed on my side. I believe the workshop would have led into more fruitful discussion and other outcomes if instead of interacting through a screen, we could have been in a classroom together.

The level of pupils' participation in the second workshop proved to be higher compared to the first workshop. This was seen in the number of participants and in the bigger amount of interaction. The pupils followed the instructions that I gave and presented their comments when asked for but did not show much own initiative. Pupils had great ideas and thoughts, but they needed adults to facilitate the session and encourage them in expressing their opinions. The outdoor setting in the end of October was not ideal for the workshop as the pupils were complaining that they felt cold. The uncomfortable physical setting could be a factor that influenced the level of participation. Some pupils also said how they were tired and out of energy as the session was held in the afternoon and their school day had started at 8am.

In a community-based participatory research the community should be part of all the research phases, and people from different parts of the community should be involved. In a school community this would mean involving also the school staff and pupils' guardians. Due to the limitations of time and resources, I narrowed my thesis to focus only on the youth perspective. Despite these limitations, I believe that the findings of this research bring a lot of valuable information to the whole school community and these findings will be utilized in the planning and implementation of the school's future development projects.

6 FINDINGS

In this chapter I present the findings of the data analysis. I start by presenting the quantitative results of the online survey which forms the basis of the results and presents the overall picture. I then present the main findings of the assets of the school community followed by the worrying aspects of the school community, jointly by using some numeric results from the quantitative data, and by using citations from the qualitative data to deepen the meaning of the presented issues. I then present the objectives that the pupils named for desired changes and improvements, and the ideas they have presented for creating this change. Finally, I present the action plan proposals of the peer support pupils to implement these ideas into practice.

6.1 Pupils' experiences in the school community

In the online survey the pupils were asked to reply 34 statements on a Likert scale, from 1-5 according to the level of their agreement (Figure 6). Value 1 means fully agree and 5 fully disagree. These statements measured the pupils' experiences in the school community related to the sense of community and safety, to cooperation with others and social capital, to the cultural capital of the school community and to the school building and the physical capital of the school. Figure 6 gives an impression that most of the pupils are feeling good in their school community. Majority of the pupils feel like being part of the school community (83%) and that they are accepted as they are in school (82%).

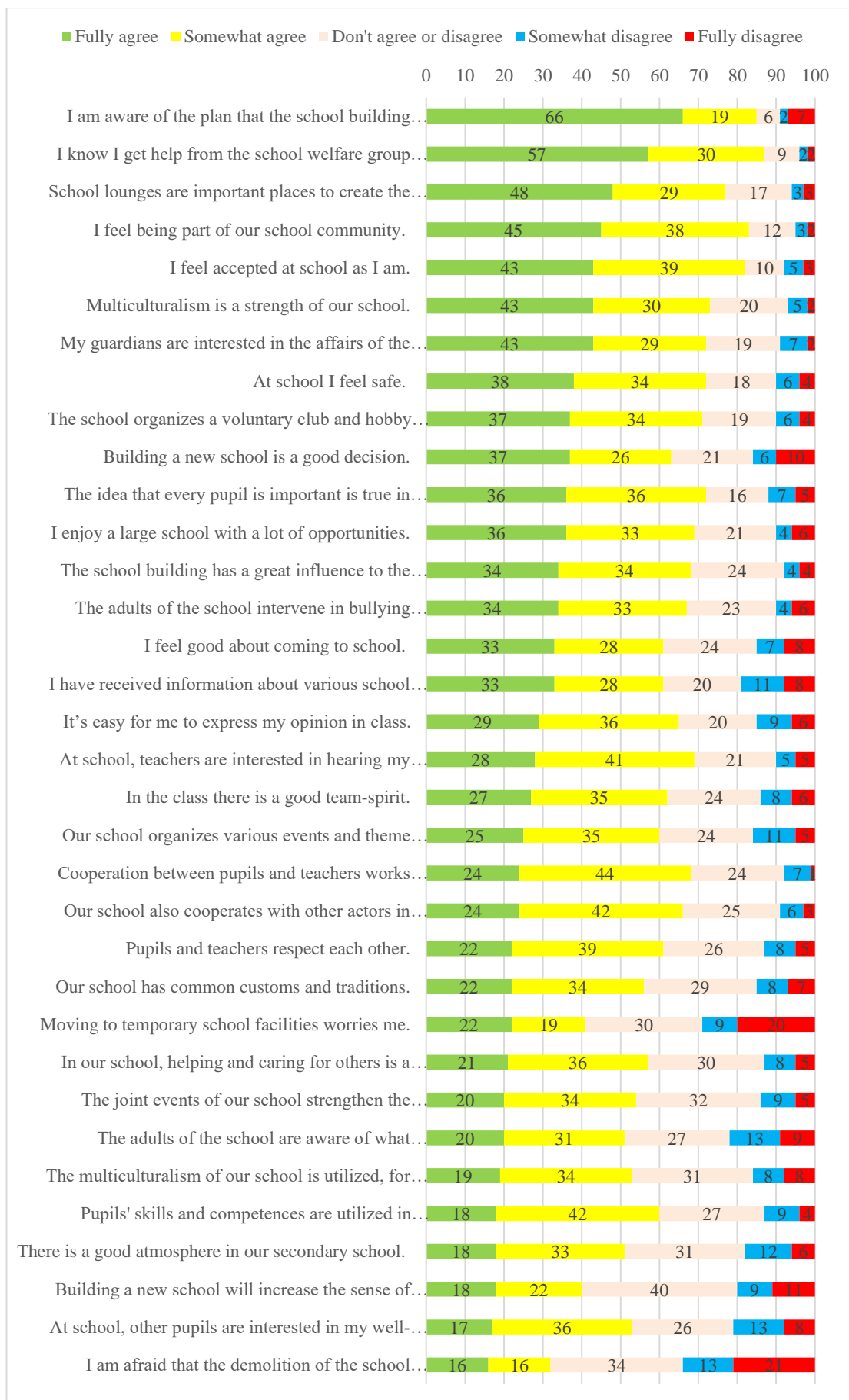


FIGURE 6. Pupils replies to the statements related to the school community in the online survey, (%) N=265.

In order to summarize the findings presented in figure 6, I used factor analysis to form five factors that describe different aspects of the school community. The aim was to reduce the number of variables and to find those variables that describe similar aspects of the school community, and to build a useful indicator for describing and analysing the phenomenon. The clearest solution proved to be a five-factor model. These five factors were named as F1 Our school is safe and has a sense of community, F2 Our school is a multicultural and a networked place for hobbies, F3 The school building creates the school atmosphere, F4 The demolition of the school worries me and F5 The adults of our school are aware of what is happening and intervene.

The first factor, *Our school is safe and has a sense of community*, is formed out of 15 variables with the highest load. These variables measure the pupils' experience about being part of the community, the feeling of belongingness, caring about others, the feeling of acceptance and safety, and expressing one's own opinions. Factor 1 is a strong factor (Cronbach's alpha .93). The variables and the divisions of the factors are presented in table 1.

The second factor, *Our school is a multicultural and a networked place for hobbies*, includes ten variables. These variables measure the school's own culture and customs related to organizing events, activities and hobbies, attitudes for multiculturalism and how pupils' skills are utilized inside the community. The experience of how the school cooperates with other actors in the region and access to the school welfare services are also involved in this factor. Factor 2 is also a strong factor (Cronbach's alpha .86).

The third factor, *The school building creates the school atmosphere*, is formed out of five variables that all indicate the role of the school building for creating the school atmosphere and the school community. Factor 3 is a quite strong factor (Cronbach's alpha .77).

The fourth factor, *The demolition of the school worries me*, consists of two variables that relate to the worries about the demolition of the school building and its effect on the school atmosphere. Factor 4 is a quite strong factor (Cronbach's alpha .70).

The fifth factor, *The adults of our school are aware of what is happening and intervene*, includes two variables that measure the pupils' experience about how the adults

of the school are aware of what is happening and their interventions to bullying situations. Factor 5 is also a quite strong factor (Cronbach's alpha .70).

TABLE 1. Rotated Factor Matrix measuring the pupils' experiences about the school community from scale 1 to 5.

Rotated Component Matrix ^a						
	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	h2
At school, other pupils are interested in my well-being and how am I.	.761					.526
There is a good atmosphere in our secondary school.	.741					.528
At school I feel safe.	.676	.334				.605
I feel good about coming to school.	.671					.519
At school, teachers are interested in hearing my opinion.	.652					.477
In the class there is a good team-spirit.	.635					.509
It's easy for me to express my opinion in class.	.634					.622
Pupils and teachers respect each other.	.628					.606
The idea that every pupil is important is true in our school.	.619	.449				.525
I feel being part of our school community.	.600	.388				.595
Cooperation between pupils and teachers works well.	.587	.363				.552
I feel accepted at school as I am.	.579				.350	.390
In our school, helping and caring for others is a common principle.	.541	.410				.403
The joint events of our school strengthen the school's sense of community.	.466	.382				.713
My guardians are interested in the affairs of the school community.	.415	.339				.667
Our school organizes various events and theme days.		.667				.545
The school organizes a voluntary club and hobby activities for the school's pupils.		.660				.489
I have received information about various school hobby and leisure activities.		.622				.532
I know I get help from the school welfare group (curator, school nurse) when needed.	.332	.620				.659
Our school has common customs and traditions.	.349	.600				.372
Pupils' skills and competences are utilized in everyday school life.	.402	.533				.566
The multiculturalism of our school is utilized, for example, in teaching situations and events.	.315	.486			.315	.557
Multiculturalism is a strength of our school.		.484				.538
Our school also cooperates with other actors in the region, such as the library, youth services, the police, etc.	.314	.481				.630
I am aware of the plan that the school building will be demolished		.454				.609
The school building has a great influence to the school atmosphere.			.760			.549
Building a new school will increase the sense of community.			.743			.320
Building a new school is a good decision.			.651	-.396		.628
School lounges are important places to create the sense of community.			.647			.686
I enjoy a large school with a lot of opportunities.			.400		.312	.409
Moving to temporary school facilities worries me.				.758		.684

I am afraid that the demolition of the school building will have a weakening effect on the school atmosphere.				.752		.636
The adults of the school are aware of what happens in break-time between the classes.					.767	.602
The adults of the school intervene in bullying situations.		.419			.642	.573

Figure 7 shows how approximately two thirds of the pupils agree with the first three factors. This means that more than two thirds of the pupils (68%) consider their school to be safe and have sense of community. The same number of pupils see their school as a multicultural and networked place for hobbies. Similar percentage (65%) agree that the school building creates the school atmosphere. The division of opinions seems to be very similar with the first three factors, with two thirds agreeing and one third disagreeing. However, the number of pupils who tell they fully disagree is only 5-7%.

The demolition of the school building divides opinions between the pupils, and a bigger number of people has a strong opinion about this than about the other statements. 71 percent of the pupils are not worried about it. However, more than every 10th pupil (13%) fully agree that the demolition of the school worries them. In total a bit less than one third of the pupils (29%) is worried about the demolition of the current school building. In the open-ended questions, some pupils expressed a hope that the school building would not be demolished, or that the demolition would happen only after they have first completed their studies in the secondary school. The peer support pupils commented these findings in the second workshop by also saying that pupils would like to finish their studies in this building. Peer support pupils on the 9th grade thought that from their grade level's perspective this was not an issue. From the perspective of the 8th grade peer support pupils, in their grade level the demolition of the school is "a basic thing" and pupils don't talk about it much, but only that there is no information about the transition to evasive modes.

The fifth factor divides pupils' opinions clearly into half and half. Half of the pupils' (51%) agree that the adults of the school are aware of what is happening and intervene, as the other half (49%) disagrees. In this factor there is the biggest number of pupils strongly disagreeing (16%). This division is seen in the open-ended questions as well. Some pupils describe the actions and interventions related to bullying as the positive

assets of the school community, as others describe dissatisfaction in this, and in the low level of intervention by adults of the school.

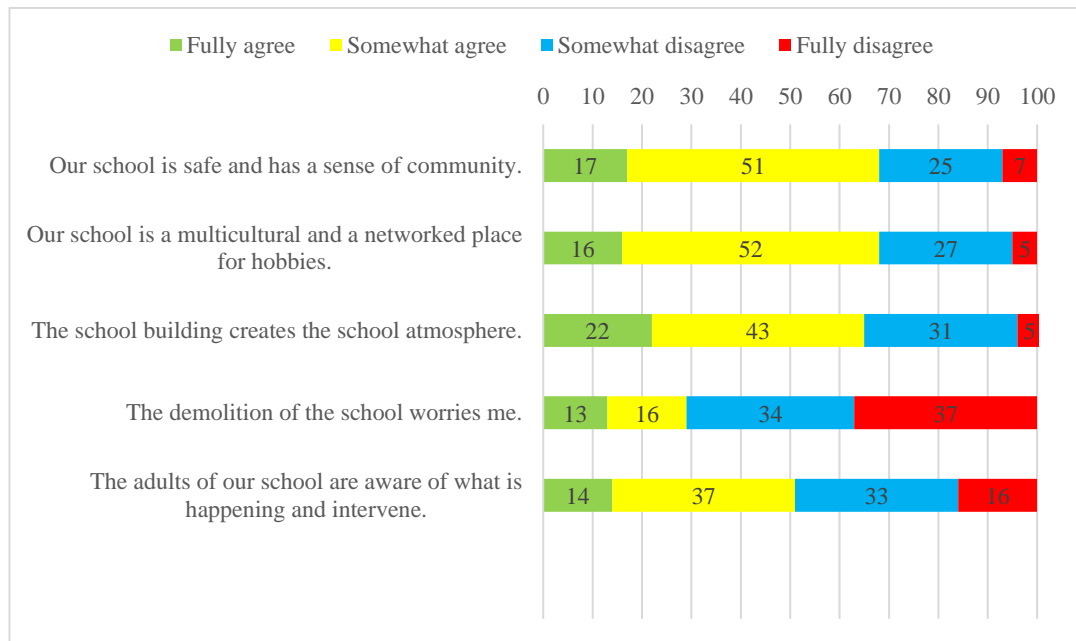


FIGURE 7. The five-factor model in a scale where 1-1,49=Fully agree; 1,5-2,49=Somewhat agree; 2,5-3,49=Somewhat disagree and 3,5-5= Fully disagree. (%). N=265.

6.2 Assets of the school community

This sub-chapter presents the positive aspects and assets of the school community named by the pupils. These findings are presented by combining the results of both quantitative and qualitative data, and by using citations from the qualitative data to deepen the meaning of the presented issues. The replies to the statement “This thing works well in our school / I am satisfied with this” were divided into five categories: atmosphere/sense of community, social capital, human capital, cultural capital and physical capital. This qualitative data was quantified by counting how many times the same thing was mentioned in the replies. The quantification shows how social capital and physical capital formed the biggest categories with 44 replies in both. In addition, 11 pupils answered that they were satisfied with every aspect of the school.

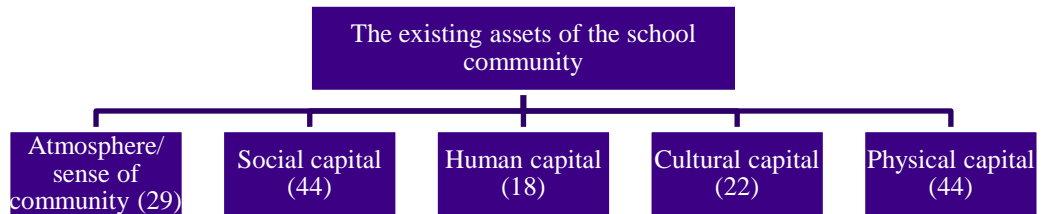


FIGURE 8. The five categories in which the pupils identified the existing assets of the school community and the times mentioned in the open-ended questions.

Atmosphere & Sense of Community

Starting with the sense of community, four out of five pupils said they feel being part of the school community (82 %). 14 pupils (5%) somewhat or fully disagreed with the statement “I feel being part of our school community” as 33 pupils (13 %) said they don’t agree nor disagree Those pupils who felt like being part of the school community experienced the atmosphere of the school and the team-spirit of their class better than the ones who did not feel like belonging to the community. Sense of community was also mentioned eight times in the open-ended questions, as a positive asset.

“All pupils support each other.”

“Everybody respects each other.”

“There are different kind of people in the school, and mostly everyone respects each other.”

The pupils defined the school atmosphere as both as an asset of the school community, but also as an objective they would want to improve. Half of the pupils (51%) feel that the school atmosphere in their secondary school is good. Almost third (31%) of the pupils did not give an opinion about this statement, and less than one fifth (17%) somewhat or fully disagreed. The good team-spirit inside one’s class was experienced more often (62%) than the good atmosphere of the whole secondary school. In naming the positive elements of the school, atmosphere was mentioned in 21 of the open-ended questions, and after peer-relations (which was mentioned 26 times) it was the second most often mentioned positive aspect.

“School has good atmosphere and people are nice to each other.”

Social capital

Social relations were emphasized in the replies. Not just the peer-relations, but also teachers were often mentioned (16) as an asset. Following citations describe the social capital of the school community;

“Everyone has friends and no one is discriminated against.”

“Everyone is cool with everybody, if one can be a good guy.”

“The cooperation between pupils and teachers works well.”

In the first workshop the peer support pupils also named social relations as the asset of the school community:

“There is always someone to talk to (adults of the school).”

“People have courage to join groups and talk to each other.”

“I don’t see anyone alone.”

“If someone has some worries, this can be shared with friends or with teacher.”

A sign of social capital was also how majority of the pupils (86 %) know that they can get help from the school’s welfare group (curator, school nurse) when needed. One important aspect in which pupils told they were satisfied was the fact that there is not much bullying in the school community, and if there is, it is addressed quickly and the one being bullied will get help. This objective raised some contradictions, as bullying was also one of the most worrying aspects of the school community, and the level of adults’ supervision and interventions in bullying were hoped to be increased. I will discuss the findings related to bullying more in the next sub-chapter *The worrying aspects of the school community*.

Human capital

While doing the content analysis, in addition to the categories of peer-relations and teachers which belong to the social capital, I formed a third category, that is called the qualities and characters of people. In some of these replies pupils and teachers were

also mentioned, but if the reply focused more on the characteristic of a person, I counted it in this one. The qualities and characteristics of people were mentioned 12 times. These characteristics, together with learning (mentioned 6 times) formed one of the five main categories, called the Human capital.

“Teachers are thoughtful and helpful.”

“Kind people.”

“Teachers are nice.”

“I learn well during the lessons.”

“It is easier to learn here than in the old one.”

Human capital consists of individuals’ skills and capacities. To identify the human capital of the school community, pupils were also asked to name their own personal assets. The pupils named 74 different types of individual strengths and skills that they consider to be positive assets for the school community (table 2). 58 pupils (22%) did not name any individual assets or the given answer was inappropriate or did not reply to the given question. Some pupils named more than one strength, and in total the pupils identified 234 individual strengths in themselves.

TABLE 2. Categories of the individual strengths which pupils identified in themselves and considered as positive assets from the perspective of the school community.

ability to learn new skills	being good at school work	creativity	gladness	I don't discriminate anyone	participation	skills in music	talents
accepting challenges	being on time	curiosity	group working skills	naturalness	positivity	skills in physics	tolerance
accuracy	being one-self	energetic	helping others	negotiating skills	resilience	skills in sports	understanding others
acting according to rules	courage	enjoying	helpfulness	nice	respecting others	skills in video editing	the joy of learning
behaviour	calmness	fair	honesty	not leaving anybody alone	self-confidence	smart	
being a good friend	common spirit	friendliness	humour	language skills	self-control	social	
acting as an example	cooperation skills	enthusiasm	I don't bully innocents	minding own business	skills in arts	spontaneous	
acceptance	being hard working	critical thinking	gratitude	initiative	skills in handcrafts	strong	

being able to forgive	communication skills	giving peaceful learning environment to others	kindness	listening others	skills in games	supportive-ness	
being able to say I am sorry	consideration	giving positive feedback	knowing when to be quiet	love	skills in maths	taking care of others	

Cultural capital

The school community in Tiistilä secondary school is multicultural and some pupils emphasized this as an asset of the school and offered this as an explanation for the lack of racism. At the same time, racism was named most often as a worrying aspect of the school community, which will be discussed in the next subchapter.

“I am happy that I am in a multicultural school.”

“Our school is multicultural and that’s why there is not so much racism.”

Almost three out of four pupils (73%) agree that multiculturalism is a strength of the school, but only half of the pupils (52%) feel that multiculturalism of the school is utilized, for example, in teaching situations and events.

The cultural capital of the school is not formed just out of multiculturalism, but it also involves things that relate to the operating culture and the customs of the school. This category is formed out of 22 statements. The pupils highlighted that the school functions in an organized way and has good rules. Two pupils mentioned in their replies how they were satisfied with the school’s actions in preventing the spread of the corona virus and in following the given rules related to this issue. Teaching and lessons (11) were often mentioned.

“Our school functions in an organized way.”

“There are good rules.”

“The length of the lessons is good.”

“Teaching is easy to follow.”

Physical capital

The physical capital together with the social capita formed the biggest categories of the positive assets. These replies that were counted in the physical capital involved things related to the school conditions, and the breaktimes (14) and school lunch (16) formed a big part of the total replies. The division of the classes was also mentioned six times and counted in as part of the physical capital.

“When we start in the secondary school, the classes are divided and not remain same, which is a good thing.”

“In our school, the school lunch works well!”

Outdoor and sport facilities and a snack vending machine were also mentioned, as were hobbies and sports. Other positive elements mentioned were school trips, group works and spending time with smartphones.

6.3 Challenges in the school community

The survey did not ask if the pupils him/herself were experiencing any worrying issues in their school, but instead what the pupils think were the worrying aspects for the whole school community. This is important to keep in mind when analysing the results as these results do not mean that the pupils would have personally experienced these issues in their school.

More than two thirds (37%) of the pupils consider racism as a worrying aspect of the school community. Smoking by pupils and bullying were the second most commonly chosen alternatives, chosen by almost one third (32%) of the pupils.

Figure 9 shows how the pupils choose external factors such as racism, bullying, pupils’ violent behaviour and pupils’ substance use including smoking and the use of alcohol more often as the worrying aspects of the school community, than internal factors such as pressures on appearance and school success. The survey allowed the pupils to choose 1-5 options from given 19 alternatives. The pupils could also choose the alternative “other” which allowed them to write down their own reply.

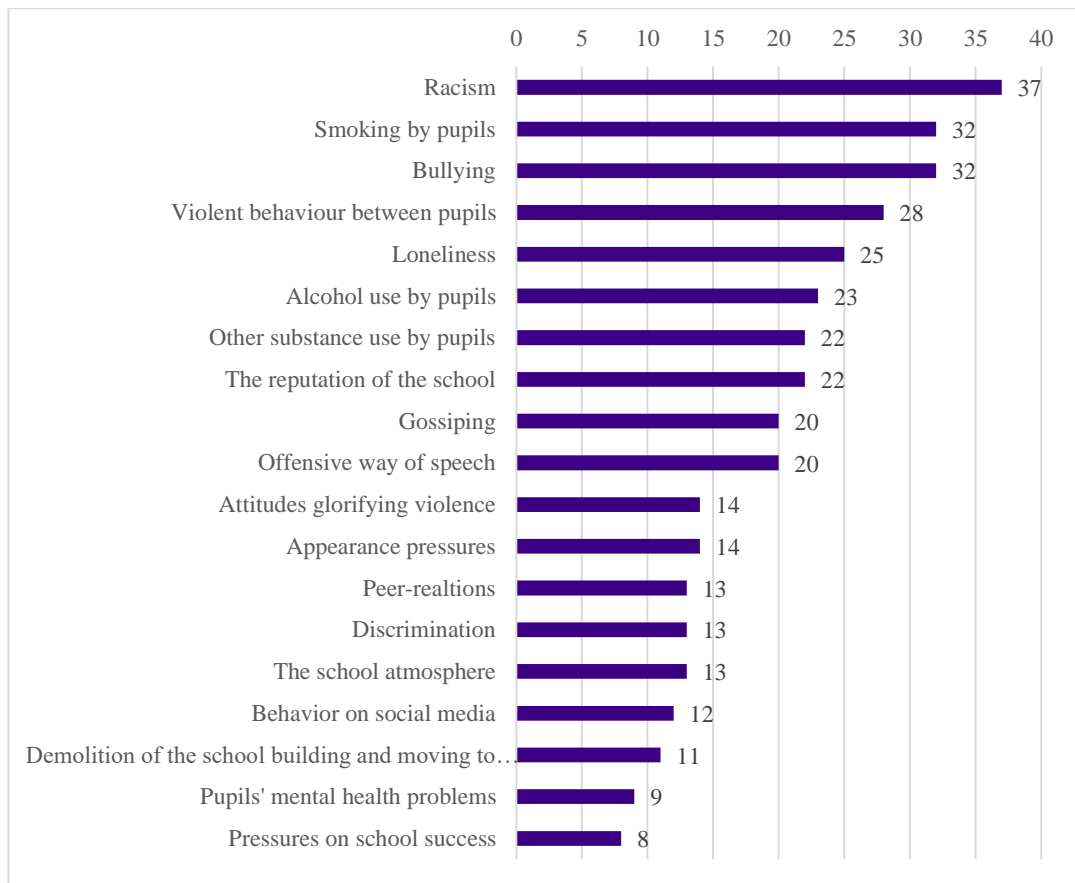


FIGURE 9. Worrying aspects in the school community (%). N=265. Pupils were asked to choose 1-5 options from 19 alternatives.

In the first workshop, the peer support pupils also named fights and shouting as the worrying aspects of their school community;

“I have seen several fights... Well not that many, but two days ago there was.”

“Not that many fights, but there is shouting (huutelua) towards each other”.

Tables 3 to 6 present how four of the five factors presented earlier in figure 7 connect to what the pupils choose as the worrying aspects of their school community. Only those variables that are statistically significant have been involved in these tables. Based on the findings it is not possible to tell which one is the cause and which one the result, but we can tell that there is a strong connection between these variables. Table 3 shows how Factor 1, *Our school is safe and has a sense of community*, is connected with five different worrying aspects of the school community. For example,

those pupils who did not consider their school to be safe and communal, were much more often choosing the offensive way of speech as a worrying aspect of the school community. Pupils who agree that their school is safe and has a sense of community, were less worried about the school atmosphere.

TABLE 3. The connection between F1 "Our school is safe and has a sense of community" and different aspects which caused worry among the pupils. Only the connections with statistically significant differences are reported. N=265.

Name of the worry	Fully agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Fully disagree	Sig.
Offensive way of speech	,11	,14	,30	,42	***
The school atmosphere	,09	,09	,17	,37	**
Alcohol use by pupils	,15	,31	,14	,11	**
Peer-relations	,11	,08	,21	,26	*
Pupils' mental health problems	,07	,06	,18	,05	*

Table 4 shows that factor 2, *Our school is multicultural and networked place for hobbies*, has statistically significant connection between two variables of the worrying aspects, pupils' mental health problems and gossiping. The number of stars in the last column shows that this connection is not as strong as the examples presented before in table 3.

TABLE 4. The connection between F2 "Our school is multicultural and networked place for hobbies", and different aspects which caused worry among the pupils. Only the connections with statistically significant differences are reported. N=265.

Name of the worry	Fully agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Fully disagree	Sig.
Pupils' mental health problems	,07	,06	,13	,29	*
Gossiping	,05	,25	,22	,14	*

Factor 4, *Demolition of the school building worries me*, has a statistically meaningful connection with two worries. Those pupils who are worried about the demolition of the school building choose more often the demolition of the school building and moving to temporary school facilities as a worrying aspect of the school community (table

5). These pupils were also more often worried about bullying, than the ones who were not so worried about the demolition.

TABLE 5. The connection between F4 “Demolition of the school building worries me”, and different aspects which caused worry among the pupils. Only the connections with statistically significant differences are reported. N=265.

Name of the worry	Fully agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Fully disagree	Sig.
Demolition of the school building and moving to temporary school facilities	,27	,21	,09	,02	***
Bullying	,42	,51	,31	,22	**

Factor 5 *The adults of our school are aware of what is happening and intervene* connects with three variables of the worrying aspects, offensive way of speech, pupils' mental health problems and attitudes glorifying violence (table 6). Those pupils who do not feel that the adults of the school are aware about what is happening and do not trust they would intervene, are more often worried about the offensive ways of speak.

TABLE 6. The connection between F5 “The adults of our school are aware of what is happening and intervene”, and different aspects which caused worry among the pupils. Only the connections with statistically significant differences are reported. N=265.

Name of the worry	Fully agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Fully disagree	Sig.
Offensive way of speech	,14	,13	,20	,40	**
Pupils' mental health problems	,11	,02	,17	,07	**
Attitudes glorifying violence	,22	,07	,13	,23	*

One of the major finding in the quantitative data was the importance of feeling safe at school, and how much this experience connects to other experiences in the school setting. For example, feeling safe at school has strong connections to the feeling of being part of the community, to participation and expressing one's opinions, and feeling good about coming to school. 72 percent of pupils claimed to feel safe at school, but every 10th pupil disagreed with this statement. 18 percent had no opinion on the matter.

Table 7 presents the connection between “I feel safe at school” to other variables. Value 1 meaning full agreement, and 5 full disagreement, the lower the mean is, the bigger amount of the level of agreement. For example, those who fully disagreed with the statement “I feel safe at school”, also disagreed more with the statement “There is a good atmosphere in our secondary school”.

TABLE 7. The connection between the statement “I feel safe at school” to the other statements, (1=fully agree; 2=I somewhat agree; 3= I don’t agree or disagree; 4=I somewhat disagree; 5=I fully disagree). N=265.

	I feel safe at school (1-5)					sig
	1	2	3	4	5	
I feel being part of our school community.	1,38	1,74	2,43	2,33	2,83	***
I feel accepted at school as I am.	1,31	1,90	2,17	3,00	3,25	***
At school, other pupils are interested in my well-being and how am I.	2,06	2,57	3,26	3,40	3,67	***
At school, teachers are interested in hearing my opinion.	1,71	2,20	2,66	2,80	3,50	***
It’s easy for me to express my opinion in class.	1,86	2,12	2,85	3,33	3,08	***
In the class there is a good team-spirit.	1,82	2,38	2,70	3,20	3,50	***
There is a good atmosphere in our secondary school.	1,83	2,62	3,21	3,80	3,92	***
I feel good about coming to school.	1,62	2,24	3,13	3,67	3,58	***
Cooperation between pupils and teachers works well.	1,74	2,17	2,66	2,80	3,00	***
Pupils and teachers respect each other.	1,87	2,42	2,81	3,07	3,33	***
My guardians are interested in the affairs of the school community.	1,61	1,98	2,34	2,60	2,58	***
Our school also cooperates with other actors in the region, such as the library, youth services, the police, etc.	1,97	2,21	2,62	2,53	3,08	***
The adults of the school are aware of what happens in break time between the classes.	2,23	2,67	3,19	2,80	2,67	***
The adults of the school intervene in bullying situations.	1,77	2,07	2,62	2,47	3,42	***
The school organizes a voluntary club and hobby activities for the school's pupils.	1,78	1,99	2,26	2,73	3,25	***

The experience of feeling safe is connected to how the pupils experience adults being aware of what is happening during the breaktimes and intervening in bullying situations. Those pupils who did not feel safe at school, more often claimed that the adults of the school do not intervene in bullying situations. Figure 6 earlier showed how only half of the pupils (51%) thought that adults of the school are aware of what is happening during the school breaktimes, and one fifth (22%) disagreed with this statement.

The open-ended questions also offered some explanations for the fact how adults' interventions were experienced. Some pupils experienced that adults paid attention and intervened in irrelevant issues such as issues related to pupils clothing, but some more serious issues like bullying were left without notice. The way of intervention was criticized as one pupil explained in his/her reply that teachers assume always the wrong thing and there is no space for explaining what really happened. Some pupils mention the disregard of adults as their concern:

“One teacher does not care what happens during the breaks. A pupil took a bike from the bike rack during a break and rode around the break yard. This teacher didn't react in any way. Such disregard of school adults can lead to serious events.”

“During breaktimes, many go to the woods and to the store, even though it's not allowed, smoke and use snuff, and teachers just look and do nothing.”

However, the other half of the pupils agree that adults do intervene, and some pupils also named this as the asset of the school community.

“Bullying is addressed.”

“If there is bullying, help is immediate.”

6.4 Desired changes and ideas for development in the school community

The things in which pupils hoped change and improvements relate to what the pupils identified as the worrying aspects in the school community. From the given answers and proposals, I identified three main categories in which pupils hoped for change: 1. Improving safety and the school atmosphere, 2. Increasing activity and participation

in the school culture and 3. Making contributions to a comfortable school environment. These desired changes and improvements I concluded as changes that related to strengthening an equal and safe school atmosphere and comfortable school environment, this is presented with examples in figure 10.

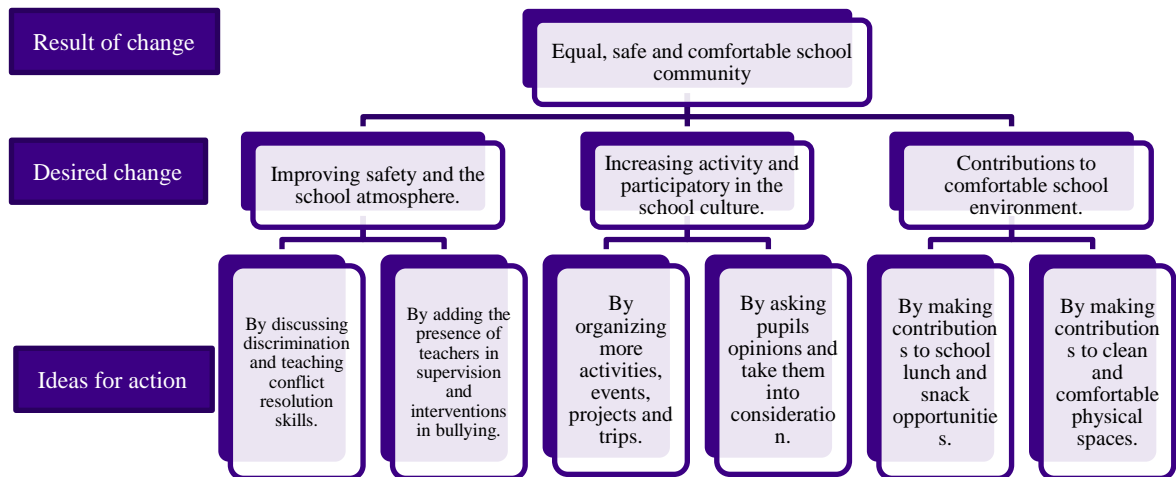


FIGURE 10. Examples of actions the pupils named as the changes they desired for, which result in equal, safe and comfortable school community.

The biggest single category of desired change was formed out of replies that claimed how everybody should be treated equally and with respect (23). The need for respect was mentioned both ways, pupils claimed that pupils should respect teachers more, but also that teachers needed to show respect to pupils and treat them equally in order to gain respect.

“Everybody should be accepted as they are, and nobody should be discriminated based on their looks for example”

“No racism.”

“Teachers should not choose favourites.”

“Teachers always say to boys, not to girls.”

“Pupils should respect teachers more.”

“Teachers should be listened.”

The changes that the pupils desired relating to safety and school atmosphere were decreasing bullying (20) and offensive speech (3), improving the school atmosphere (15), activating the presence of teachers in supervision and interventions for bullying (8) and having a more peaceful learning environment (7).

“Everyone would be open-minded and more positive and would accept people exactly as they are.”

“Relations between pupils could be somehow developed.”

“Have more discussions in the school about homophobia and other discrimination.”

“Adding the number of teachers in breaktimes and in corridors.”

Pupils also wanted to increase the number of activities (12) and the level of pupils’ participation in the school (4). More activities and events were hoped for the break-times, but also more trips, projects, sport clubs and hobbies were suggested.

“More some special days among certain age groups could be arranged, in which different classes would do something together.”

“More activities for the breaktimes.”

“If the student council asked questions more often and these would be implemented and not only read.”

“That there would be discussions for pupils about, that things can be resolved in other ways than by using threat or violence.”

“Replacing detention with a communal service.”

The pupils’ replies highlighted the meaning of the physical facilities to their school experience and this formed an important category of the desired changes. These included improvements to school facilities (18), school lunch (17), breaktime facilities (15), indoor breaktimes (10), school schedule (9), hygienic toilet facilities (6), and snack opportunities (3).

“Following the lunch menus as announced online.”

“Improving basketball hoops and adding benches.”

“A trash can for menstrual padding and tampons, could be placed in the toilets.”

Some pupils (5) also mentioned they wished changes to those teachers who they were not satisfied with, and some (4) hoped for less supervision. Other things mentioned in which pupils hoped change were receiving more information about opportunities for support and help in studies, having less homework during distance learning, a wish to listen to music while studying in the class, kicking out "the bad pupils" from the school, mandatory Swedish lessons, indoor air problems and wearing school uniforms. Some pupils hoped improvements to the content of the lessons. One said lessons are boring, one hoped that teaching coding could start already on the 8th grade, and one wished for more alternatives at the technical work lessons.

6.5 Action plans proposed by the peer support pupils

In the second workshop the peer support pupils discussed the presented findings of the online survey and were asked to work in pairs and to create action plans for the suggested development ideas. Six peer support pupils worked in two pairs and two did the assignment individually. In total four ideas were chosen, and four action plans were submitted. The importance of physical facilities for pupils was again emphasized as three of the action plans focused on school lunch and snack opportunities. Peer support pupils defined these ideas as a way to support pupils energy levels and concentration during the long school days and saw these ideas as a solution to prevent pupils going to the store during the school day. The fourth action plan aimed at improving the class team spirit by organising more common activities and recognized the opportunity to cooperate with local youth services in the implementation of the proposal. These four action plans are presented in tables 8-11.

The first action plan proposal presented in table 8 suggests organizing snack sales in the afternoon a few times a week. The pupils would be the ones who decide what items are sold. The aim is that pupils would have more energy during the long school days, and to prevent pupils going to the store during school days. Cooperation among pupils, teachers and the canteen staff as well as communication skills are needed for the implementation.

TABLE 8 Action plan proposal, “Organizing snack sales”.

Idea/proposal	The school would hold snack sales from time to time, and pupils would be able to suggest themselves what products are for sale.
Goals	Pupils would have more energy during the long school days. Pupils would not have to go to store during the school day, as this is not allowed. School would benefit from the profits of the sale.
Short description of the plan	The school would organize snack sales few times a week during the break starting at 14.15. The sales would be targeted to those whose school day continues to later in the afternoon. The sales could be organized in the canteen.
What community assets will be used in implementation?	Communication skills are needed in order to communicate the pupils hopes to the organizers of the snack sale.
What/who is needed in the implementation?	The help of teachers and the canteen staff is needed, and the snack products. Information about pupils’ hopes is needed.
Other things to be considered	The prices should be reasonable.

The second action plan proposal presented in table 9 suggests acquiring a vending machine for cheap drinks. The aim of this proposal is to affect pupils’ well-being positively. The peer support pupils explained this idea by claiming that pupils would not be so tired and they would be able to concentrate better during the last lessons of the school day after gaining more energy form the drinks. For this idea to be implemented peer support pupils suggest organizing sales to collect the needed funds and utilizing pupils’ skills and creativity in the process.

TABLE 9. Action plan proposal, “Vending machine for drinks”.

Idea/proposal	Vending machine for drinks (coffee, tea, cacao)
Goals	Pupils would no become thirsty and they would gain some energy. Pupils would not be so restless.
Short description of the plan	A coffee machine that would serve cacao, coffee, juice and tea, and it would cost 20-50 cents.
What community assets will be used in implementation?	Let’s begin by selling for example cakes so we get money to buy the coffee machine. This brings creativity and pupils can bring other strengths to this project of organizing the sale. Gladness, creativity, sales skills, mathematical skills.

What/who is needed in the implementation?	School, teachers and everything, possibly pupils.
Other things to be considered	Few pupils from each class could take weekly turns to take care of the machine.

The important role of school lunch has been highlighted throughout the results of the research both as an asset and as an object that needs improvement. The third action plan proposal presented in table 10 suggests making improvements to the school lunch by providing a wider range of foods on offer. The peer support pupils defined the main goal of this proposal to be preventing pupils going to the store during the school day. By asking the support of school's pupils council and the principal, pupils would send message to the school kitchen and present their proposals for food.

TABLE 10. Action plan proposal, "Improvements to school lunch".

Idea/proposal	Better food, for example more choices to choose from
Goals	This idea can affect that pupils would not go to store during the school day.
Short description of the plan	Peer support pupils write down proposals for food and tell about this to the pupils' council. The pupils' council sends a message to the school principal and the principal emails to the school kitchen.
What community assets will be used in implementation?	Communication skills, fairness and smartness.
What/who is needed in the implementation?	Pupils, principal, teachers and the school kitchen staff.
Other things to be considered	

The fourth and the last action plan proposal presented in table 11 focuses to promote team spirit and identify the common strengths of the class. This is thought to be achieved by organizing more common activities within classes during the school day. Peer support pupils claim that these activities help pupils to get to know each other and to be helpful. For the implementation of these activities cooperation with the youth services is suggested.

TABLE 11. Action plan proposal, “More common activities to do among the class”.

Idea/proposal	More common activities to do among the class
Goals	To learn better identify the common strengths of the class and to promote the team spirit of the class
Short description of the plan	Who? All pupils in the class and the class supervisor. What? Nice common activities. When? During the school time. Where? Outdoors / in the home class.
What community assets will be used in implementation?	Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - everyone can be as they are - being supportive - group work skills - sociality
What/who is needed in the implementation?	Participants (pupils, class supervisor). Equipment that is needed.
Other things to be considered	It would be also possible to implement this in some public place during the school day. This helps pupils to get to know each other and be helpful. Youth instructors for the youth services could help in creating the ideas and in the implementation. Pupils could be also divided into smaller groups and some competition could be arranged.

7 DISCUSSION

In this chapter I discuss the findings of the research and connect them into the wider discussions taking place in the society, as school and the phenomenon of school community always reflect on the surrounding society. The comments presented by the peer support pupils in the second workshop are included in the discussion.

The main findings of the research show that pupils in Tiistilä secondary school recognize assets in human, social, cultural and physical capitals of their school community. The importance of social relations together with the school atmosphere and the sense of community, was emphasized as the assets of the school community, but also as issues that caused worries and that the pupils considered as development areas. The physical facilities and conditions also played a big role for the pupils' school experience. The most worrying aspects of the school community were named to be racism, smoking, bullying, violent behaviour and loneliness. The desired changes and ideas for improvement pupils suggested related to strengthening a safe and equal school atmosphere and comfortable school environment.

The pupils' experiences about their school community in Tiistilä secondary school can be compared with earlier collected national data about youth and their experiences about school communities. The Finnish Institute for Health and Wellbeing provides a wide national survey every second year that provides knowledge about the well-being of youth and their living environments in Finland. The School Health Survey (SH-survey) involves groups of 4th and 5th grade pupils in primary education, 8th and 9th grade students in secondary education, 1st and 2nd year high school students and 1st and 2nd year students in vocational schools (who are under 21-years old). (Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos. Tutkimus ja kehittäminen. Tutkimukset ja hankkeet. Kouluterveyksely.) The main findings from the last survey from 2019, indicate how majority of children and youth are satisfied with their life and that they enjoy going to school (Ikonen & Helakorpi 2019, 1). The research findings from Tiistilä secondary school draw a similar picture than the national results of the SH-survey from 2019. In Tiistilä secondary school 61 percent of pupils replied they feel good about going to school, which is similar than the results of the SH-survey, where 60 percent of the pupils in

8th and 9th grades claimed they feel good about going to school (Ikonen & Helakorpi 2019, 1).

One peer support pupil commented the results of the survey by saying that she was actually surprised about how majority of the pupils feel good about going to school, even though the discussions in school deal with topics that indicate that the school is not good and pupils would rather not be in school.

7.1 Addressing the worrying aspects of the school community

Racism, smoking, bullying, violent behaviour and loneliness were the five most worrying aspects of the school community chosen by pupils. All these aspects can be defined as threats to the social capital of the community, and to the pupils' experience of safety and well-being. These factors increase pupils' risk of exclusion and are important to be recognized and addressed when they occur.

Racism

Racism was chosen as the most worrying aspect of the school community (37%) which is an interesting finding since at the same time multiculturalism was considered to be a strength of the school by almost two thirds of the pupils (73%). The fact that there is a chance that the pupils with something else than Finnish as their mother tongue are underrepresented in the sample (as presented in chapter 5.6), the percentage could be even bigger. This fact is crucial to be recognized and brought into the discussion. The peer support pupils thought that the fact that racism was mentioned so often was worrying, but that they were not really surprised about this finding.

Racism is a sensitive topic in Finnish schools in general. Issues related to racism have been ignored in examination of the challenges of multicultural schools, despite the fact that this phenomenon has been strongly present in schools. (Soutu 2011.) In Soutu's dissertation research she explains how multiculturalism in schools has focused much on pedagogical solutions and to guarantee good quality teaching for immigrant pupils. Though this is important, from the perspective of racism, more relevant would be to focus on the attitudes of Finnish pupils and how they encounter immigrant pupils. Soutu suggests that instead of discussing cultural differences, schools should focus

more on identifying cultural racism and discuss about group dynamics and influencing pupils' attitudes. By asking the question "*Is there racism in our school?*", the school opens the opportunities to recognize and discuss this issue, and set rules that help in intervening in situations where racism is recognized. (Jokisalo 2011.)

As presented earlier in the Good relations model, the atmosphere of attitudes has an effect on people's experience about safety and it also impacts their behaviour in terms of interaction (Wigfield & Turner 2010, 66). Based on this, experiences about racism could partly explain the worries related to bullying and violent behaviour in the school community.

Bullying and violent behaviour

The results of the SH-survey show how bullying has been decreasing from year to year in the whole country, and the prevalence of bullying is currently lower than in any other time before during the 21st century (Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos. Tutkimus ja kehittäminen. Tutkimukset ja hankkeet. Kouluterveyskysely. Kouluterveyskyselyn tulokset). In addition to the national survey, the experiences of bullying in Finnish schools have been followed for a long time by international surveys such as WHO's Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS-survey) and UNESCO surveys as well. On a world scale, the prevalence of bullying in Finnish schools is relatively low, and in comparison, with other Nordic countries and Western Europe, bullying seems to be a common issue. Despite the fact, that the prevalence of bullying in Finnish schools has been decreasing, it still occurs in an alarming amount. (Laitinen, Haanpää Francke & Lahtinen 2020, 11.)

School bullying and violent behaviour between pupils were among the most worrying aspects of the school community of Tiistilä. As school is not only a separate community but part an important part of the surrounding community, the phenomena at school always reflect on the wider community. At the time when this research was conducted, discussion about school bullying and school violence have been going on widely in the national media and even in the Finnish parliament.

A violent incident at Vantaa's Kytöpuisto school on 15th of September 2020, where a pupil was injured by the violence of 6th grade pupils, started a good deal of discussion

and got media coverage (YLE. News. Parents' group calls on schools to intervene in school bullying, violence 2020; Vantaa. Uutisia. Varhaiskasvatus ja koulutus. Kytöpuiston koulun väkivallantekoon puututtu tiukasti 2020). This event took place only 10 days before the pupils filled in the online survey, and it is likely that some of the pupils in Tiistilä were also aware of this on-going discussion. The role of social media and digitalization has grown to be an influencing part of the lives of the youth and has also brought new dimensions to school bullying. As social media plays such a major role in the lives of the youth I was surprised, that the behaviour on social media did not cause more worries among the pupils. Contrary to my expectations, *behaviour on social media* was one of the alternatives that got the lowest points among the worries of the school community (12 percent of the pupils).

An interesting finding of the research was how half of the pupils were satisfied with the level of awareness of the adults of the school regarding what is happening and how they intervene when needed, but how other half of the pupils did not experience this. This arises new questions, and makes me wonder what separates these two groups in the school community. If bullying exists in the school community, what parts of it is visible to who and what is left without notice? There might be also different interpretations among pupils and teachers on what kind of situations require interventions. I would also like to know the factors of the positive experiences in which bullying has been addressed that some pupils claimed that they were satisfied with. These already existing ways of intervention and prevention should be recognized and strengthened.

Tiistilä secondary school has launched their own instructions to intervene bullying situations. These instructions are also printed and visibly placed around the school building. According to these instructions, if bullying has been experienced, seen or heard, one should tell about it to an adult of the school. The adult who hears about bullying will transfer that information to a “kivi”-teacher who are the teachers of the school trained for mediation of the bullying situations. The situation is settled between the parties involved. The guardians of the involved pupils and their class supervisor are notified about the incident, but the confidentiality of mediators protects the pupils themselves.

One teacher who has been involved in mediation of a bullying situation argued that the different experiences on the adult intervention in bullying might vary because the

cases are kept confidential and not all pupils will be aware of these situations. To those pupils who are not involved in the situation, it might seem that nothing was done, though the situation has been solved among the pupils who were involved.

The peer support pupils thought that teachers are willing to help, but pupils still do not always want to tell them because they do not believe that teachers can do anything about the issues which most often relate to relationships. Peer support pupils said that pupils neither approach them in these issues. From this perspective the peer support pupils thought that increasing a more open atmosphere in the school would increase the willingness to talk about these issues.

Smoking

On national level the smoking amongst young people has declined rapidly since 2013. From 2006 to 2011, 15 percent of 8th and 9th grade pupils smoked every day, but starting from 2013 that number dropped every year, and in 2019, that percentage was less than six. (Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos. Tutkimus ja kehittäminen. Tutkimukset ja hankkeet. Kouluterveyskysely. Kouluterveyskyselyn tulokset.) Despite this national positive development, one third (32%) of the pupils in Tiistilä secondary school defined smoking by pupils as a worrying aspect of their school community.

Peer support pupils commented this result by saying that smoking is a bad thing as the pupils in the lower grades can see this and they might follow the bad example. Peer support pupils also commented, that the pupils hide their smoking and smoke more outside the school day.

Loneliness

Based on the SH-survey results from 2019, 11 percent of 8th and 9th grade pupils in Finland feel lonely quite often or constantly (Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos. Tutkimus ja kehittäminen. Tutkimukset ja hankkeet. Kouluterveyskysely. Kouluterveyskyselyn tulokset). Though the number of pupils who feel lonely in Tiistilä secondary school was not measured in this thesis, the findings pointed out how every fourth (25%) pupil considered loneliness as a worrying aspect of their school community. Loneliness is a risk factor for pupils' mental and physical health and well-being (Junttila 2016; Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos. Tutkimus ja kehittäminen. Tutkimukset ja hankkeet. Kouluterveyskysely. Kouluterveyskyselyn tulokset).

The experience of loneliness is linked to social relations and communities and can relate to the feelings of not belonging or to the lack of sense of community. Loneliness can be divided into social and emotional loneliness. Socially lonely youth think that they rarely have friends, they do not fit in or do not feel accepted by others, as emotionally lonely youth feel they do not have any close friend or a friend who they could talk to about their own things. Tackling loneliness improves both mental health and social well-being. (Junttila 2016.) Loneliness can be reduced by supporting social skills, increasing opportunities for social contacts, and by influencing the attitudes of others related to the consideration of the lonely ones. Good and open relationships at home between the youth and their parents also prevent loneliness. (Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos. Tutkimus ja kehittäminen. Tutkimukset ja hankkeet. Kouluterveyskysely. Kouluterveyskyselyn tulokset.) In schools, focusing on creating and maintaining good group spirit and paying attention to pupils' attitudes and behaviour towards each other are central in prevention and in early support for pupils who experience loneliness (Junttila 2016).

Junttila (2018), has suggested a cheap and simple way to promote the well-being of pupils at schools by organizing the "Listening breaktimes". This is a fixed time window when the teachers would have time to listen to the pupils. She says that according to previous research for children it is important to be noticed and heard by their teacher. (Ministry of Education and Culture. Niina Junttila ehdottaa lasten ja opettajien kuunteluvälituntia 2018)

Paying attention and recognizing pupils' attitudes was mentioned as an important factor in addressing the worrying aspects of the school community such as racism and loneliness, but also in addressing bullying, violence and smoking as well. Though adults of the school have an official duty to provide a safe learning environment for pupils, the whole community is needed in tackling these issues. Building a stronger sense of community and improving the school atmosphere is a way to address these issues. As proved before, strong sense of community and good atmosphere in school, develop social and emotional competencies of the pupils, and act as a protective factor to avoid problem behaviours such as the use of drugs and violence. (Schaps 2003; Ahonen 2008, 197, 209.)

7.2 Utilizing the assets of the school community

The model of Good relations relates to the pupils' own suggestions and vision about achieving equal, safe and comfortable school community. By making contributions to a comfortable school environment, places for interaction are created, and by increasing activity and participation in the school culture a positive atmosphere and the sense of safety will increase. These investments would affect to three out of the four factors named in the School Well-being Model: having (school conditions), loving (social relations) and being (self-fulfilment), and through these factors the investments would positively impact the well-being of the pupils.

In addition, the components of Lerner's "Big Three" design can be identified in the ideas that the pupils presented for actions for development. For example, pupils hoped for more activities, and that their opinions would be asked more often and took into consideration (=1. Opportunities for youth participation in and leadership of activities), discussions about bullying and discrimination and teaching non-violent conflict resolution skills (=2. Emphasize the development of life skills) and adding the presence of adults in supervision and interventions in bullying (=3. A sustained and caring adult-youth relationship.) (Lerner et al. 2006, 11.)

Concrete examples of suggestions were organising more events, projects and activities that are ways to create opportunities for interaction and participation. The pupils' attitudes could be influenced by organizing more discussions about homophobia, bullying and other discrimination. By taking part in these activities and through interaction the general attitudes can be influenced, which then in turn affect the pupils feeling of safety and behaviour. An example of a specific way to influence the pupils' behaviour was by teaching pupils non-violent conflict resolution skills.

Organizing more events, activities and projects formed also a notable category of the desired changes and these are tools for fostering the good relations. More than half of the pupils (54%) felt that the joint events of the school strengthen the school's sense of community. Planning and organizing activities could be a way to utilize the skills and gifts of pupils, and the social capital and cooperation of the pupils and the teachers. As said earlier, youth need to have an active role in the community, but they need adults to facilitate the opportunities. Having pupils as the agents of social and community

change is proved to empower and facilitate the sense of community (Torres-Harding, Baber, Hilvers, Hobbs & Maly 2017).

As adults are much needed, but the timetables of the school adults and teachers are often known to be very tight and the resources limited, it is important to recognize and utilize the resources around the school and in the surrounding environment and community. In Tiistilä school this has already been recognized and practiced and two thirds of the pupils (66%) agreed that their school operates with other actors in the region, such as the library, youth services, the police, etc. This regional cooperation among different services also offers opportunities to interaction and participation between different groups and fosters the development of good relations. These findings support the continuation of the regional cooperation and suggests inviting workers from different services to contribute in the continuation of the school community development process.

Different Non-governmental organizations can also be recognized as possible community partners of the school, and they have supported the anti-racism work and peace-education in Finnish schools by producing materials and organizing visits, trainings and campaigns. Examples of these are the Ahtisaari-days organized by the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), Week against racism campaign coordinated by the Finnish Red Cross, and different materials and trainings produced by the Peace Education Institute (Rauhankasvatusinstituutti). Recognizing the opportunities that exists in the co-operation with other actors in the surrounding community is a way to build the social capital of the school community. The cooperation with the community partners is also a way to implement the pupils' ideas about organizing more events and projects, to arrange discussions about discrimination and bullying, and to offer training to improve conflict resolution skills. In the peer support pupils' action plans the co-operation with local youth services was seen as a way to organize more common activities with the class and as a way to learn more about the strengths of the class and foster the team spirit.

In the times being affected by the COVID-19, the organizing of traditional joint events and gatherings is somewhat limited. However, in finding new solutions and ways to

foster the school atmosphere with the existing limitations, the pupils' initiative, creativity and communication skills is seen as important resources that should be fostered in use.

Koivisto & Rautakoski (2013) define that the well-being of youth in school communities means that the assets of everyone is recognized, which creates the feeling of participation and sense of community. These individual assets are referred to as the human capital. The pupils recognized a huge number (74) of different individual assets that they considered to have positive impact for the school community, and in total they named 234 different individual assets. Almost two thirds (59%) of the pupils agreed that the pupils' skills and competences are already utilized in everyday school life. The amount of this identified human capital in the school community is a major asset for the school to utilize in their future development. By highlighting these found assets when presenting the research results to the school community, positive effect for the atmosphere might be achieved.

However, a notably number of 58 pupils did not name any individual assets or the given answer was not legible. From the total of 265 pupils replying to the online survey, this amount presents more than one fifth of the pupils (22%). These results show that a big amount of the human capital remains unrecognized. The peer support pupils claimed that by organizing more activities among the class, the class could learn to identify their common strengths.

The peer support pupils also recognized how the assets of the pupils could be used in making contributions to the school environment by organizing snack sales, purchasing a vending machine and making improvements to the school lunch. The implementation of these ideas would offer the pupils opportunities to participate and make contributions in their school community, and to recognize and utilize the skills and capacities of pupils. They had good arguments that these contributions would help pupils to concentrate and stop their need to go to the store during the school day, which is not allowed. Pupils also brainstormed ideas of how they could organize fundraising and participate in the processes of implementing these ideas. In order to move these ideas forward, pupils need the support of the school adults to facilitate and guide the process.

For example, adults could encourage and help the peer support pupils to make proposals of school lunch opportunities and then organize a way to approach the kitchen staff with these proposals and start a dialogue.

8 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter the conclusions of the research findings and the answers to the research questions are presented. Based on the process, I offer some recommendations for the future as the responsibility of continuing the school community development process remains with the Tiistilä secondary school. Finally, I present views on the research process and reflect the development of my professional expertise.

8.1 Conclusions

By using a participatory and asset-based approach, this research provided information about the pupils' experiences in the school community in Tiistilä secondary school. The findings of the research present the experiences of 76 percent of the pupils in the secondary school, and provide answers to the research questions *How do the pupils in Tiistilä secondary school experience their school community?* and *What kind of hopes and ideas do the pupils have to change and improve the school community, and how can the existing assets be utilized to achieve that change?* Two thirds of the pupils considered their school to be safe and to have a sense of community and that it serves as a multicultural and networked place for hobbies. Feeling safe at school was found to have a strong connection to the pupils' other experiences in the school community such as the feeling of being part of the community, the possibility to participate and express one's opinions, and to the positive feeling about coming to school. The importance of social relations together with the school atmosphere and the sense of community, was emphasized as assets of the school community, but also as an issue that caused worries and which the pupils saw as an improvement object. The meaning of physical facilities for the pupils' school experience was also highlighted throughout the results. Racism, smoking, bullying, violent behaviour and loneliness were the five most worrying aspects of the school community chosen by pupils, and these can be also defined as threats to the social capital. The desired changes and ideas for improvement related to strengthening safe and equal school atmosphere and comfortable school environment. The pupils suggested a variety of ideas such as organizing discussions about discrimination, teaching pupils non-violent conflict resolution skills,

organizing more activities, increasing pupil's participation, increasing adults' role in supervision and making contributions to the physical facilities of the school.

The research findings prove the importance of social relations and safety to the pupils' experiences about the school community. These findings are similar to the previous research presented as the theoretical framework of this research; social relations, the feeling of acceptance and the feeling of safety are the indicators of a school atmosphere and the sense of community in a school (Moisio 2017; Salovaara et al. 2011) The school conditions (including safety) and social relations are also important factors for the well-being of pupils according to the school well-being model (Konu 2002). The model of Good relations and the design of Big Three are considered to promote the accomplishment of the desired change for strengthening safe and equal school atmosphere.

8.2 Recommendations

The purpose of the research was to benefit the school community in Tiistilä secondary school in their future development and to increase the pupils' participation in the school community development. The findings of this research can be considered as the starting point of the community development process. As this research and its findings present only the voices of the pupils in the school community, it is crucial to make sure that all community members are informed and involved when continuing the planning and implementations related to the development of the school community.

The results of the researched are presented to all the pupils and teachers of the secondary school, but after that the school community needs to choose who will continue the coordination of the steps from here on. This decision is a crucial point to ensure the continuation of the process, and the utilization of the results.

The findings and ideas presented by the pupils support the continuation of the regional multi-professional cooperation mentioned in the introduction of the thesis. Workers and actors from different services in the region can act together with the school and the pupils to implement their ideas, and for example organize events and activities, provide training, create spaces for interaction and to affect the atmosphere of attitudes.

As a recommendation for continuing this process, I suggest arranging a series of community meetings in which representatives of all community groups are present and the desired changes would be further discussed, and a plan for action and implementation would be created. It is recommended to invite workers involved in the regional multi-professional cooperation to participate in the process, and utilize the social capital of these existing partnerships. Pupils need to have opportunities to participate in the following steps of the process as well. Pupils have huge amount of capital that consists of their ideas, skills and capabilities but they need adults' encouragement and support to facilitate the process and to utilize this capital in turning their ideas into practice. To continue the process according to the steps of a participatory action research the next steps would be implementing, evaluating and monitoring the action.

As this research aims to increase the pupil's participation in the future development of the school setting, the successfulness of the process should be later assessed by the pupils themselves. It is not enough to point out that the pupils' opinions were asked and reported, but what is crucial is how the pupils themselves experienced the success of the process. Did they feel their opinions were heard and ideas valued? Were their thoughts discussed, ideas implemented, and the expected changes achieved?

8.3 Views on the process

Conducting this research process required systematic and active co-operation with the school principals and the teacher in charge of the peer support pupils' activities. This co-operation worked well and according to a solution-oriented approach. Together we brainstormed ideas in order to find the best possible solutions to adapt the research plan in to the prevailing conditions affected by the COVID-19 situation. Solutions were found by utilizing the physical capitals of the school community: workshops were organized by using online platforms and an outdoor space at an inner ward of the school. Though the level of participation likely decreased due to these changes, both of the workshop sessions were managed to organize and relevant data was collected. Considering the participatory approach of the research, more interaction with the pupils and the school community could have taken place in the planning phase of the research.

The research process was conducted according to the research plan and followed the agreed schedule. The efforts of the school prove how they were committed to the research process and how they valued the new knowledge they gain from the research. The school has a high interest to utilize the research results in practice, which proves the relevance and usefulness of this research.

From the professional point of view this process offered me an opportunity to apply the asset-based approach that I had used when working with families, in to wider community and school setting. This process challenged me to study new theories and research methodology, and to apply the new knowledge into practice. I believe this process improved my competences as a community worker and in project management, and taught me how to utilize different methods in collecting new information and to analyse and utilize data for planning development.

Finally, I want to thank everybody involved in the process for their participation and cooperation. These research findings would not exist without the participating pupils of the Tiistilä secondary school, nor without the teachers who facilitated the opportunities for participation.

REFERENCES

- A 628/1998. Perusopetuslaki. Retrieved 17.9.2020 from <https://finlex.fi/fi/laki/alkup/1998/19980628?search%5Btype%5D=pika&search%5Bpika%5D=perusopetuslaki>
- A 731/1999. Suomen Perustuslaki. Retrieved 17.9.2020 from <https://finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1999/19990731?search%5Btype%5D=pika&search%5Bpika%5D=perustuslaki>
- Ahonen, A. (2008). Koulussa ei viihdytä, mutta miksi. In *Koulutuksen kulttuurit ja hyvinvoinnin politiikat* (2008). Helsinki: Suomen kasvatustieteellinen seura [Turku].
- Aistrich, A. & Absetz, P. (2013). Osallistavalla otteella nuoret kumppaneiksi terveyden edistämisen tutkimuksessa. *Liikunta & Tiede*, (3), (pp. 8-15). Retrieved 19.2.2020 from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266383050_Osallistavalla_otteella_nuoret_kumppaneiksi_terveyden_edistamisen_tutkimuksessa
- Allardt, E. (1976). *Hyvinvoinnin ulottuvuuksia*. WSOY, Porvoo.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development : Experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press. Retrieved 8.10.2020 from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/diak/reader.action?docID=3300702>
- Curran, T., & Wexler, L. (2017). School-Based Positive Youth Development: A Systematic Review of the Literature. *Journal of School Health*, 87(1), 71–80. Retrieved 5.8.2020 from <https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.12467>
- Ekholm, E., Tuokkola, K. & Luhtasaari, M. (2018). *Keys to coexistence -Tips for municipalities for promoting good relations*. Publication of the Ministry of Justice 29/2018. Retrieved 23.10.20 from <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-259-706-9>
- Espoon kaupunki. (2019). Tila- ja asuntojaosto: Tiistilän koulun ja päiväkodin hankesuunnitelma. Retrieved 15.9.2020 from https://www.espoo.fi/fi-FI/Tila_ja_asuntojaosto_Tiistilan_koulun_ja
- Espoon kaupunki, Tilapalvelut-liikelaitos. (2019) *Hanke 4500. Tiistilän koulu- ja päiväkot*. Hankesuunnitelma 31.10.2019. Retrieved 15.9.2020 from: <http://espooprodfi.oncloudos.com/kokous/2019479221-4-1.PDF>

- Evans, S. D. (2007). Youth sense of community: Voice and power in community contexts. *Journal Of Community Psychology*, 35(6), 693-709. Retrieved 19.2.2020 from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20173>
- Foot, J. & Hopkins, T. (2010). *A glass half-full: how an asset approach can improve community health and well-being*. Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) Healthy Communities Team. Retrieved 5.8.2020 from <http://www.assetbasedconsulting.net/uploads/publications/A%20glass%20half%20full.pdf>
- Gibson, S. & Blandford, S. (2005). *The School as a Community. Managing Special Educational Needs: A Practical Guide for Primary and Secondary Schools*. Sage Books. Retrieved 26.7.2020 from: https://us.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-assets/9835_book_item_9835.pdf
- Green, M., Moore, H. & O'Brien, J. (2006). *When People Care Enough To Act. ABCD in action*. Toronto: Inclusion Press. Retrieved 25.10.2020 from <http://christinesoto.com/CareEnoughToAct.pdf>
- Green, G. P., & Haines, A. (2016). *Asset building & community development* (4th edition ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE
- Hogan, C. (2003). *Practical Facilitation, A toolkit of techniques*. London: Kogan Page.
- Hoikkala, T. & Paju, P. (2013). *Apina pulpetissa, Ysiluokan yhteisöllisyys*. Nuorisotutkimusverkosto/Nuorisotutkimusseura, julkaisuja 139. Tampere: Tammerprint Oy.
- Ikonen, R., Helakorpi, S. (2019). Lasten ja nuorten hyvinvointi - Kouluterveyskysely 2019. Tilastoraportti 33/2019. Terveiden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos. Retrieved 10.10.2020 from https://www.julkari.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/138562/Tilastoraportti_33_Kouluterveyskysely.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y
- Ivankova, N. (2015). *Mixed Methods Applications in Action Research, From Methods to Community Action*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Jokisalo, J. (2011) Rasismin monet kasvot kouluissa. *Rauhanpuolustajat lehti*, 2/2011. Retrieved 25.10.2020 from <https://rauhanpuolustajat.org/arkisto-raput/rasismin-monet-kasvot-kouluissa/>
- Junttila, N. (2016) Lasten ja nuorten yksinäisyys. In Saari, J. (2016). *Yksinäisten Suomi*. Helsinki: Gaudeamus.

- Keskitalo, E., Vuokila-Oikkonen, P., Karvinen, I. & Launonen, P. (2016). Osallistava toimintatutkimus työelämän muutoksen tuottamisessa. In A. Mutanen, M. Kantola, H. Kotila & L. Vanhanen-Nuutinen (Ed.), *Hyvä elämä. Käytäntö, tutkimus ja ammattipedagogiikka*. (pp. 228–245). (Turun ammattikorkeakoulun Tutkimuksia 44). Retrieved 25.2.2020 from: <http://julkaisut.turkuamk.fi/isbn9789522166081.pdf>
- Kiilakoski, T. (2016) Koulu on enemmän, Nuorisotyön ja koulun yhteistyön käytännöt, mahdollisuudet ja ongelmat. *Nuorisotutkimusverkosto/Nuorisotutkimusseura, verkkojulkaisuja 107, Kenttä*. Retrieved 24.10.2020 from https://www.nuorisotutkimusseura.fi/images/julkaisuja/koulu_on_enemman.pdf
- Koivisto, K. & Rautakoski, P. (2013) *Lasten ja nuorten hyvinvoinnin edistäminen koulu yhteisössä*. Oulun seudun ammattikorkeakoulu. Retrieved 16.9.20 from <https://www.theseus.fi/handle/10024/64265>
- Konu, A. (2002) *Oppilaiden hyvinvointi koulussa*. Printed dissertation. Tampere: Tampereen Yliopistopaino Oy Juvenes print.
- Konu, A., Alanen, E., Lintonen, T. & Rimpelä, M. (2003) Factor structure of the School Well-being Model. *Health Education Research* 17(6), 732-42. Retrieved 24.10.20 from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/10969522_Factor_structure_of_the_School_Well-being_Model
- Kretzmann, J. & McKnight, J. (1993). *Building communities from the inside out – A path toward finding and mobilizing a community's assets*. Chicago: Acta Publications.
- Lerner R., Lerner V., Almerigi, J., Theokas, C., Phelps, E., Naudeau, S., Gestsdottir, S., Ma, L., Alberts, A., Smith, L., Simpson, I., Christeansen, E., Warren, D. & von Eye, A. (2006). Towards a new vision and vocabulary about adolescence: Theoretical, empirical, and applied bases of a “positive youth development” perspective. In Balter, L., & Tamis-LeMonda, C. S. (Ed.), *Child psychology: A handbook of contemporary issues* (445–469). New York: Psychology Press/Taylor & Francis.
- Lerner, R. M. (2017). Commentary: Studying and testing the positive youth development model: A tale of two approaches. *Child Development*, Volume 88(4), 1183–1185.

- Lerner, R. M. (2018). Character development among youth: Linking lives in time and place. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 42*(2), 267-277.
- McMillan, D. & Chavis, D. (1986). Sense of Community: A Definition and Theory. *Journal of Community Psychology 14*, 6-23. Retrieved 15.9.20 from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235356904_Sense_of_Community_A_Definition_and_Theory
- Ministry of Education and Culture. Niina Junttila ehdottaa lasten ja opettajien kuunteluvälituntia. (2018). Retrieved 10.10.2020 from <https://minedu.fi/en/-/niina-junttila-ehdottaa-lasten-ja-opettajien-kuunteluvalituntia>
- MLL. Tietoa MLL:sta. Welcome to the Mannerheim League For Child Welfare / MLL Peer Support Scheme. (2019). Retrieved 6.10.2020 from <https://www.mll.fi/tietoa-mllsta/welcome-mannerheim-league-child-welfare/mll-peer-support-scheme/>
- Moisio, P. (2017). *Hyvinvoiva koulu yhteisö – Oppimismyönteisen ilmapiirin edistäminen Rovaniemen alueen yläkouluissa*. Pro gradu -tutkielma. Lapin yliopisto. Retrieved 15.9.2020 from <https://lauda.ulapland.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/63154/Moisio.P%c3%a4ivi.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Mäensivu, K. (2002). Koulun tehtävä. In *Terveellisen ja turvallisen opiskelu ympäristön laadun arvioinnin perusteet perusopetusta varten*. Opetusministeriön julkaisu. Retrieved 6.10.20 from <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/80837/opmtr27.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Laitinen, K., Haanpää, S., Francke, L. & Lahtinen, M. (2020). *Kiusaamisen vastainen työ koulussa ja oppilaitoksissa*. Oppaat ja käsikirjat 2020:3a. Opetushallituksen julkaisu. Grano Oy. Retrieved 20.10.2020 from https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/kiusaamisen_vastainen_työ_kouluissa_ja_oppilaitoksissa.pdf
- Paasivaara, L. & Nikkilä, J. (2010). *Yhteisöllisyydestä työhyvinvointia*. Helsinki: Painopaikka Nord Print Oy.
- Pittman, K., Irby, M., Tolman, J., N. Yohalem, N., & Ferber, T. (2003). *Preventing Problems, Promoting Development, Encouraging Engagement*. Washington, DC: The Forum for Youth Investment, Impact Strategies, Inc.

- Retrieved 9.10.2020 from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.471.1224&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Pitmann, K. (2014, June 30) Make the Connection Webcast: Positive Youth Development: Origins and Overview (video). Retrieved 10.10.2020 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yOTFYZDOrI&feature=youtu.be>
- Rasku-Puttonen, H. (2008) Oppilaiden osallisuus kouluyhteisössä. In *Koulutuksen kulttuurit ja hyvinvoinnin politiikat* (2008). Helsinki: Suomen kasvatustieteellinen seura [Turku].
- Salovaara, R., Hokonen, T., & Honkonen, T. (2011). *Rakenna hyvä luokkahenki*. Jyväskylä: PS-kustannus.
- Schaps, E. (2003) Creating a School Community. In *Educational Leadership*, vol. 60. Retrieved 2.8.2020 from: <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar03/vol60/num06/Creating-a-School-Community.aspx>
- Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö. Niina Junttila ehdottaa lasten ja opettajien kuunteluvälituntia. Published by Sosiaali ja terveysministeriö 9.11.2018. Retrieved 2.11.2020 from <https://stm.fi/-/1410845/niina-junttila-ehdottaa-lasten-ja-opettajien-kuunteluvälituntia>
- Souto, A. (2011). *Arkipäivän rasismi koulussa: Etnografinen tutkimus suomalais- ja maahanmuuttajanuorten ryhmäsuhteista*. Helsinki: Nuorisotutkimusseura : Nuoristotutkimusverkosto.
- Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos. Tutkimus ja kehittäminen. Tutkimukset ja hankkeet. Kouluterveyskysely. Retrieved 16.10.20 from <https://thl.fi/fi/tutkimus-ja-kehittaminen/tutkimukset-ja-hankkeet/kouluterveyskysely>
- Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos. Tutkimus ja kehittäminen. Tutkimukset ja hankkeet. Kouluterveyskysely. Kouluterveyskyselyn tulokset. Retrieved 16.10.20 from <https://thl.fi/fi/tutkimus-ja-kehittaminen/tutkimukset-ja-hankkeet/kouluterveyskysely/kouluterveyskyselyn-tulokset>
- Torres-Harding, S., Baber, A., Hilvers, J., Hobbs, N. & Maly, M. (2017). *Children as agents of social and community change: Enhancing youth empowerment through participation in a school-based social activism project*. Sage Journals, 13(1), 3-18. Retrieved 12.10.2020 from <https://doi-org.anna diak.fi/10.1177%2F1746197916684643>
- Tuomi, J. & Sarajarvi, A. (2009) *Laadullinen tutkimus ja sisällönanalyysi*. Helsinki: Kustannusosakeyhtiö Tammi.

- UNDESA (2013). Youth Participation. Retrieved 15.9.2020 from <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-participation.pdf>
- Vantaa. Uutisia. Varhaiskasvatus ja koulutus. Kytöpuiston koulun väkivallantekoon puututtu tiukasti. (2020). Retrieved 20.10.2020 from https://www.vantaa.fi/uutisia/varhaiskasvatus_ja_koulutus/101/0/152981
- Weiner, I. B., Lerner, R. M., Easterbrooks, M. A., Mistry, J., & Weiner, I. (2012). *Handbook of psychology, developmental psychology* (375-381). ProQuest Ebook Central. Retrieved 10.10.2020 from <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/diak/detail.action?docID=918176>
- Wigfield, A. & Turner, R. (2010). *Good relation measurement framework*. Policy evaluation group. Equal and human rights commission research report series. Manchester: Arndale House. Retrieved 21.10.20 from <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/research-report-60-good-relations-measurement-framework.pdf>
- Yhdenvertaisuus.fi. Equality.fi. Relations between population groups influence everyone in the society. Retrieved 20.10.2020 from <https://yhdenvertaisuus.fi/en/goodrelations.fi>
- Yhdenvertaisuus.fi. Equality.fi. What do good relations mean? Retrieved 9.11.2020 <https://yhdenvertaisuus.fi/en/what-are-good-relations>
- Yhdenvertaisuus.fi. Equality.fi. What affects good relations? Retrieved 20.10.2020 from <https://yhdenvertaisuus.fi/en/what-affects-good-relations->
- YLE. News. Parents' group calls on schools to intervene in school bullying, violence. (2020). Retrieved 20.10.2020 from https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/parents_group_calls_on_schools_to_intervene_in_school_bullying_violence/11559029

APPENDIX 1. Plan of the first workshop for peer support pupils

The plan for the first workshop was done by using the framework for workshop planning by adapting Doyle and Straus (1976) as presented in Hogan (2003, 33).

Content What?	Process How?	Structure Group- ing?	Equip- ment Materi- als?	Timing (90min)
1. Introduction and going through the purpose of the workshop.	Explanation of the workshop by the facilitator.	whole group		10 min
2. Getting to know the group, recognizing individual assets.	Choosing strength from the strength cards.	whole group		10 min
3. Introducing the research setting and main concepts	Explaining the research setting, goals of the research and asset-based approach, inviting the peer support pupils in the process.	whole group	Strength cards	10 min
3. Defining the assets and worrying aspects of the school community.	Learning café, and presentations. Discussions in groups and writing and drawing in the flip-charts.	whole group or 2-3 smaller groups	Flip-flap charts, pencils	20 min
Break				10 min
4. Testing the online survey.	Peer supporter pupils will fill in the survey and then give feedback and comments for improvement. Facilitator takes notes.	whole groups, individually or in pairs	phones or tablets	20 min
5. Evaluation and feedback of the workshop.			post-its	10 min

APPENDIX 2. Questions of the online-survey translated into English

The first four sections of the online survey included statements, in which the participants were asked to reply on a Likert- scale (from 1 to 5) according to the level of agreement or disagreement. In the tables below I present the statements involved in the survey translated from Finnish into English.

Section 1 involved nine statements that related to the sense of community.

Tunnen kuuluvani kouluyhteisöömme.	I feel being part of our school community.
Koen, että koulussa minut hyväksytään sellaisena kuin olen.	I feel accepted at school as I am.
Koulussa muut oppilaat ovat kiinnostuneita siitä, mitä minulle kuuluu ja miten voin.	At school, other pupils are interested in my well-being and how am I.
Koulussa opettajat ovat kiinnostuneita kuulemaan mielipiteeni.	At school, teachers are interested in hearing my opinion.
Minun on helppo ilmaista mielipiteeni luokassa.	It's easy for me to express my opinion in class.
Luokassamme on hyvä ME-henki.	In the class there is a good team-spirit.
Yläkoulussamme on hyvä ilmapiiri.	There is a good atmosphere in our secondary school.
Koulussa minulla on turvallinen olo.	At school I feel safe.
Tulen mielelläni kouluun.	I feel good about coming to school.

Section 2 involved 9 statements that measured the experience about the social capital in the school community.

Oppilaiden ja opettajien välinen yhteistyö toimii hyvin.	Cooperation between pupils and teachers works well.
Oppilaat ja opettajat kunnioittavat toinen toisiaan.	Pupils and teachers respect each other.
Huoltajani ovat kiinnostuneita kouluyhteisön asioista.	My guardians are interested in the affairs of the school community.
Koulumme tekee yhteistyötä myös alueen muiden toimijoiden kanssa kuten kirjasto, nuorisopalvelut, poliisi yms.	Our school also cooperates with other actors in the region, such as the library, youth services, the police, etc.
Koulun aikuiset ovat tietoisia, mitä välitunneilla tapahtuu.	The adults of the school are aware of what happens in break time between the classes.
Koulun aikuiset puuttuvat kiusaamistilanteisiin.	The adults of the school intervene in bullying situations.
Koululla järjestetään koulun oppilaille tarkoitettua vapaaehtoista kerho ja harrastustoimintaa.	The school organizes a voluntary club and hobby activities for the school's pupils.
Olen saanut koulussa tietoa erilaisista harrastus ja vapaa-ajan toiminnoista.	I have received information about various school hobby and leisure activities.

Tiedän, että saan tarvittaessa apua koulun oppilashuoltohenkilökunnalta (kuraattori, koulun terveydenhoitaja).	I know I get help from the school welfare group (school social worker, school nurse) when needed.
--	---

Section 3 included eight statements related to cultural capital and customs of the school community.

Ajatus siitä, että jokainen oppilas on tärkeä, on totta koulussamme.	The idea that every pupil is important is true in our school.
Monikulttuurisuus on koulumme vahvuus.	Multiculturalism is a strength of our school.
Koulumme monikulttuurisuutta hyödynnetään esimerkiksi opetustilanteissa ja tapahtumissa.	The multiculturalism of our school is utilized, for example, in teaching situations and events.
Koulussamme järjestetään erilaisia tapahtumia ja teemapäiviä.	Our school organizes various events and theme days.
Koulumme yhteiset tapahtumat vahvistavat koulun yhteishenkeä.	The joint events of our school strengthen the school's sense of community.
Koulussamme toisten auttaminen ja huomiointi on yhteinen periaate.	In our school, helping and caring for others is a common principle.
Oppilaiden taitoja ja osaamista hyödynnetään koulun arjessa.	Pupils' skills and competences are utilized in everyday school life.
Koulussamme on yhteisiä tapoja ja perinteitä.	Our school has common customs and traditions.

Section 4 included sentences related to the psychological capital of the school community. The current Tiistilä school for about 700 students is scheduled to be demolished next year and replaced by a new building on the same site. The statements related to the demolition of the school building, and the feelings and hopes associated with this change.

Olen tietoinen koulurakennuksen purkamissuunnitelmista.	I am aware of the plan that the school building will be demolished
Uuden koulun rakentaminen on hyvä päätös.	Building a new school is a good decision.
Uuden koulun rakentaminen tulee lisäämään yhteisöllisyyttä.	Building a new school will increase the sense of community.
Viihdyn hyvin suuressa koulussa, jossa on paljon mahdollisuuksia.	I enjoy a large school with a lot of opportunities.
Koulurakennuksella on suuri merkitys koulun ilmapiiriin.	The school building has a great influence to the school atmosphere.
Koulun oleskelutilat ovat tärkeitä paikkoja yhteisöllisyyden luomiselle.	School lounges are important places to create the sense of community.
Väliaikaisiin koulutiloihin siirtyminen huolestuttaa minua.	Moving to temporary school facilities worries me.
Pelkään, että koulurakennuksen purkaminen vaikuttaa koulun ilmapiiriin heikentävästi.	I am afraid that the demolition of the school building will have a weakening effect on the school atmosphere.

Section 5 focused in the development of the school community. This section involved three open-ended questions.

Tämä asia toimii meidän koulussa hyvin / tähän olen tyytyväinen:	This thing works well in our school / I am satisfied with this:
Tähän asiaan toivoisin koulussamme muutosta:	I would like a change in this at our school:
Jos sinulla on idea, miten tämä muutos voitaisiin mahdollistaa, voit kirjoittaa sen tähän.	If you have an idea how this change could be made possible, you can write it down here.

In section 6 the focus was in identifying the worrying aspects in the school community. The pupils were asked to choose one to five alternatives from the list.

Yksinäisyys	Loneliness
Kaverisuhteet	Peer-relations
Kiusaaminen	Bullying
Käyttäytyminen sosiaalisessa mediassa	Behavior on social media
Oppilaiden alkoholinkäyttö	Alcohol use by pupils
Oppilaiden tupakointi	Smoking by pupils
Oppilaiden muu päihteiden käyttö	Other substance use by pupils
Väkivaltainen käytös oppilaiden välillä	Violent behaviour between pupils
Väkivaltaa ihannoivat asenteet	Attitudes glorifying violence
Rasismi	Racism
Oppilaiden mielenterveysongelmat	Pupils' mental health problems
Juoruaminen	Gossiping
Haukkuva ja herjaava puhekuulttuuri	Offensive way of speech
Koulun ilmapiiri	The school atmosphere
Koulun maine	The reputation of the school
Epätasa-arvoinen kohtelu	Discrimination
Paineet koulumenestyksessä	Pressures on school success
Ulkonäköpaineet	Appearance pressures
Koulurakennuksen purkaminen ja väistötiloihin siirtyminen	Demolition of the school building and moving to temporary school facilities
Muu, mikä?	Other, what?

Section 7 emphasized how each individual affect their community. In this section pupils were asked to name one personal strength and that way identify the human capital of the school community

APPENDIX 3. Content analysis of the qualitative data

Content analysis of the qualitative data from the online survey & number of appearances in open ended survey replies.

Simplified expressions	Intermediate category	Main category	Combining theme
<p>The school has a good and fun atmosphere. Everyone respects each other. I am glad that I am in a multicultural school. There is not much bullying.</p>	<p>Atmosphere (21) Sense of community (8)</p>	<p>Atmosphere & Sense of community (29)</p>	<p>The existing assets of the school community (157)</p>
<p>Teachers are good at teaching. Teachers are nice and helpful. Pupils are nice. I learn well during the lessons.</p>	<p>Qualities and characters of people (12) Learning (6)</p>	<p>Human capital (18)</p>	
<p>Everyone has friends at school. Cooperation between pupils and teachers.</p>	<p>Peer relations (25) Teachers (16) Cooperation (3)</p>	<p>Social capital (44)</p>	
<p>Actions against bullying. Preventing the spread of corona-virus. The school operates in a planned manner. Lessons and teaching works well.</p>	<p>Rules (3) Action in problem solving situations (6) Customs/ way of doing things (2) Teaching/ lessons (11)</p>	<p>Cultural capital (22)</p>	
<p>Outdoors facilities, break-time facilities. Sports and hobbies. Break times and free school lunch. Groups are well divided.</p>	<p>Facilities (8) Breaktimes (14) School lunch (16) Group division (6)</p>	<p>Physical capital (44)</p>	

Simplified expressions	Intermediate category	Main category	Combining theme
<p>More activities for break-times. Organizing more events, projects and trips. More sports and hobby opportunities. Pupils opinions should be asked and taken into consideration. More information for pupils.</p> <p>Less bullying and fights. Not being mean to each other. The restlessness of pupils. Teachers should be better present during breaktimes and better address bullying. Rules should be followed.</p> <p>Menus should be accurate. Better canteen and food. More opportunities for buying cheap snacks. School lounges and outdoor facilities should be improved. Private lockers for pupils. More places to sit on during breaks. More comfortable seats. More sports facilities to the school yard. Clean school environment and hygienic toilet facilities.</p>	<p>More events and activities (12) Increasing pupils' participation (4) Detention practice (3)</p> <p>Decreasing bullying (20) and defamatory speech (3) Peaceful learning environment (7) Everybody should be treated equally and with respect (23) Improving school atmosphere (15) Presence of teachers in supervision and interventions for bullying (8) Acting according to rules. (2)</p> <p>Improvements in school lunch (17) Indoor breaktimes (10) Snacks (3) School facilities (18) Breaktime facilities (15) Hygienic toilet facilities (6) School schedule (9)</p> <p>Less supervision (4) Teachers (5) Lessons (4) Other (7)</p>	<p>Increasing activity and participation in the school culture.</p> <p>Improving safety and the school atmosphere.</p> <p>Contributions to comfortable school environment.</p> <p>Other</p>	<p>Actions to strengthen a safe and an equal school atmosphere and more comfortable school environment. (185)</p>

APPENDIX 4. Template for action plan proposals

Idea/proposal	
Goals	
Short description of the plan	
What community assets will be used in implementation?	
What/who is needed in the implementation?	
Other things to be considered	