

**The benefits of a sports-based positive youth development programme in a low socioeconomic area: perceptions of participants, parents, programme leaders and school teachers**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Young people go through a period of time involving complex physical, mental, emotional and social development (Curran & Wexler, 2017). This period of transition to adulthood includes a number of developmental changes, giving opportunities for both positive and negative changes to occur (Curran & Wexler, 2017). This development period provides an opportunity to foster positive developmental outcomes to ensure youth are healthy and thriving members of society (Curran & Wexler, 2017). This strengths-based approach is known as Positive Youth Development (PYD), viewing young people as ‘resources to be developed’ rather than ‘problems to be solved’ (Bean & Forneris, 2016; Holt, Neely, Slater, Camire, Cote, Fraser-Thomas, MacDonald, Strachan & Tamminen, 2017; Lerner, Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, Phelps, Gestsdottir, Naudeau, Jelcic, Alberts, Ma, Smith, Bobek, Richman-Raphael, Simpson, Christiansen, & Von Eye, 2005). PYD has been utilised to investigate young people’s involvements in a number of sports and non-sporting programmes (Holt et al., 2017; Neely & Holt, 2014).

To contribute to this evolving body of sports-based PYD literature, this study aimed to investigate the perceived benefits of sports-based PYD programmes in low socioeconomic areas. More specifically, the research questions explored the perceptions of four key stakeholder groups, the youth, their parents (or guardians), the programme leaders and the youth participant’s school teachers.

The social constructionist viewpoint recognises knowledge as being created through experiences (Thorne, Kirkman, 1997). This socio-cultural approach to investigating insights into PYD programmes, the uniqueness of a sports environment together with the limited research in this area, supports the need to consider a multiple stakeholder

perspective in order to understand the perceived benefits of sports-based PYD programmes.

To gain in-depth understanding and explore individuals' experiences, views and perceptions of the benefits of a sports-based PYD programme, a qualitative, interpretive descriptive approach was adopted in this study. Data was collected from four stakeholder groups through semi-structured in-depth individual interviews that revealed rich and insightful knowledge. These interviews revealed a number of positive outcomes from youth participating in the sports-based PYD programme. The interviews also highlighted a number of consistencies among the positive outcomes identified by each of the different stakeholder groups. The significant positive outcomes identified in the research project included the importance of positive adult-youth relationships, the transferability of the life skills taught and the opportunity to participate in a sports-based PYD programme. The knowledge gained and the lessons learnt help provide better understandings of the impact sports-based PYD programmes have on youth. The multiple stakeholder perspective utilised in this study provided another layer of rich in-depth understanding of the influence the programme has. As a result, these insights can be utilised to inform funding agents and organisations that operate in a sports-based PYD environment.

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## ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed  Date: 12/02/2018

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this to my parents Edmund and Lorraine Manuela. Thank you for your selfless love, support and direction throughout my life. I am a product of your tireless hard work and determination for success. You have taught me that sacrifice, dedication and hard work are worth the fight to achieve your goals. You have both been my inspiration and motivation to have the strength to dream big. I am forever grateful and thankful for everything you do.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

New Zealand's Ministry of Youth Development, The Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002) has identified young people as being aged between 12-24 years. The New Zealand Government developed the Agenda for Children (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002) that identifies children as everyone under the age of 17, but recognises that many "older children" identify as being "youth" or "young people".

This study focused on examining the perceived benefits of a positive youth development programme, purely in the context of sport. Positive Youth Development (PYD) is a strengths-based approach to the development of children and adolescents, viewing them as "resources to be developed" instead of "problems to be solved" (Holt, Neely, Slater, Camire, Cote, Fraser-Thomas, MacDonald, Strachan & Tamminen, 2017; Lerner, Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, Phelps, Gestsdottir, Naudeau, Jellicic, Alberts, Ma, Smith, Bobek, Richman-Raphael, Simpson, Christiansen, & Von Eye, 2005). PYD has been used extensively to study child and adolescent involvement in different types of organised and adult-supervised sport programmes (Holt et al., 2017; Holt & Neely, 2011). However, young people today are participating in a wider range of sports (Spruit, Van Vugt, Van der Put, Van der Stouwe, & Stams, 2016), and it is important to acknowledge the diverse range of sports and related cultural practices that exist outside of conventional sport (Gilchrist & Wheaton, 2011). For example, informal sport is becoming increasingly fundamental to the physical activity and cultural lifestyles of young people and must be considered when researching those individuals, in order to demonstrate the contribution sport has made to their health and social outcomes

(Gilchrist & Wheaton, 2011; Spruit et al., 2016). The purpose of this research project is to give voice to, and hear the perception of youth who participate in sports-based PYD programmes, as well as their parents (or guardians), their programme leaders and their (school) teachers.

## **1.2 Youth, young people and children**

The period from childhood to adolescence (ages 6-18) is a vital time of formative growth in order to achieve human potential (World Health Organization, 2014). It is a period of overwhelming physical, psychological, and emotional change (Neely & Holt, 2014). Youth is a phase of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence. This phase of one's life can be both a time of vulnerability and opportunity (World Health Organization, 2014). Through this time of change and development, the decisions made and habits formed can determine the health and well-being of a lifetime (World Health Organization, 2014). The World Health Organisation (WHO) has defined adolescents as those aged between 10 and 19 years. Other frequently utilised and overlapping terms are youth, defined by the United Nations as those 15-24 years, and young people, defined as those aged 10-24 years.

Even though the terms adolescent, youth and young person are often used interchangeably, they can be defined differently depending on circumstances and context, particularly when considering demographic, socio-economic and socio-cultural settings. While other literature identifies adolescents as the measurement for a period of development, Holt, (2008), suggests adolescence is the phase or transition between childhood and adulthood. Adolescents have basic, supportive requirements to facilitate their development into healthy, successful and productive adults (Holt, 2008, 2016; Ward & Parker, 2013). Holt (2008) categorises adolescence into three phases: early (10-14 years), middle (15-18 years) and late (19-21 years). Each adolescence phase has a

broad spectrum of biological, social, emotional and psychological transitions, which need to be successfully overcome before an individual can effectively enter the adult world (Holt, 2008).

### **1.3 Positive Youth Development (PYD) and sport**

The premise that sport is a platform for “training” for life can be traced as far back as the early Greek and Mayan cultures (Petitpas, Cornelius, Van Raalte, & Jones, 2005). The belief that sport can contribute to personal development is nothing if not historically embedded. Consequently, sport is often highly regarded for its potential (or ability) to provide individual and community benefit beyond the enjoyment of the participation experience (Gould & Carson, 2008; Haudenhuyse, Theeboom, & Coalter, 2012; Kay, 2009; Spaaij, 2009). These community benefits cover health, education, youth obesity, antisocial behaviour, social exclusion, community cohesion and development (Gilchrist & Wheaton, 2011; Haudenhuyse et al., 2012; Kay, 2009; Spaaij, 2009). Contradictory to Coackley (2011), others view sport as providing opportunities for people from all sectors of society, to develop social trust and norms (Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2003).

Sport is one of the most popular activities amongst young people (Jones, Edwards, Bocarro, Bunds, & Smith, 2016). There are a variety of physical, mental, emotional and social benefits linked to sport (Coakley, 2011; Jones et al., 2016). Its increased use within many communities highlights its perceived importance, its enormity within society and the associated increased complexities (Kay, 2009; Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2003; Spaaij, 2009; Strachan, MacDonald, & Cote, 2016; Wright, Jacobs, Ressler, & Jung, 2016). Generally speaking, young people’s participation in sports activities is associated with positive health and well-being outcomes (Kay, 2009; Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2003; Spaaij, 2009; Strachan et al., 2016; Wright et al., 2016). More recently,

there has been a trend towards purposefully designing sport programmes to foster positive values, life skills and pro-social behaviour (Coakley, 2011; Gould & Carson, 2008; Jones et al., 2016; Wright et al., 2016). Youth participation in these types of programmes is linked to positive achievements and increased social, intellectual, and emotional learning (Coakley, 2011; Gould & Carson, 2008; Jones et al., 2016; Wright et al., 2016). Despite this, some academics still question the utility of sport for PYD (Holt et al., 2017; Neely & Holt, 2014). Coackley (2011) asserts ‘...the act of sport participation among young people leads to no regularly identifiable developmental outcomes’ (p. 309).

Both developmental psychology and sports psychology provide an underpinning ethos for sports-based PYD (Holt & Neely, 2011; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Weiss, Stuntz, Bhalla, Bolter, & Price, 2013). What is known about developmental sport psychology is the psychosocial and behavioural benefits of participation in physical activity and sport (Weiss et al., 2013). It is important to note that such benefits are not automatic and sports-based PYD programmes seeking to build mental, emotional, social and cognitive competencies must be aware of this (Rauscher & Cooky, 2016). This therefore highlights the significance of programmatic intentions, goals and outcomes of sports-based PYD programmes (Rauscher & Cooky, 2016). It is important that programmes intentionally focus on creating an environment for the specific provision of developmental learning experiences (Holt & Neely, 2011; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Weiss et al., 2013).

To date, researchers have focused primarily on how sports impact on youth development. Studied outcomes include self-esteem, self-perceived competences, motivation, moral development, social relationships, leadership, resilience, substance use, body image, physical fitness and motor skill development (Coakley, 2011; Holt &

Neely, 2011; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Weiss, 2008). There are many programmes informally working in this area in an attempt to reduce the social problems youth face within their communities (Lerner et al., 2005; Petitpas et al., 2005; Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012; Spaaij, 2009). The belief is that key capabilities, behaviours and the ability to make good decisions can be developed through PYD programmes, which will provide youth with the necessary skills to cope with social issues as they experience them in their everyday, lived experiences (Weiss et al., 2013). It has been suggested that development of such personal assets will encourage youth's abilities to engage in positive behaviours, in its attempts to lower the incidence of youth engaging in undesirable behaviours (Neely & Holt, 2014; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016).

The majority of existing literature in the area of sports-based PYD programmes focuses on a single perspective (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2013; Armour & Sandford, 2013; Bean & Forneris, 2016; Bean, Forneris, & Halsall, 2014; CMDHB, 2016; Curran & Wexler, 2017; Haudenhuyse et al., 2012; Johnson, Garing, Oliphant, & Roberts, 2016; Riciputi, McDonough, & Ullrich-French, 2016; Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012).

Studies have predominantly focused on the perceptions of sports-based PYD programmes, and the benefits and impacts they have on one of the following groups; the youth, their parents (or guardians) or the programme leaders and coaches. More recently, there have been studies that have included two of these groups, thus providing additional perspectives to previously reported results (Hemphill & Richards, 2016; Holt, Kingsley, Tink, & Scherer, 2011). This study aims to contribute actively to the development and advancement of knowledge by examining sports-based PYD from multiple stakeholders' perspectives within a New Zealand context.

#### **1.4 The New Zealand context**

Auckland, New Zealand, is well suited to a study of PYD. Young people make up a substantial proportion of New Zealand's population with Auckland's population younger than the national average (CMDHB, 2016; Statistics New Zealand, 2013). The 2013 New Zealand Census recorded that 35.8% of the 1.416 million people living in the Auckland Region were aged 24 years and under (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). In 2016, Counties Manukau (CM), a region of Auckland, was recorded as being home to 11% of the total New Zealand population (CMDHB, 2016). The population of Counties Manukau is multi-ethnic with larger proportions of Maori (16% of CM population) and Pacific (21% of CM population) peoples residing there than other areas in Auckland (CMDHB, 2016). The 2013 census also documented that populations of Maori or Pacific ethnicities have a higher proportion of young people than other groups, totalling 35.5% of all young people living in Auckland (24 years and under).

Whilst New Zealand generally has a high living standard, there is significant inequality in the distribution of wealth. When the 2013 NZ census was conducted, 36% of the Counties Manukau population were living in areas classified as the most socioeconomically deprived (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). It was also documented that 58% of Maori, 76% of Pacific peoples and 45% of those aged 0-14 years who reside in Counties Manukau live in areas classified as high socioeconomic deprivation (CMDHB, 2016; Statistics New Zealand, 2013).

### **1.5 The research problem**

There is a popular belief that participation in sport naturally and inevitably contributes to PYD (Bean et al., 2014; Coakley, 2011; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012). Some researchers recognise there is nothing special about sport that automatically results in positive developmental outcomes (Neely & Holt, 2014; Turnnidge, Côté, & Hancock, 2014).

More often than not, young people are viewed as having problems that need fixing (Holt, 2008; Ward & Parker, 2013). There have been increasing concerns about the future of today's young people, particularly with an increase in adolescent 'problem' behaviour and the subsequent societal concerns related to this (Martinek & Ruiz Pérez, 2005; Spruit et al., 2016). The majority of youth development programmes and research has embraced a "deficit reduction" approach to youth behavioural issues (Armour & Sandford, 2013; Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin, 2005; Jones et al., 2016). This puts societal problems at the focal point of the interventions being developed and implemented, to ameliorate or eliminate problem behaviour in youth (Jones et al., 2016). This approach to positive development often demonstrates only an average rate of success, despite the high cost of such initiatives (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005). Youth living in low socio-economic communities are often considered to be "at risk", with the potential to benefit from participating in extra-curricular activities such as structured sports programmes (Holt et al., 2011; Terry, Hahn, & Simjanovic, 2014; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). However, the empirical evidence supporting this link is not compelling (Terry et al., 2014). Although some research suggests that participation in sports-based PYD programmes results in personal enhancement(s) (Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012), there is little known about the specific mechanisms underpinning the relationship between participant involvement and PYD outcomes (Gould & Carson, 2008; Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012).

Community concern about the unstructured and unproductive time many youth have is not a new concept and the negative outcomes for both youth and their local communities have been extensively documented (Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012). The concerns about the amount of unstructured time youth have and the consequential negative outcomes for both youth and their local communities is well documented (Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012). The possibility of providing programmes during

unstructured time could be positive for at-risk youth from disadvantaged backgrounds (Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012), however there is limited literature to support such claims. Despite the lack of evidence, many organisations provide PYD programmes especially for at-risk youth from disadvantaged backgrounds (Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012).

Recent literature has shifted focus from a negative deficit approach, to a positive, strengths-based approach to youth development (Armour & Sandford, 2013; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Jones et al., 2016; Martinek & Ruiz Pérez, 2005; Turnnidge et al., 2014). This change in paradigm refocuses development to be primarily based around the belief that inherent behaviours and human capability can be enhanced and positive improvements to individuals lived experiences are achievable (Armour & Sandford, 2013; Carreres-Ponsoda, Carbonell, Cortell-Tormo, Fuster-Lloret, & Andreu-Cabrera, 2012; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Martinek & Ruiz Pérez, 2005; Turnnidge et al., 2014). PYD advocates support this view, suggesting the best way to prevent negative behaviours is to promote positive behaviours (Armour & Sandford, 2013; Jones et al., 2016; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). This is possible by aligning a young person's strengths with the resources in their social and physical environment (Armour & Sandford, 2013; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Jones et al., 2016; Neely & Holt, 2014).

## **1.6 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceived benefits of a sport-based PYD programme in a low socio-economic area in Auckland, New Zealand. The study investigates the perceptions of four key stakeholder groups: programme participants, parents/guardians of the participants, programme leaders and the participant's school teachers.

The specific research questions are:

1. What are the self-perceived benefits of participating in a sports-based positive youth development programme in a low socioeconomic area?
2. What benefits do parents (or guardians) perceive that their children receive from a sports-based positive youth development programme in a low socioeconomic area?
3. What benefits do programme leaders perceive that participants receive from sports-based positive youth development programme in a low socioeconomic area?
4. What benefits do school teachers perceive that their students receive from sports-based positive youth development programme in a low socioeconomic area?
5. What perceptions underpin the relationship between participant involvement and PYD outcomes?

### **1.7 Overview of methodology and methods**

This research sits within an interpretive paradigm, exploring peoples' experiences, views and perspectives on the benefits of a sports-based positive youth development programme. This study utilised an interpretive description as a methodology that follows a tradition of qualitative research through conducting empirical investigations (Thorne, Kirkham, S, R, & O'Flynn-Magee, 2004). Interpretive description enables rich descriptions of a particular phenomenon of interest, with the purpose of revealing clear descriptions based on the participants' experiences (Smythe, 2012; Thorne et al., 2004). Aspects of appreciative inquiry were also considered and applied in this study as it operated within a strengths-based environment (Smart & Mann, 2003). In addition, participant demographics were cogitated carefully which identified and acknowledged

that Talanoa, a Pacific research-based methodology would be an important cultural paradigm to be considered throughout the investigations of this study. Interpretive description together with appreciative inquiry and talanoa allowed for the generating of substantiated knowledge in an applied research settings (Holt, Kingsley, Tink, & Scherer, 2011; Thorne et al., 2004)

In terms of methods, the study utilised in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Interviews were conducted with 11 youth participants, 10 parents (or guardians), 6 programme leaders and two school teachers. The context for this research is a sports-based PYD programme based in Manurewa, Auckland, New Zealand. Counties Manukau Sport (CMS), a Regional Sports Trust located in South Auckland, manages and administers the sports-based PYD programme.

## **1.8 Outline of the thesis**

This introductory chapter provides the background and context for this research project. This chapter also presents an introduction and overview to each of the chapters featured within this thesis. Chapter 2 provides a literature review of PYD and sports-based PYD programmes. This proceeds into discussions of sports-based PYD in low socio-economic areas and the possible benefits these programmes might offer. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodologies applied to this research, focusing on qualitative interpretive descriptive studies. Chapter 3 also describes the methods and data analysis process. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the research with respect to the four key participant groups and their perceptions: participants, parents (or guardians), programme leaders and school teachers. In addition to providing an interpretation of the findings, Chapter 5 also includes suggestions for future research and an acknowledgement of the limitations of the research.

## **1.9 Delimitation of the scope**

Counties Manukau Sport (CMS), a Regional Sports Trust located in South Auckland, manages and administers the Manurewa-based Youth Impact Programme (YIP) chosen for this study. The research concentrated on four key stakeholder groups, the youth participants, their parents or guardians, the programme leaders and the school teachers. The findings and data collected was reliant on the information offered by these four stakeholder groups. The information collected is assumed to be genuine and a true representation of the opinions of the participants of the research project. Although findings from this study may help develop understandings, the researcher makes no claim for universal generalisability. The study did not aim to investigate the actual benefits of the sports-based PYD programme, but more specifically focused on the self-reported and perceived benefits of participant groups. Due to time and resourcing constraints, this study focused on a single programme, which allowed for a focused and detailed case study.

### **1.10 Summary**

Some people believe that there are no real benefits from youth participating in sports-based PYD programmes, but evidence to support this is often missing. The purpose of this research is to investigate the perceived benefits of youth participating in a sports-based PYD programme. Data will be collected from interviews with four key participant groups the youth participants, their parents (or guardians), the programme leaders and their school teachers to identify the perceived benefits to youth participating in a sports-based PYD programme.

This introductory chapter provides the basis upon which this thesis was founded as well as covering what will be presented in the subsequent chapters. It has provided the background to the research, the problems and questions it seeks to answer along with an introduction into the fundamental literature that supports the research project. The

following chapter will provide a review of the literature of PYD theories and sport context. A model of youth development through sport will be presented along with indigenous reflections and contributions. The benefits of a PYD programme will be discussed and current studies that have investigated low-income households and at risk youth will be presented.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This literature review outlines Positive Youth Development (PYD), provides an overview of sport and PYD and identifies theoretical approaches to sport and PYD. It offers reflections and contributions of indigenous models and discusses the benefits and criticisms of sports-based PYD. The literature review will also consider sports-based PYD research that has focused on communities of low socio-economic status and at-risk youth. The review will conclude by proposing the way forward for sports-based PYD and considers gaps in the literature.

#### **2.2 Positive Youth Development (PYD)**

There are various definitions of Positive Youth Development (PYD). Neely and Holt (2014, p. 255) define it as “...the processes by which young people acquire a range of cognitive, social, emotional and behavioural skills” and as a “... strength-based view of development that includes a range of theoretical and conceptual approaches, which share a common focus on intentional efforts to develop interest, skills and abilities that will enable youth to positively navigate life’s challenges and thrive”. Neely and Holt (2014) also state that PYD “...has become the umbrella term for many types of studies looking at the potential benefits of sport participation” (p.255). Ullrich-French and McDonough (2013) support this, stating that PYD programmes “aim to enhance youths’ lives by providing opportunity for building strengths and recourses” (p. 279). PYD views young people as having potential waiting to be developed and enhanced, which can be positively nurtured and strengthened rather than a problem that needs to be solved (Carreres-Ponsoda et al., 2012; Holt, 2008, 2016; Jones et al., 2016; Turnnidge

et al., 2014; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). More recently, PYD has become the overarching label for various types of studies investigating the potential benefits of youth participation in sport (Turnnidge et al., 2014). The fundamental aim of a PYD programme is to enhance youths' lives through providing opportunities to build strengths and capabilities (Armour & Sandford, 2013; Bean et al., 2014; Holt et al., 2017; Johnson et al., 2016; Neely & Holt, 2014; Turnnidge et al., 2014; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013; Vest Ettekal et al., 2016).

A holistic view to development that connects PYD to prevention and promotion is important and is necessary for youth to become functioning and contributing adults in society (Carreres-Ponsoda et al., 2012; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). If youth development is to be fully understood, it is imperative to explore the environment in which youth are developing in and the external influences that they experience (Carreres-Ponsoda et al., 2012). External influences can either stimulate and foster, or hinder and obstruct positive development (Carreres-Ponsoda et al., 2012). Thus, the PYD approach points out the significance of context and environment in relation to development (Armour, Sandford, & Duncombe, 2013). This highlights the importance of the interaction between youth and their communities (Armour et al., 2013). In an attempt to achieve a mutually beneficial transaction, PYD strives for a supportive community environment for youth, which in turn contributes to fostering youth who contribute positively to their community (Armour & Sandford, 2013). Through best practice, 'good youth' can be produced (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005).

### **2.2.1 PYD: A strengths-based approach.**

Recent research has shifted focus from a negative deficit approach, to a positive strengths based approach to youth development (Armour & Sandford, 2013; Fraser-

Thomas et al., 2005; Holt, 2016; Jones et al., 2016; Martinek & Ruiz Pérez, 2005; Turnnidge et al., 2014; Vest Ettekal et al., 2016). The new paradigm refocuses development that is primarily based around the belief that inherent behaviours and human capability can be enhanced and positive improvements to individuals lived experiences are achievable (Armour & Sandford, 2013; Carreres-Ponsoda et al., 2012; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Jones et al., 2016; Martinek & Ruiz Pérez, 2005). Positive Youth Development (PYD) advocates the view that the best way to prevent negative behaviours is to promote positive behaviours (Armour & Sandford, 2013; Jones et al., 2016; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). It is suggested that this is achieved through focusing young people's strengths and aligning these with specific resources in their social and physical environments (Armour & Sandford, 2013; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Jones et al., 2016; Neely & Holt, 2014).

A strengths-based view to PYD originates from developmental systems theory, and an emphasis on skills, aptitudes, talents and the potential youth have (Armour & Sandford, 2013; Holt, 2008, 2016). Such an approach to PYD takes an optimistic position for youth development (Armour & Sandford, 2013; Armour et al., 2013), compared to the more traditional deficit deductive approach (Armour & Sandford, 2013; Armour et al., 2013; Neely & Holt, 2014; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). This view of PYD highlights the manipulability of human development, acknowledging that all young people have the potential for change (Armour & Sandford, 2013; Armour et al., 2013). PYD is embedded in the notion that all young people have the ability to thrive when their individual strengths are enriched by a supportive environment and they can in return contribute to the environment positively (Agans, Vest Ettekal, Erickson, & Lerner, 2016; Holt, 2016; Lerner, Lerner, & Bowers, 2015; Vest Ettekal et al., 2016). According to Holt, Kingsley, Tink and Scherer (2011, p. 300), PYD can be applied to multiple approaches that share a belief young people are 'resources to be developed'

and not ‘problems to be solved’. In sum, PYD is a strengths based approach which strongly advocates that all young people have the ability to make positive development adaptations (Holt et al., 2011). PYD programmes can positively impact on youth’s lives (Bean & Forneris, 2016).

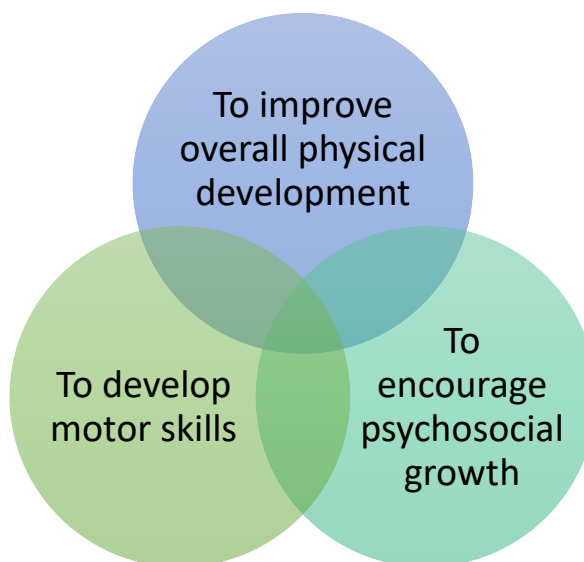
### **2.3 Sport and Positive Youth Development (PYD)**

Coakley (2011, p.306) posits, “Sport contributes to development”. Sport as a context has been recognised as having the potential to actively foster youth positively (Haudenhuyse et al., 2012; Holt & Neely, 2011). Sport is a useful foundation for PYD as it has the potential to appropriately address multiple aspects of well-being for at-risk groups, if appropriately structured (Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). Over the past decade a differentiation of PYD programmes has been observed, into those solely sports-based and those with a sport-plus focus (Haudenhuyse et al., 2012; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). This has led to two key types of PYD programmes - traditionally structured youth sports programmes, which may or may not incorporate development outcomes, and programmes that specifically promote PYD and utilise sport as the means to achieve those goals (Holt, 2008, 2016; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013).

The association between sport and PYD is not new; it has been a long-standing assumption that youth sport fosters positive outcomes (Bean & Forneris, 2016; Holt, 2008; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016). Whilst sport can provide a useful vehicle for a development context (Holt, 2008, 2016; Jones et al., 2016; Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012), researchers have established that PYD is not guaranteed through simply participating in sports or a sports based programme (Bean et al., 2014; Gould & Carson, 2008; Turnnidge et al., 2014). The literature also suggests that those sport-based PYD programmes that are intentionally structured enhance development outcomes for youth

(Bean & Forneris, 2016; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Gould & Carson, 2008; Petitpas et al., 2005). It should be noted that research has recognised that sport in isolation does not lead to PYD outcomes (Holt, 2008, 2016; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016). The belief that sport builds crucial capabilities, which support a wide range of positive developmental outcomes, has stimulated enormous growth in the number of local, national and international programmes using sport to cultivate PYD (Burnett, 2015; Jones et al., 2016). PYD and corresponding community development paradigms are a popular framework for directing the planning and implementation of youth sports programmes (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2013; Jones et al., 2016; Riciputi et al., 2016; Turnnidge et al., 2014; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013).

Youth participating in sport and physical activities have the opportunity to achieve three broad outcomes (Jones et al., 2016; Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2003; Spruit et al., 2016; Strachan et al., 2016; Vest Ettekal et al., 2016; Wright et al., 2016).



***Figure 1: Three broad outcomes for youth participating in sport and physical activity***

While many acknowledge the value of positive outcomes through sport (Strachan et al., 2016) it is essential to ensure sports programmes are intentionally and purposefully designed to foster and develop such outcomes (Coakley, 2011; Jones et al., 2016; Kay, 2009; Petitpas et al., 2005). Sport is a useful and purposeful foundation for PYD because it has the potential to specifically address multiple aspects of well-being for youth (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2013; Danish, Forneris, Hodge, & Heke, 2004; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). Researchers have investigated the potential benefits related to youth participation in sport for decades (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2013; Anderson-Butcher, Riley, Amorose, Iachini, & Wade-Mdivanian, 2014; Neely & Holt, 2014; Turnnidge et al., 2014; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). Anderson-Butcher et al. (2013) characterise sport-based youth development programmes as being “...designed to promote both social and athletic competences as well as broader life skill development in youth today” (p. 64).

There is a popular belief that participation in sport naturally and inevitably contributes to PYD (Bean & Forneris, 2016; Bean et al., 2014; Coakley, 2011; Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012). This can be attributed to the sheer richness of positive opportunities available to those who partake in it (Coakley, 2011). The values and social behaviours associated with sport and the opportunities sport promotes, actively encourage positive outcomes for both individuals and the wider community (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2014; Gould & Carson, 2008; Whitley, Forneris, & Barker, 2013). Sport settings provide a rich and prosperous social context because they encompass multiple interactions, emotions and can foster positive social opportunities for conflict resolution. These include cooperation, team building, goal setting, leadership and life skills (Holt & Neely, 2011; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013; Vest Ettekal et al., 2016). There is also increasing evidence that participation in sports provide youth with positive morals, affirming skills and positive social relationships (Coakley, 2011; Holt et al., 2011; Holt & Neely, 2011; Skinner, Zakus, & Cowell, 2008).

Sports programmes are practical platforms to deliver social interventions, particularly in a PYD context (Neely & Holt, 2014; Terry et al., 2014). Sports-based PYD programmes are based on the premise that there is considerable overlap between the skills required to improve at sport and to be successful in life (Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Terry et al., 2014). Sport promotes PYD through enhancement of life skills that assist young people to face complex, physical, behavioural and cognitive challenges (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2013; Bean & Forneris, 2016; Bean et al., 2014; Terry et al., 2014). Community-based sports programmes support youths' development of social skills, self-control, a sense of belonging, teamwork and social responsibility (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2013; Coakley, 2011; Neely & Holt, 2014; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016). Many community-based sports programmes seek to enhance communities (Skinner et al., 2008).

### **2.3.1 “Nothing special about sport” (Turnnidge et al., 2014, p. 204).**

Although it is increasingly acknowledged that sport can nurture positive development (Jones et al., 2016; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Riciputi et al., 2016; Turnnidge et al., 2014; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013), many researchers argue that there is nothing special about sport that automatically results in positive developmental outcomes (Neely & Holt, 2014; Turnnidge et al., 2014). There is a clear argument that both the structure and the design of the programme must be oriented towards the desired positive developmental outcomes (Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Riciputi et al., 2016; Turnnidge et al., 2014; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). More specifically PYD advocates claim that structured sports activity and learning must take place in a safe, empowering environment that inspires development and supportive relationships among others (Rauscher & Cooky, 2016). Sport is increasingly utilised as a mechanism to implement change, by a range of non-sport organisations and service providers. These organisations include youth work organisations, and a multitude of community and

welfare services and agencies (Haudenhuyse, Theeboom, & Nols, 2013; Spruit et al., 2016). This reinforces the idea that the PYD approach is malleable in the various contexts it is applied to (Armour & Sandford, 2013).

## **2.4 Theoretical approaches to sport and Positive Youth Development**

The lack of relevant research has hindered recent attempts to create sport-specific PYD models (Holt et al., 2017). However the theoretical approaches to PYD that do exist have made contributions to sports-based PYD literature (Gould & Carson, 2008; Holt et al., 2017; Petitpas et al., 2005). For example, a number of PYD measurement studies have emerged from the developmental psychology literature (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2013, 2014; Holt et al., 2017; Lerner, Bowers, Geldhof, Gestsdottir, & Desouza, 2012; Lerner, Lerner, & Bowers, 2015; Lerner, Lerner, Urban, & Zaff, 2015). This section explores two non-sport related theories to have emerged from the psychology literature.

### **2.4.1 Relational development systems (RDS).**

The majority of the theoretical concepts that underpin PYD build upon the concepts of relational developmental systems (RDS) (Holt et al., 2017; Lerner, Lerner, Urban, et al., 2015; Overton, 2015). In the PYD context, RDS concepts incorporate the reciprocally beneficial relations between developing youth and their environment (Agans et al., 2016; Holt, 2008, 2016; Lerner, Lerner, & Bowers, 2015; Lerner, Lerner, Urban, et al., 2015; Overton, 2015). Hence, RDS principles are based on mutually influential relations between individuals and contexts (Lerner, Lerner, & Bowers, 2015; Lerner, Lerner, Urban, et al., 2015). A noteworthy concept is relative plasticity, which is defined as an individual's ability for systematic change throughout a lifetime (Agans et al., 2016; Lerner, Lerner, & Bowers, 2015; Vest Ettekal et al., 2016). More precisely, relative plasticity adds weight to a proactive search for the traits of youth and their

environment that should be reflected in the design of the PYD programmes (Holt et al., 2011). The capacity for change lies in relationships and interactions that exist among the multiple levels or context that span across individual psychological levels, social relationships with peers and family, and sociocultural levels (Holt et al., 2011). When PYD is rooted in RDS philosophies, it accentuates the potential for mutually effective interactions between individuals and context, resulting in mutually beneficial and hence adaptive relations (Holt et al., 2011; Lerner, Lerner, & Bowers, 2015; Lerner, Lerner, Urban, et al., 2015; Vast Ettekal et al., 2016).

In addition, RDS meta-theory suggests that plasticity is a fundamental strength for human development (Holt et al., 2011; Lerner, Lerner, & Bowers, 2015; Lerner, Lerner, Urban, et al., 2015; Vast Ettekal et al., 2016). Plasticity describes the ability for universal change for both the phenomenon and the relational developmental system, whilst also acknowledging that sequential events in the life or lives of an individual or a group, may similarly limit change (Holt et al., 2011; Lerner, Lerner, & Bowers, 2015; Lerner, Lerner, Urban, et al., 2015; Vast Ettekal et al., 2016). In other words, the system that promotes change can also have the opposite effect of constraining it (Vest Ettekal et al., 2016). When focusing on relative plasticity as a strength, it provides a solid foundation for change, for improving individual's lives and fostering positive developments (Vest Ettekal et al., 2016). PYD researchers using the RDS approach should consider how interactions between the individual and context benefit a particular person/group, at a specific time and place (Vest Ettekal et al., 2016). Through investigations of such complex issues, researchers can not only describe, but also explain development (Vest Ettekal et al., 2016).

#### **2.4.2 Five C's model.**

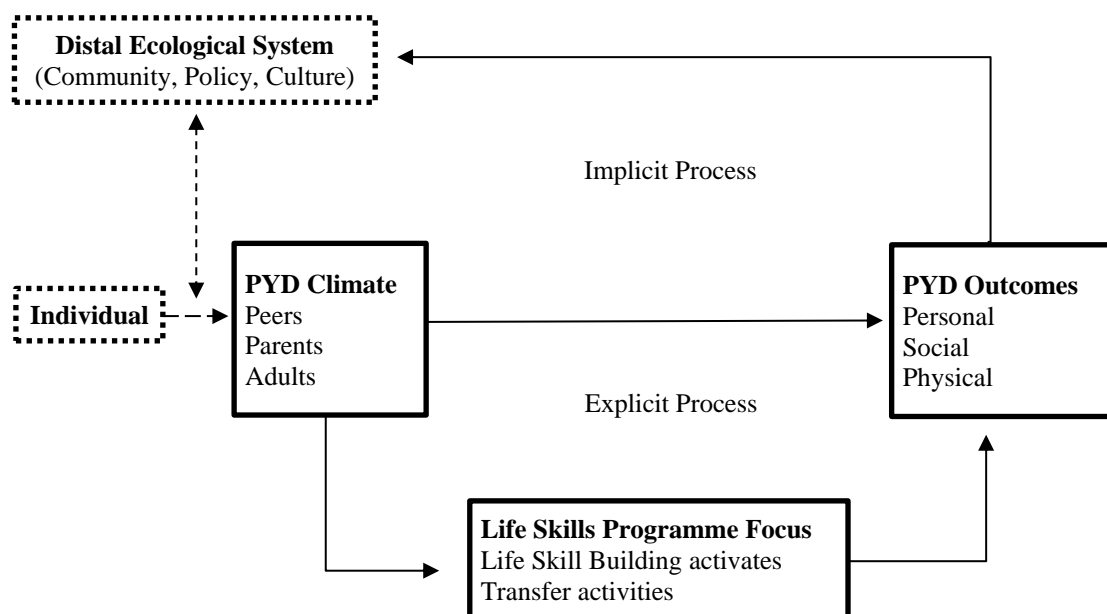
The PYD perspective and RDS meta-theory provide the foundation for the Five C's model (Lerner, Lerner, Urban, et al., 2015; Vest Ettekal et al., 2016). The Five C's are competence, confidence, character, connection and caring (Lerner, Lerner, Urban, et al., 2015; Vest Ettekal et al., 2016). The "Five C's" model suggests that youth have the capacity to systemically change throughout the course of their life (Lerner et al., 2012) and identifies that, when youth develop these five attributes, a 'sixth C', contribution, will emerge (Vest Ettekal et al., 2016). What's more, the literature suggests that there are three key components that youth programmes need to foster in the Five C's model (Agans et al., 2016; Lerner et al., 2012). These include opportunities to build supportive relationships with adults, engage in leadership and practice life skills (Agans et al., 2016; Lerner et al., 2012).

There are different sport-related studies that have produced and utilised different models that contribute toward interpretations of the RDS based positions of PYD (Vest Ettekal et al., 2016). These have concentrated on either more or fewer Cs, with other RDS based models of PYD focused on a number of PYD-activating attributes (Vest Ettekal et al., 2016). Thus, the Five Cs model is not the only, or in any way the dominant RDS based model (Overton, 2015; Vest Ettekal et al., 2016). Nonetheless it does demonstrate the ways in which a relational strength-based approach to positive development may be effectively and pragmatically studied through the use of contemporary models of the relational developmental process (Vest Ettekal et al., 2016).

## **2.5 A model of PYD through sport**

Sport is an important context to promote growth and development of positive attributes in youth (Armour & Sandford, 2013; Lerner et al., 2012; Lerner, Lerner, Urban, et al., 2015; Masten, 2014; Turnnidge et al., 2014; Ward & Parker, 2013; Zaff, Donlan, Pufall Jones, & Lin, 2015). Holt et al. (2017) developed a meta-synthesis model of sport-based

PYD as a practical approach to not only unpack and explain the relationships that exist at the programme level of sport, but also highlight the application and delivery of a sports-based programme. The concept of specificity is noteworthy because it concentrates the model on a particular ‘moment of analysis’, allowing for explicit application (Holt et al., 2017; Overton, 2015). The sport-based PYD model (Figure 2.) integrates theory from the wider PYD literature, most of which emphasises that the social-ecological systems affect behaviour (Anderson, 2017; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Holt et al., 2017; M. I. Jones, Dunn, Holt, Sullivan, & Bloom, 2011; Vierimaa, Erickson, Côté, & Gilbert, 2012). The model also exhibits reasonable similarities to previous sport-specific models identified in literature (Agans et al., 2016; Anderson, 2017; Gould & Carson, 2008; Lerner et al., 2012; Overton, 2015; Riciputi et al., 2016). Therefore, this model provides a practical tool to accurately structure sport-based PYD programmes purposefully; more specifically the type of delivery, for example an implicit or explicit focus to PYD (Holt et al., 2017).



**Figure 2: Model of PYD through Sport** (Holt et al., 2017).

The model shown in Figure 2 is bound within the context of distal ecological systems (Holt et al., 2017). Sports programmes and their participants are seen as a microsystem, and exchanges in the microsystem can be affected and manipulated by aspects of the larger macrosystem (Anderson, 2017; Holt et al., 2017). It is therefore important to consider socio-demographic aspects as well as individual variables that can influence the ways in which individuals foster positive developmental outcomes through their involvement in sport-based programmes (Holt et al., 2017).

The PYD climate is considered to be the relationship youth have with adults, which represents the contextual aspect of the PYD programme (Holt et al., 2017). More specifically, it is represented by the nature of the relationship and the supportive contribution by parents (and guardians), coaches and leaders as well as positive peer interactions (Holt et al., 2017). According to Holt et al (2017), interactions between peers, parents (and guardians) and adults, can facilitate and foster PYD. For PYD to occur, however, it is important to have positive adult and peer relationships. Figure 2 proposes that youth who actively participate in sports-based PYD programmes will become positive, thriving and contributing members of the community.

## **2.6 Indigenous models – reflections and contributions**

There has been a clear paradigm shift in the world as adults and society view youth as resources to be developed and engaged with to promote pro-social behaviours (Jackson, 2014). Along with this, contemporary youth development theorists and researchers are appreciating native philosophies of child and youth socialization (Gilgun, 2002). Native philosophies to youth development have a close correlation to theories and research of

the modern strengths-based PYD approach (Jackson, 2014). The Circle of Courage and Te Whare Tapa Wha, for example, both embody the essential indications for youth to be developing positively (Brendtro, L, Brokenleg, & Bockern, S, 2005).

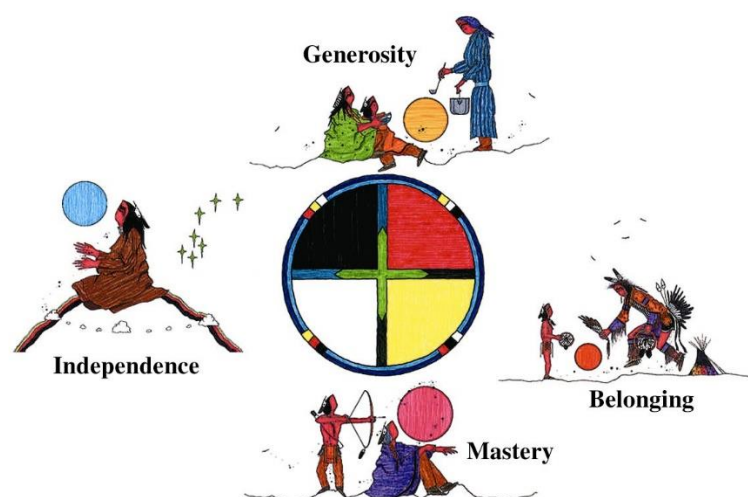
The Circle of Courage and Te Whare Tapa Wha are both deeply rooted in the culture of indigenous peoples who profoundly respect a holistic approach to total health and well-being (Brendtro, et al., 2005; Broughton, J, Lawrence, H, & Jamieson, 2016). Both models draw on wisdom from indigenous cultures as well as sharing a strengths-based approach to individual development (Rauland & Adams, 2015). As ecological models, the Circle of Courage and Te Whare Tapa Wha both recognise that youth live within a multifaceted environment - themselves, their family, their peers, school and the community. All of these factors impact how youth grow, develop and consequently contribute to society (Gilgun, 2002). The Circle of Courage and Te Whare Tapa Wha integrate research from native cultures. Both models provide a holistic view to youth development and total well-being that provide an excellent foundation for application of these models across cultural contexts and settings (Brendtro, et al., 2005).

### **2.6.1 The Circle of Courage.**

The Circle of Courage assimilates Native American philosophies of child socialisation and development and reflects modern strength-based approaches to the holistic development of children (Bruner, M, Hillier, Baillie, C, & Lavallee, L, 2015; Gilgun, 2002). The Circle of Courage has four interdependent elements: belonging, mastery, independence and generosity (Jackson, 2014). Belonging can be nurtured in various ways including experiencing supportive, positive relationships and a sense of connection to family, friends and the community (Brendtro, et al., 2005; Brendtro, L, Mitchell, M, & Jackson, W, 2014; Gilgun, 2002; Jackson, 2014). The Circle of Courage views relationships and connections as central to youth development. Creating

opportunities to establish trusting connections augurs well for a strong sense of belonging (Brendtro, Mitchell, et al., 2014). Mastery is being able to successfully gain knowledge and do something well, while feeling a sense of pride in doing so (Gilgun, 2002). Mastery reflects mental, emotional, physical and spiritual competency. Independence incorporates both freedom of thinking and action (Brendtro, Mitchell, et al., 2014).

According to Gilgun (2002), individuals in control of their own life can take charge of their emotions and make good decisions that consider the effects of their behaviour and actions towards others. The Circle of Courage places an importance on strengthening self-discipline and the ability to make responsible decisions (Brendtro, L, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 2014). Generosity is giving to others. People can give time, kindness, gratitude, service and material goods (Gilgun, 2002). It is the art of balancing individual interest with the interest of others, often involving sacrifice, teaching that a generous person who understands the art of giving is likely to have a set of well-developed intrinsic positive values (Brendtro, Brokenleg, et al., 2014; Brendtro, Mitchell, et al., 2014; Gilgun, 2002).



**Figure 3: The Circle of Courage** (Hatter & Vanbockern, 2005).

### **2.6.2 Te Whare Tapa Wha.**

A model closely correlated and interconnected with the Circle of Courage is a Maori model, Te Whare Tapa Wha. Hauora refers to the four cornerstones of well-being, taha tinana (physical), taha hinengaro (mental and emotions), taha whanau (social) and taha wairua (spiritual) (Little & Johansen, 2013). Each cornerstone signifies the fundamental beliefs of life interpreted as the four walls of a whare (house), with each wall providing strength and balance (Rochford, 2004). The wharenui (meeting house) is used to demonstrate the cornerstones of well-being. The foundation of the model lies with premise that each of the walls of the wharenui must be robust and equally balanced to maintain its structure (Little & Johansen, 2013), emphasising that each cornerstone is equally important to an individuals' growth, development and achieving a well-balanced state of hauora. This model has been used as a methodology in a number of areas across wellness in life and education in New Zealand (Little & Johansen, 2013; O'Hagan, Reynolds, & Smith, 2012; Owen, Hart, & Trimmer, 2016; Rix & Bernay, 2014; Rochford, 2004).

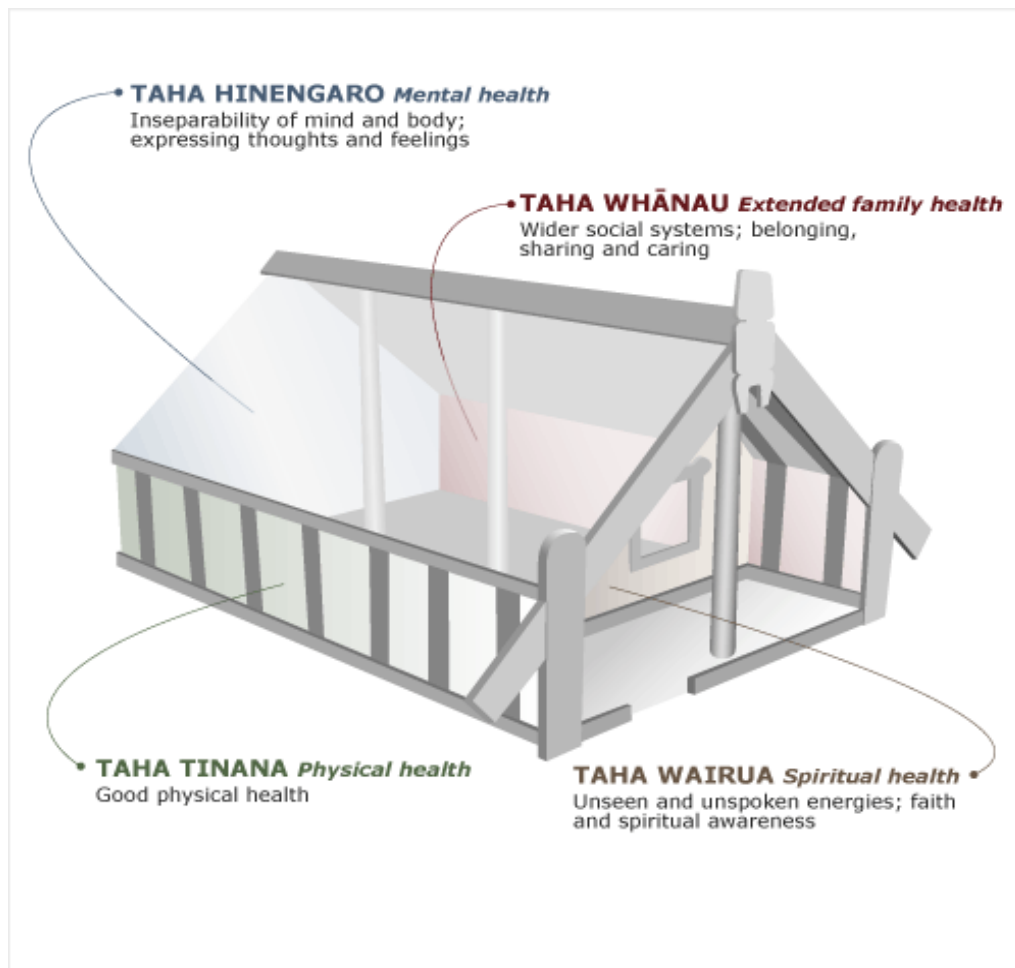
#### ***2.6.2.1 Hauora - the four cornerstones of well-being.***

Taha Tinana is physical health, growth and development as it relates to the body, encompassing everything that is important to an individual's physically health and well-being (Little & Johansen, 2013; Rix & Bernay, 2014). Taha Hinengaro is psychological health, incorporating mental and emotional well-being involving how individuals think, feel and behave. It is the notion that the mind and the body are joined, recognising that an individual's mind, opinions and feelings cannot be separated from the body and soul (Little & Johansen, 2013). It is acknowledging the mind and body and having the ability to express thoughts, feelings and emotions in a constructive and positive manner (Rix &

Bernay, 2014). Taha Whanau is family, which in a Maori context underpins Maori culture.

Te Whare Tapa Wha expands on whanau by embracing all relationships with others; specifically the connections you have with those around you, your family, peers and other adults within the community (Little & Johansen, 2013). It has also been used to describe a group of people who share a common belief and interest that unites them together, highlighting that a whanau are a collective group in multiple environments operating as one, shaping and influencing the behaviour and attitudes of the individuals within them (Little & Johansen, 2013). It is the wider social system and the sense of belonging, sharing and caring that occurs within that (Rix & Bernay, 2014).

Finally, Taha Wairua is spirituality. Wairua (spirituality) relates to individuals' identity as Maori and the important links this has to the natural environment; the land, lakes, mountains, oceans and rivers. These are of significance to one's identity; it is important to know who you are and where you are from as it can help guide you in the future (Little & Johansen, 2013). More generally, it is the values and beliefs that guide and determine the way individuals live their life, their search for meaning and purpose, identity and self-awareness (Bernay, Graham, Devcich, Rix, & Christine, 2016).



*Figure 4: Te Whare Tapa Wha* (Rix & Bernay, 2014).

## 2.7 Benefits of sport-based Positive Youth Development programmes

Many sports-based PYD programmes have implemented PYD frameworks that have proven to be increasingly popular and effective in achieving their desired outcomes (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2013; Bean & Forneris, 2016; Bean et al., 2014; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012; Turnnidge et al., 2014). These programmes typically focus on developing and enhancing personal and social assets rather than concentrating on decreasing deficits and diminishing problem behaviours (Lerner et al., 2005; Lerner, Lerner, & Bowers, 2015; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013).

PYD frameworks emphasise that positive development in sport is the product of constant interactions between the person and the environment, highlighting the importance of the relationship between individuals and contextual factors (Turnnidge et al., 2014). The contextual factors can affect the quality of youths' experience, which may also impact on the ability for youth to make positive developmental gains (Turnnidge et al., 2014). The existing literature suggests that programmes with an emphasis on social, emotional, behavioural, cognitive and moral capabilities, building self-efficacy and fostering positive relationships will provide a PYD-supportive environment (Holt & Neely, 2011). Furthermore, Lerner and colleagues (2005) suggest that sports-based PYD programmes are expected to encourage the 5 C's when there is the opportunity for the continual building of positive adult-youth relationships, the opportunity for skill development and leadership opportunities (Holt & Neely, 2011).

The utilisation of PYD frameworks in a sports setting can produce a constructive environment to develop both physical and psychosocial skills (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2013; Bean et al., 2014; Gould & Carson, 2008). When sports-based PYD programmes are intentionally designed they can strategically focus on social, cognitive, academic, emotional and physical proficiencies in addition to the development of a range of life skills (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2013; Bean et al., 2014; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Ullrich-French, McDonough, & Smith, 2012; Wright et al., 2016). However, after years of research it is now widely acknowledged that to achieve positive developmental outcomes from sports initiatives, they must be intentionally and specifically designed and managed (Jones et al., 2016).

Many sports-based programmes are operating within a broader environment than just a sporting context (Jones et al., 2016). It is then important that the various social elements within the surrounding environment that these programmes work in are carefully

considered (Coalter, 2010; Jones et al., 2016). To uncover the significance of these complex relationships, academics and practitioners have requested more research into the process of designing sports-based PYD programmes (Coalter, 2010; Jones et al., 2016; Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). This suggests that purposeful programme design and structure are important to ensure an appropriate environment for positive developmental learning experiences for youth (Rauscher & Cooky, 2016).

### **2.7.1 ‘Traditional’ vs ‘other’ sports programmes.**

Literature differentiates between ‘traditional’ sport practices, which assumes sport fundamentally contributes to positive development, and other sports programmes that utilise sport as the vehicle to undertake and achieve positive developmental outcomes (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2013; Coalter, 2007, 2010; Johnson et al., 2016; Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012; Turnnidge et al., 2014). Both of these types, ‘sport plus’ or ‘plus sport’, consider sport as necessary but not sufficient for the attainment of PYD outcomes (Jones et al., 2016). In the application of these approaches, sports programmes are either purposefully combined with additional activities targeted at particular outcomes (i.e. sport plus), or utilised sport as the ‘hook’ to engage youth with programmes primarily focused on education and/or health objectives (i.e. plus sport) (Coalter, 2007; Jones et al., 2016).

The success of sports-based PYD programmes is reflected in the specific programme design and can be mostly attributed to the strength of its non-sport components (Jones et al., 2016).

Researchers have advocated for two definite approaches for sport programme design to facilitate positive youth developmental outcomes (Turnnidge et al., 2014). The first relies heavily on programme leaders to build and foster an environment that allows the relevant skills and attributes to be taught explicitly (Johnson et al., 2016; Turnnidge et al., 2014; Ward & Parker, 2013). The second approach focuses purely on developing

sport-specific outcomes through the programme. Any transferable skills that result from the programme are non-intentionally structured (Turnnidge et al., 2014). However, literature suggests that both programme design approaches can achieve both sport-specific and personal development outcomes for youth (Turnnidge et al., 2014). Programme leaders can facilitate the transfer of skills through either an explicit or implicit programme design (Bean & Forneris, 2016; Johnson et al., 2016; Turnnidge et al., 2014).

### **2.7.2 Developing skills and capabilities.**

Sport can foster various qualities and competencies in young people (Camiré, Trudel, & Forneris, 2014; Forneris, Camiré, & Trudel, 2012; Gould & Carson, 2008).

Transferability of key aptitudes and abilities can result from a sporting context to other aspects of a person's life (Rauscher & Cooky, 2016). The developmental benefits of youth participating in sport are reliant on social and environmental factors, of which peers and particularly those in a position of influence such as coaches and parents, play a key role (Holt & Neely, 2011; Neely & Holt, 2014). Developing and strengthening both capabilities and developmental skills can nurture youth to become healthier and more engaged members of society, who are less likely to participate in undesirable behaviours (Rauscher & Cooky, 2016). Fostering personal skills, especially cognitive, social, emotional and intellectual abilities, can also ensure youth mature into successfully functioning members of the community (Bean & Forneris, 2016; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016).

PYD's theoretical foundations imply that social relationships, sociocultural influences as well as personal characteristics shape development (Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). More explicitly, development occurs because of mutual exchanges between individuals and their environment (Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013), such as

participants within a sports-based PYD programme and the relationships they have with the leaders of the programme and their peers.

Interpersonal relationships, specifically individual and contextual interactions, play a crucial role in PYD. These relationships strive for positive outcomes for youth by nurturing motivation, achievement, development and general well-being outcomes (Bean & Forneris, 2016; Bean et al., 2014; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). Linking positive outcomes highlights the need for consistent, regular adult leaders who foster a supportive and caring environment to enable the building of positive relationships with youth (Gould & Carson, 2008; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). Literature has found that these influences can affect one's perceived level of competence, abilities and self-efficacy (Jones et al., 2016; Neely & Holt, 2014). Intentionally or not, these key influences in young people's lives impact on both their personal and social development (Camiré, 2014; Camiré et al., 2014; Neely & Holt, 2014). This can be both positive and negative, emphasising the necessity for meaningful peer interactions, the need for supportive parental and adult contributions, and a mastery-orientated motivational environment for youth to engage in (Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Weiss, 2008; Weiss, Kipp, & Bolter, 2012).

The literature suggests that to successfully foster development of youth in a sporting context, key people must be both competent and knowledgeable (Camiré et al., 2014; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016). Riley and Anderson-Butcher (2012), for example, identify similarities and key themes across research involving parents, suggesting that their perceptions of sports-based PYD programmes are that they provide lessons for both sport and life. Parents identified positive outcomes at an individual level to be the most significant benefit from youth participation in such programmes (Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012). Complementing this is the perceived notion by parents that there are

benefits at a wider community level, when youth are involved in proactive, pro-social activities (Neely & Holt, 2014; Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012). The research suggests that not only do the youth gain benefits but also the wider community, and that this relationship is interconnected and influenced by the positive outcomes of youth who actively participate in PYD initiatives (Neely & Holt, 2014).

## **2.8 Criticisms of sport-based Positive Youth Development programmes**

The existing literature indicates that youth sport programmes must have clearly defined strategies to facilitate positive development outcomes and enhance the generalisability of the sport skills and attributes to other areas of life (Turnnidge et al., 2014; Vest Ettekal et al., 2016). More often than not, however, young people are viewed as problems that need solutions (Holt, 2008, 2016; Ward & Parker, 2013). There are the perennial concerns about the future of young people, particularly with an increase in adolescent ‘problem’ behaviour and societal concerns (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Martinek & Ruiz Pérez, 2005). Over the past two decades the majority of researchers have concentrated on a ‘deficit reduction’ approach to youth behavioural issues (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Jones et al., 2016; Martinek & Ruiz Pérez, 2005; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016). This puts societal problems as the focal point of interventions attempting to decrease or eliminate such problems (Jones et al., 2016). This approach has an average rate of success and can be extremely costly (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Jones et al., 2016).

PYD appreciates youth in terms of their potential for healthy development (Bean & Forneris, 2016; Bean et al., 2014; Turnnidge et al., 2014). Many PYD studies have assumed that youth involvement in a suitable sports-based environment, in conjunction with building supportive relationships, will develop capabilities and attributes that can be transferred and applied in non-sport settings (Bean & Forneris, 2016; Bean et al.,

2014; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Turnnidge et al., 2014). While some researchers suggest that sport is a source of transferable skills (Bean & Forneris, 2016; Bean et al., 2014; Danish et al., 2004; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Turnnidge et al., 2014), others warn that there is nothing ‘special’ about sport that automatically results in PYD outcomes (Turnnidge et al., 2014). The impact of sport participation, positive or negative, is dependent on the multifaceted interaction between environmental and social factors (Turnnidge et al., 2014).

To date, existing PYD programmes have been criticised for unduly focusing on individual outcomes and neglecting critical social components that affect youth development (Coakley, 2011; Jones et al., 2016). This is especially true in a sport context with research predominantly focusing on individual skills and abilities influenced through sport participation (Coakley, 2011; Jones et al., 2016; Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012). There remains a lack of knowledge however regarding the characteristics of the programmes that may influence personal development (Coakley, 2011; Jones et al., 2016; Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012). The literature has also suggested that youth sport is just one component of a larger, more complex ecological system (Holt et al., 2017), with some scholars questioning the need for a definition of PYD through sport as a singular construct (Holt et al., 2017).

Sport-based PYD programmes are purposefully designed to develop physical, academic, emotional and social resources (Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). While differing in practical application and theoretical underpinnings (Ward & Parker, 2013), literature has identified three common features that have been repeatedly critiqued in PYD programmes; the programme goals, the programme activities and the programme atmosphere (refer to Table 1) (Bean & Forneris, 2016; Ward & Parker, 2013). These three features are interrelated and play a role in influencing the overall PYD outcomes

of a programme (Ward & Parker, 2013). Literature has documented differing PYD outcomes across programmes, which could possibly be attributed to these three features (Bean & Forneris, 2016).

**Table 1: Summary of three common features critiqued in PYD programmes** (Bean & Forneris, 2016; Ward & Parker, 2013)

Features	Summary
<b>Programme goals</b>	The programme purpose, the specific PYD outcomes the programme is trying to achieve.
<b>Programme activities</b>	The particular activities the programme implements to achieve its programme goals.
<b>Programme atmosphere</b>	The environment the PYD programme operates within, including how the people involved interact with each other and their surroundings.

While there is growing evidence that sport is a fertile context for nurturing PYD outcomes, there is a lack of consensus about the actual positive transferability of these outcomes (Coakley, 2011; Danish et al., 2004; Jones et al., 2016; Turnnidge et al., 2014). This lack of theoretical clarity makes it problematic to specifically attribute developmental change to sport participation (Coakley, 2011; Jones et al., 2016), and offers inadequate understanding into the environment, procedures and contexts that would be likely to generate change (Jones et al., 2016). This raises concerns around the considerable expectation people place on sport and its ability to ‘solve’ societal problems (Spaaij, 2009; Spruit et al., 2016). Although sports presumably positive

contributions to a number of desired societal outcomes, for example sport for social mobility of disadvantaged youth, are often acknowledged, evidence for such outcomes is limited (Spaaij, 2009).

## **2.9 Low socio-economic status, at-risk youth and sports-based PYD**

PYD programmes are a tool for optimising developmental outcomes for at-risk youth (Sanders, Munford, Thimasarn-Anwar, Liebenberg, & Ungar, 2015; Whitley et al., 2013). Over the past decade, sport and physical activity participation has slowly declined (Whitley et al., 2013). Studies have identified that children from low-income households make up the biggest proportion in these declining numbers (Holt et al., 2011). The cost of sports programmes, club fees, uniforms, travel and other related costs can be prohibiting factors influencing low youth participation in low socio-economic neighbourhoods (Holt et al., 2011; Riciputi et al., 2016; Spaaij, 2009; Spruit et al., 2016; Terry et al., 2014; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013).

There are academic, health, social and civic inequalities within all communities (Haudenhuyse et al., 2012; Holt et al., 2011; Riciputi et al., 2016; Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012; Spruit et al., 2016). Historically, these inequalities have disproportionately affected low socio-economic areas and, more specifically, low-income households (Zaff et al., 2015). Policy makers, politicians and practitioners have all looked at extensive community initiatives in a variety of areas to close the disparity (Zaff et al., 2015). A significant focus by these community initiatives is youth participation relating to ‘at-risk’ youth behaviour in low socio-economic communities (Holt et al., 2011; Holt & Neely, 2011).

An individual’s social environment, geographical conditions, education and the regional economy all shape their personal development, aspirations and possibilities for thriving

(Spaaij, 2009; Spruit et al., 2016; Terry et al., 2014). Socio-economic factors play a crucial role in the physical, psychological and social development of young people (World Health Organisation, 2006; World Health Organization, 2014). More specifically, youth from low socio-economic areas usually have limited access to services and facilities and are more likely to be considered at-risk (Whitley et al., 2013). Low socio-economic youth have a higher probability of experiencing a number of unhealthy developmental outcomes and being considered 'at-risk' youth (Sanders et al., 2015; Whitley et al., 2013).

An 'at-risk youth' is vulnerable to not achieving optimal development (Whitley et al., 2013; World Health Organisation, 2006). Youth considered at-risk are at a greater than normal rate enduring individual stress, family and contextual risks, educational disengagement and neighbourhood distress (Sanders et al., 2015). At-risk youth have been classified as children and adolescents (ages 6-18) who are at an increased risk of unhealthy, antisocial and undesirable behaviours due to differing combinations of risky peers, low socio-economic status and lack of access to services and facilities (World Health Organisation, 2006). If the opportunities for prosocial engagements are limited, there is a high probability of exposure to risk, thus highlighting the need for PYD programmes in low socio-economic areas and neighbourhoods considered to be disadvantaged (Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012).

The disadvantages that individuals from low socio-economic areas experience stem from various causes (Riciputi et al., 2016). Youth living in low-income households usually face more challenges throughout their lives, making activities that foster positive developmental changes and outcomes vital (Holt, 2016; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Riciputi et al., 2016). For example, concerns for safety within a community can discourage locals from actively utilising neighbourhood play areas (Holt, 2016; Holt et

al., 2011; Riciputi et al., 2016; Spaaij, 2009; Spruit et al., 2016; Terry et al., 2014; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013; Whitley et al., 2013). Youth from low-income homes are also more likely to experience less cognitive stimulation, less verbal communication and supervision from parents and guardians, and prioritise employment ahead of education (Holt et al., 2011; Riciputi et al., 2016; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). Often older siblings are required to look after younger siblings for practical and/or cultural reasons (Riciputi et al., 2016; Spaaij, 2009; Spruit et al., 2016). This influences the ability for youth to participate in activities and programmes offered, limiting their opportunity to develop into thriving youth (Holt et al., 2011; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Riciputi et al., 2016).

Research indicates that youth from a low-income household are less physically active and in turn more likely to be overweight or obese (Holt et al., 2011; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Riciputi et al., 2016; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). Low rates of school readiness and achievement, an increase in externalising negative behaviours like aggression, difficulties in developing positive social skills and an increased risk of adolescent childbearing have also been attributed to a lack of income (Holt et al., 2011; Riciputi et al., 2016; Spruit et al., 2016; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). When supported by school teachers, coaches and parents however, these low-income households can achieve positive physical activity behaviours and increased motivation levels (Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). This highlights how role models and adults influence youth as they grow (Bowers, Geldhof, Johnson, Lerner, & Lerner, 2014; Masten, 2014; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). Finally, youth from low-income families experience an increased amount of stress (Holt et al., 2011; Riciputi et al., 2016; Spruit et al., 2016; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). Free or low cost activities and programmes that foster PYD may help to limit the effects of such disadvantages through life (Riciputi et al., 2016; Whitley et al., 2013). Many youth from

low-income homes have demonstrated enhanced levels of social responsibility, self-esteem and hope as a result of sports-based PYD programmes (Riciputi et al., 2016; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013).

In sum, a focus on improving provisions for sport for children from low-income families should be viewed as a long-term investment in health (Holt et al., 2011). It may be difficult to quantify, but providing sporting opportunities for children from low-income families is a health promotion strategy. This could contribute to reducing the financial burden on the healthcare system in the long-term and continue to support the positive nurturing and development of youth (Holt et al., 2011; Spaaij, 2009; Spruit et al., 2016; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013).

Community concerns about unstructured time are not new, and apprehensions around unsupervised time leading to negative outcomes for both youth and their local communities are equally well documented (Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012).

Therefore, providing programmes during unstructured time could be especially useful for at-risk youth from disadvantaged backgrounds (Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012; Terry et al., 2014). While it would make sense to assume that youth participating in sport-based PYD programmes in low socio-economic areas would consequently benefit from such programmes, there is limited literature to support such claims.

## **2.10 Moving forward for sport-based PYD and gaps in the literature**

There are numerous studies that examine the benefits of sport-based PYD programme on disadvantaged and ‘at-risk’ youth (Holt, Tink, Mandigo, & Kenneth, 2014; Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012; Spruit et al., 2016; Terry et al., 2014; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). The majority of research focusing on youth in low socio-economic areas uses a deficit perspective (Spaaij, 2009; Spruit et al., 2016). Very few studies focus on youth using a positive approach. There is an opportunity to explore the broader

impact of sports-based PYD programmes. The delivery of sports-based PYD programmes has the potential to impact youth both at an interpersonal and an intrapersonal level (Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012). This also includes the impact this may have on the wider community they live in (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2013; Armour & Sandford, 2013).

Youth living in low socio-economic communities are often associated with being ‘at risk’ and can benefit from participating in extra-curricular activities such as structured sport programmes (Holt et al., 2011; Terry et al., 2014; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). However, some researchers caution that more empirical evidence is needed to make this argument more compelling (Terry et al., 2014). Although some research suggests that participation in sports-based PYD programmes develops participants skills and capabilities, there is little known about the specific mechanisms underpinning the relationship between participant involvement and the PYD outcomes (Gould & Carson, 2008; Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012). Rather than target the multiple stakeholders involved, the majority of the literature has focused solely on the perspective of one specific group (e.g. the participant, the parents, or the coaches) (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2013, 2014; Turnnidge et al., 2014; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013). Finally, the link between sport and PYD is rarely questioned from an ‘outsiders’ perspective, and there are only a few qualitative studies describing youth experiences in sports-based PYD programmes (Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012).

The questions that need to be asked and answered through further investigation include;

1. What are youth participants, parents’, programme leaders and school teachers’ perceptions of the benefits of sports-based PYD programmes?
2. To what degree do such benefits affect the youth participants at an individual, family and wider community level?

3. What mechanisms underpin the relationship between participant involvement and direct outcomes from youth participants, parents', the programme leader's and the youth participant's school teachers views?

## **2.11 Summary**

This literature review has provided an insight into the research and theories that reinforce this study. The substance of RDS theory and PYD concepts lead to the development of the Five C's model. Together, RDS, the Five C's model and the model of PYD through sport provide the theoretical underpinnings of this research. This literature review has given considerations to indigenous models of development, health and well-being to support the context of this study. It also presents both the benefits and criticisms of sports-based PYD programmes.

This research seeks to understand the perceived benefits of sports-based PYD programmes in low socio-economic areas from the perspectives of the youth participants, their parents (guardians), the programme leaders and the youth participant's school teachers. The following chapter will cover the methodology and methods used to undertake this research project.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter explains the research methodology and methods used to investigate the perceived benefits of a sports-based positive youth development programme in a low socio-economic area. This is a qualitative study that applies an interpretive descriptive methodology to access and analyse data derived from in-depth, semi-structured interviews. This chapter begins by describing the interpretive descriptive nature of the qualitative research approach. Information regarding the selection of participants, techniques used during the data collection and analysis as well as the overall design of the research project is then provided. This chapter concludes by identifying the issues and limitations of the study.

#### **3.2 Qualitative research**

Sport provides a rich context for qualitative research (Jones et al., 2016; Jones, Brown, & Holloway, 2012; Sparkes & Smith, 2013). Involvement in sport and physical activity is replete with a variety of personally and socially generated meanings (Jones et al., 2016; Jones, Brown, & Holloway, 2012; Sparkes & Smith, 2013). Through sport participation, valuable interactions occur with individuals in diverse social and cultural situations (Jones et al., 2012). Qualitative researchers in sport and physical activity have a vital role in revealing the impact and effect of such interactions (Jones et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2012). Without this contribution, there will be no clear understanding of how and why sport and physical activity affects individuals' lives (Jones et al., 2016; Jones, Brown, & Holloway, 2012; Sparkes & Smith, 2013).

Qualitative research examines the context of human experience (Doyle, Brady, & Byrne, 2009). Qualitative research is a type of social analysis that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experience and the world they live in (Sparkes & Smith, 2013). It also provides insights into a particular area through exploring and delving into individual's specific experiences and perspectives (Martin, 2011).

Qualitative research seeks to understand the social reality of individuals, groups, and cultures and explore the behaviours, perspectives and experiences of individuals in their daily lives (Jones et al., 2016; Sandelowski, 2000; Sparkes & Smith, 2013).

Sandelowski (2000) suggests that a “qualitative design facilitates a comprehensive summary of an event in the everyday terms of these events” (p.336).

### **3.3 Interpretive description**

Interpretive description explores a particular phenomenon, revealing clear descriptions of experiences from the perspective of the participants and therefore increasing understandings (Smythe, 2012; Thorne et al., 2004). Studies that utilise an interpretive descriptive approach are inductive in nature and synonymous with qualitative approaches to data collection and analysis (Gray, 2014). Interpretive description can be applied to qualitative studies into human experiences for the development of gaining in-depth knowledge of these experiences (Thorne, Kirkman & MacDonald-Emes, 1997). This approach allows for generating grounded knowledge in applied research settings (Holt et al., 2011; Thorne, 2008).

An ontological perspective of multiple realities informs interpretations theoretically with an epistemological view that recognises knowledge as being socially constructed by the individuals who experience the events (Holt et al., 2011). This subjective approach operates on the assumption that the belief of truth is problematic, with very few absolute truths existing with the exception of aspects of the physical world

(Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Rather, there are multiple constructed realities that can only be studied holistically, making reality complex, contextual, constructed, and fundamentally subjective (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The subjective approach emphasises that knowledge cannot exist without the individuals who create it. Consequently, knowledge is subjective, and is dependent on how individuals construct their world (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Interpretive description broadens the qualitative research realm of description and interpretation while still meeting qualitative credibility benchmarks (Hunt, 2009; Thorne et al., 2004). The application of the interpretive description allows for identification of themes and patterns with a subjective perspective, while also acknowledging discrepancies between individuals (Hunt, 2009; Thorne et al., 2004).

When articulating such a generalist method of inquiry such as interpretive description, it is important to acknowledge concerns identified in the literature regarding a lack of epistemological and methodological foundation (Thorne et al, 2004). The philosophical position of interpretive description aligns to a constructivist and interpretive naturalistic orientation (Thorne et al, 2004). Interpretive description recognises the constructed and contextual nature of human experiences but simultaneously allows for the possibility of shared realities (Hunt, 2009; Thorne et al., 2004, 1997). Lincoln and Guba (1985) have explained interpretive description as multiple constructed realities that can only be investigated holistically, making reality multifaceted, contextual, constructed and finally subjective. Thus, the interaction between the researcher and the researched influence one another being inseparable, suggesting that theory emerges or is grounded in the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The basis of interpretive description is a smaller scale qualitative study, investigating a phenomenon for the purpose of acquiring themes and patterns within subjective

perceptions to produce an interpretive description capable of informing understanding (Thorne et al, 2004).

More often than not, this type of study is structured around relatively small samples, and uses data collection methods such as interviews and focus groups to articulate a comprehensive and significant explanation of empirical knowledge (Hunt, 2009; Thorne et al., 2004). Using interpretive description as an approach can foster the exploration of peoples' experiences, views and perspectives on the benefits of sports-based PYD programmes. Interpretive approaches share assumptions about what is considered as truth and how we understand human experiences (Grant & Giddings, 2002).

The emphasis of this study was centred on enhancing and growing an understanding of sports-based PYD programmes rather than testing and development of theory.

Interpretive description advances slightly beyond the traditional qualitative descriptive approaches because it operates on the assumption that researchers are not solely satisfied with description on its own (Thorne et al., 2004). Instead they go further, continuously exploring for greater meaning and explanations that may provide practical implications (Hunt, 2009; Thorne et al., 2004). The inductive nature and characteristics of interpretive description guides the construction of an interpretive rationalisation that is created on the basis of informed questioning. It uses reflective techniques and critical examination, which results in enhancing and informing phenomena (Hunt, 2009; Thorne et al., 2004).

### **3.4 Appreciative inquiry**

The research also included some elements of appreciative inquiry because of its strength-based approach to understanding phenomena. Appreciative inquiry was not applied in its entirety. Rather key aspects of appreciative inquiry added depth to understanding by focusing on the strengths of the programme and its outcomes (Smart

& Mann, 2003). In very broad terms, appreciative inquiry is about the search for the best in people and the relevant world around them (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001). This related directly to the goals and objectives of the sports-based PYD programme used in this study.

Appreciative inquiry methods were included to capture more sensitive data on the relationship between the programme and the perceived outcomes of participants partaking in the programme (Smart & Mann, 2003). Application of appreciate inquiry was carried out in the data collection phase of this study which allowed meaningful stories and experiences to be captured (Smart & Mann, 2003). In particular appreciative inquiry was adopted in the craft of positive questioning asked during the individual interviews triggering positive aspects to be highlighted (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001; Smart & Mann, 2003).

Appreciative inquiry methods are centred around the need for relatedness, understanding and appreciation of one another (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001). Emphasising the importance of relationships ability to thrive when there is an appreciation, people seeing the best in one another (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001; Smart & Mann, 2003). Appreciative inquiry provides and supports talanoa as a research methodology as it is based on the importance of human relationships and connections made with individuals (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001; Vaioleti, 2006).

### **3.5 Talanoa**

The talanoa methodology informed, guided and strengthened the research protocols. Talanoa can be defined as open, informal conversation between individuals where thoughts, feelings, and stories are shared openly (Stewart-Withers, Sewabu, & Richardson, 2017; Vaioleti, 2006). Talanoa is embedded deeply into Pacific culture and is underpinned by the connection of people through story telling (Stewart-Withers et al.,

2017). Vaioleti (2006) considers talanoa as “natural for most Pacific peoples” (p.25). The information shared during talanoa is solely reliant on the underlying relationship and feeling of cultural connectedness between the individuals (Prescott, 2008; Stewart-Withers et al., 2017). Reflecting on epistemology also known as the origin of knowledge, the nature of knowing and the building of knowledge, there are risks in assuming that Western, Eastern and Pacific knowledges have the same origins and construction therefore the same must be applied when collecting, analysing and constructing new knowledge (Vaioleti, 2006). It is important to acknowledge that research methodologies developed in dominant cultures are not always appropriate when investigating and searching for solutions for Pacific peoples, whose knowledge and social construction has a unique epistemology as well as lived realities here in Aotearoa (Vaioleti, 2006).

Talanoa was embraced because all programme participants (and most of their parents) were of Maori and/or Pacific descent. A growing number of both Pacific and non-Pacific researchers have begun to prefer and utilise talanoa as a culturally appropriate methodology (Stewart-Withers et al., 2017).

Traditional interviews can share some talanoa characteristics. However, the crucial difference lies not in the sole purpose of gaining knowledge but in the construction and enhancement of relationships, which is at the core of talanoa (Prescott, 2008). Developing and/or strengthening the relationship can then add depth and quality to the research project (Vaioleti, 2006).

### **3.6 Site selection and access**

The participants selected for this research were from an established sport-based PYD programme managed by Counties Manukau Sport (CMS), a Regional Sports Trust (RST). The CMS programme is part of the nationwide Youth Impact Programme (YIP)

that is funded by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). CMS utilise contacts and relationships with local schools to recruit youth who have an interest in sport but are also under-achieving in areas of literacy and numeracy. YIP has run in two locations in South Auckland for seven years, starting in 2000. This research project utilised the Manurewa-based location for the purpose of investigations for this study.

The CEO of CMS acted as the initial gatekeeper to this research site. In this context, gatekeeper refers to people who control access to a social role, field setting or structure (Jones et al., 2016). In the first instance, the researcher met with the CMS CEO to introduce the research project. This was followed up with email communication and formal written documentation about the research project, including the aims and objective. This lead to introductions to the programme leaders, who in turn facilitated access to programme participants, their parents and school teachers. The parents also acted as gatekeepers in this research, due to consent needed for their children to participate in the study. The programme leaders played a vital role in facilitating access to these particular gatekeepers. Gaining access to key influential individuals within the specific context is crucial. Jones (2015) suggests that being introduced by someone known within the context can enhance greater trust between the research and participant, which has positive consequences for the quality of the data. This was successfully demonstrated by the CEO of CMS through the introduction of the programme leaders of the YIP and again by the programme leaders to the youth participants and their parents.

### **3.7 Participants and recruitment**

The use of multiple stakeholders complements and adds depth to the data collected (Kahlke, 2014; Thorne et al., 1997). Participants in the study have been classified into four groups: 1) youth participants, 2) the parents and or guardians of the youth

participants, 3) programme leaders and 4) school teachers. Numerous qualitative researchers argue that individuals who have lived and experienced a particular phenomenon are the best source of expert knowledge about the phenomena of interest (Strasser, 1991; Thorne et al., 1997). The decision to seek the perspective of four stakeholder groups was heavily influenced by sport-based PYD literature (refer to Section 2.10). Whilst there are numerous studies that investigate the various benefits of sports-based PYD programmes, there are only a few that investigate the perceptions of the youth participants, parents (or guardians), programme leader and school teachers within a single study (refer to section 2.10).

Youth participants were recruited on the basis that they had actively participated in the programme for at least four of the five days of the school holiday programme, were aged between 10 and 17 years of age and voluntarily chose to be a part of the study. Parents of the programme participants were recruited simultaneously with the youth participants. The researcher was given an opportunity to speak to all youth participants and their parents (or guardians), which provided the opportunity for recruitment. The programme leaders were recruited as a direct result of being granted access by the CEO of CMS. The researcher was provided with the contact details of the school teachers to invite them to participate in the study. The recruitment process resulted in semi-structured interviews being conducted with 11 youth participants, ten parents (or guardians), six programme leaders and two school teachers. Participants were interviewed individually with the exception of the youth participants. The youth participants of this study were classified as minors, this meant the researcher was required to gain parental (or guardian) consent as well as giving the parent (or guardian) the option to be present during the youth participants' interview.

### **3.8 Semi-structured interviews**

Interviewing is a method of data collection commonly associated with qualitative research that investigates the why and how of phenomena from the participants' perspective (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008; Jones et al., 2016). A qualitative interview has been described as a "conversation with a purpose" (Sparkes & Smith, 2013 p. 83). The interviews with youth participants, parents (or guardians) as well as the programme leaders allowed the research to gain insights that could not be easily gained by observation alone (Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012).

The research project used a semi-structured interview approach. Semi-structured interviews are the most common source of data in interpretive descriptive studies (Hunt, 2009). This approach utilises a set of predetermined questions as the foundation for the interview. These questions aim to explore the research question more deeply (Jones et al., 2016). The semi-structured approach allowed the researcher to adopt a flexible style during data collection, adapting the order of questions and provided the opportunity for probing further to gain more information with subsidiary questions as conversations flowed (Gray, 2014; Jones et al., 2016). The semi-structured approach adopted during the individual interviews also contributed to comparative data analysis between each interview (Hunt, 2009; Kahlke, 2014). The researcher utilised semi-structured approach, enabling the line of questioning on a range of issues to form as within-interview triangulation and ensuring repeatability (Jones et al., 2016).

The semi-structured approach provided the participants with a degree of flexibility enabling them to express their personal belief, ideas, feelings and experiences (Jones et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2012; Sparkes & Smith, 2013). This encouraged participants to further unpack meanings about their specific experiences (Sparkes & Smith, 2013). The capability to deviate and digress from the schedule of questions allowed the interviewer to explore themes and ideas more deeply as they became known during the semi-

structure interview. This was a direct advantage of choosing this nature of enquiry and is supported by talanoa.

Once the interview schedule was developed, the researcher had the flexibility to review, develop, and refine the interview guide to a certain extent between and during interviews. This was enabled by the semi structured interview approach and supported by the talanoa approach (Jones et al., 2016). This approach had the desired outcome of making the data more meaningful and reflective with regards to the particular phenomenon being examined (Jones et al., 2016; Sparkes & Smith, 2013).

### **3.9 Interview format**

Talanoa played a key role during the interview phase of the research. The researcher realised the importance of developing a relationship with participants before any meaningful data could be gathered from the interviews. Meaningful relationships with participants was established through the researcher partaking deeply in the research experience by being involved in the sports-based PYD programme rather than just standing back and analysing it (Vaiotei, 2006). Talanoa reduced the disconnect between the researcher and participants, providing research participants with a human face they could relate to (Vaiotei, 2006). The open, informal conversation style between people in which their thoughts, opinions, feelings, and stories were shared was utilised during data collection (Vaiotei, 2006). Vaiotei (2006) states “because of the relationship that has been developed, quality will be added to the research” (p.26).

The development of the interview schedule was guided by current literature. Questions were developed from broad overarching statements, then fine turned to a more specific line of questioning (Gill et al., 2008; Jones et al., 2012). The interviews were constructed around the themes and ideas derived from the five C’s model (Agans et al., 2016; Lerner et al., 2012) and relational developmental systems (RDS) (Agans et al.,

2016; Overton, 2015). No specific questions were asked as to whether or not the groups were using or were aware of the five C's model and RDS. The questions asked were open-ended to provide a holistic view of the perceived benefits of sports-based PYD programmes. The interview format was divided into sections, each section had a fundamental topic area (bullet-point), followed by questions and sub-questions which acted as prompts to foster discussions. Table 2 documents the themes and questions.

**Table 2: Interview areas and questions**

Area	Key topic area, questions and sub-questions
Introduction and background	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction</li> <li>2. Brief explanation of the study</li> <li>3. You have been selected for this research because you or your child participate in a sports-based youth programme</li> </ol>
Sports-based youth development programme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Can you tell me about the programme you are involved with?</li> <li>2. What do you do when you come to this programme?</li> <li>3. How did you hear about this programme?</li> <li>4. How long have you been coming to this programme?</li> <li>5. Why did you want to be a part of this programme?</li> </ol>
Programme outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) What are the reasons that make you want to continue to be a part of this programme?</li> <li>b) What other things does the programme encourage people to do here?</li> <li>c) Have you noticed any change in your behaviour from being involved in the programme? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. School</li> <li>b. Home</li> <li>c. Family</li> <li>d. Friends</li> <li>e. Church</li> <li>f. Anything else</li> </ol> </li> <li>d) Have you noticed a change in the types of choices you make? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. School</li> <li>b. Home</li> <li>c. Family</li> <li>d. Friends</li> <li>e. Church</li> <li>f. Anything else</li> </ol> </li> <li>e) Are there any other things that have changed in your life since being a part of this programme?</li> </ol>
Other Suggestions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are there any other benefits both positive and or negative that you can think of resulting from the programme?</li> <li>2. If you could identify one thing that stands out the most for you that has changed as a result of being involved with this programme, what would it be?</li> </ol>
Closing – anything else you want to share?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sum up key points from the discussion</li> <li>2. Explain process of where to from here with summary of results and how the summary will be used.</li> </ol>

The introductory and background sections aimed to set the scene for the interviews, providing background information about the study to the participants and most importantly allowing the participants an opportunity to relate to the researcher. The establishment of a relationship with participants was initiated through the researcher's involvement in the sports-based PYD programme, which allowed participant to become familiar with the researcher. This then allowed the researcher to build on the established relationship in the introductory section with the interviewees - an important cultural aspect for both Maori and Pacific peoples. The sequence of questioning was structured so that general questions were asked at the beginning stages of the interview, leading into more complex and thought-provoking questions later.

In addition to gaining an overview of the programme and its relevant setting, specific questions were asked of participants about their knowledge of the programme. Certain areas of interests were focused on, attempting to unpack and gain a deeper understanding of participants' experiences of the sports-based PYD programme. The third section of the interview delved more deeply into participants' experiences and explored their perceptions of the sports-based PYD programmes. Questions were framed to enable participants to share their thoughts, views, understandings and interpretations of possible outcomes from participating in the sports-based PYD programmes. The final section of the interview gave the interviewees the opportunity to share any other insights, opinions, or reflections they had with regard to the sports-based PYD programmes. This also gave the researcher an opportunity to conclude and summarise the interview.

The above interview schedule was utilised for all four stakeholder groups. Participants were interviewed individually, although nine out of the eleven interviews with youth participants were conducted with the parent (or guardian) present for the duration of the

youth participant interview. The individual interviews were conducted in a location chosen by the participants. This was either the participant's home, the researcher's place of work or at the YIP. This was done in an attempt to ensure that it was most accommodating to participants' and to support them in feeling comfortable in the interview environment. Interviews were audio recorded to allow a complete, precise transcription to occur (verbatim), as well as allowing the researcher to identify the manner and tone in which key ideas and insights may be spoken about by each participant. The researcher also made supplementary notes, to identify key themes and concepts throughout each of the individual interviews. This enabled the researcher to reflect more deeply on what was said. The use of audio-recording allowed the researcher to concentrate on the conversation and the tone and way in which participants said things.

### **3.10 Data analysis, categorisation, and evaluation**

Data analysis is the process of making sense of data, organising heterogeneous comments into patterns, categories and descriptive units and finding the relationships and connections between them (Jones et al., 2012). Qualitative data investigates, explores and interprets the data set collected, starting with the raw data and transforming it during the analysis and reflection processes (Jones et al., 2012). Many interpretive descriptive studies utilise a content analysis approach (Thorne et al., 2004). Jones (2015) suggested that content analysis is an excellent approach to develop an understanding of the content of communications, ideas, themes, and messages in sport research. Content analysis provides a systematic objective process for quantifying phenomena (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The purpose of content analysis is to describe the characteristics of phenomena in a conceptual form by examining and analysing lived experiences (Vaiolati, 2013).

The analysis process of this study was guided by content analysis literature (for example, Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Vaioleti, 2013). The data analysis process followed three key phases (Refer Figure 5).



**Figure 5: Data analysis process.** (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Vaioleti, 2013).

Aspects of constant comparison method from grounded theory were also applied to assist in advancing interpretive thinking through the analysis process (Holt et al., 2011). Constant comparison method initially stems from Glaser and Strauss (1967); their strategy involves incoming data being constantly compared with other data (Jones et al., 2012). In undertaking a constant comparison method, the process was iterative, requiring the researcher to move from one piece of data to the other, looking for similarities and relationships as well as differences (Jones et al., 2012). This constant comparison allowed the research to identify incidences and themes in each data set and subsequently enhance theory development through refinement and relationship exploration (Holt et al., 2011).

The analytic process commenced with the preparation phase, this involved selecting the unit of analysis and making sense of the data (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). Selecting the unit of analysis was the theme or phase the researcher selected to decide what to analyse and in what detail (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The next step was data immersion, making sense of the entire data set (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

Transcription of interviews was the initial phase of the data analysis process following the data collection phase of the research project. The researcher transformed the audio-recorded data from the individual interviews into written text (Jones et al., 2012). The transcription process began with each individual interview being transcribed in its entirety (verbatim). The researcher then read through each transcript to obtain an in-depth understanding of the data set, trying to become immersed in the data (Jones et al., 2012; Sparkes & Smith, 2013).

The next analytic phase applied an inductive content analysis and involved organising the data. This required three steps: 1) open coding, 2) creating categories and 3) abstractions (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). At this point the interaction between data collection and analysis began (Jones et al., 2012; Sparkes & Smith, 2013). Open coding is the process of making notes and headings while reading through the transcripts (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Polite & Beck, 2004; Vaismoradi et al., 2013); this was done until the researcher was fully absorbed in the data, producing as many key words, headings and notes as necessary to describe the entire 'data' set. The key words and notes produced are what Elo and Kyngas (2008) refer to as a coding sheet. Categorising the data allowed for the describing of the phenomena by grouping together data that 'belongs' to a particular grouping (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Categories were then grouped together into overarching key headings.

The grouping step analysed and compared the number of initial categories by disestablishing and clustering those that are similar or dissimilar into wider categories or concepts (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Creating wider categories allowed phenomena to be explained which enhanced knowledge and understanding (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The abstraction process involved the construction of general descriptions of the research topic and was achieved through the creation of categories and sub-categories. Sub-

categories and categories were chosen using relevant content from the grouping step. Sub-categories were formed by clustering similar incidences together to make main categories or concepts.

The third and final step of the analytic process reported the results from the previous two stages. It involved a more interpretive lens, where the researcher reflected on what quantities of data might mean, both individually and in relation to each other (Holt et al., 2011; Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Clear descriptions were formulated from the research through the generation of concepts, these concepts then contributed to a better understanding of the research question (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Literature indicated that it is possible to use theory to advance interpretive analysis (Holt et al., 2011; Thorne, 2008). However, Thorne (2008) recommends that it is imperative to move slowly and carefully before the imposition of a theoretical framework is used to help systematise or guide interpretation. This advice was carefully considered. Given the broad conceptual context underpinning the study, the researcher selectively applied theory to advance the interpretation of the data (Holt et al., 2011). This ensured the data was analysed within an appropriate context.

### **3.11 Evaluation of the data**

The evaluation of the data collected by this study is consistent with the interpretive descriptive research perspective stated at the beginning of the chapter and aligns with interpretive descriptive literature (Holt et al., 2011; Kahlke, 2014; Thorne Sally, Kirkman Sheryl Reimer, 1997). The initial analysis to investigate the programme was conducted on an impartial and non-comparison basis. Evaluating the sports-based PYD programme specifically looked at four participant groups, each was treated as an individual entity with its own unique characteristics associated with it. These were evaluated separately, with comparisons only made afterwards.

Results were presented through content analysis, an excellent approach to develop an understanding of a certain aspect of sport (Jones et al., 2016). What was of interest was the presence, connections and or correlation between the concepts revealed from the data gathered, particularly the subtlety of perceptions of each of the participants, youth, parents (or guardians) and programme leaders and the similarities and differences that they revealed. The results were presented on a theme by theme basis, focusing on the research question (the benefits of sports-based PYD programmes in low socio-economic areas: youth participant, parent (or guardian), programme leader and school teachers perceptions).

### **3.12 Trustworthiness of the data**

Qualitative data analysis is open to considerably more interpretation and debate than quantitative, especially with regard to the validity and reliability of data interpretation (Jones et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2012). Qualitative research has a unique ontological and epistemological stance that must be considered when reflecting on the quality of qualitative research. Guba & Lincoln (1989) acknowledge this and have identified four key aspects for accessing quality that provide a trustworthiness criterion. Dependability, confirmability, credibility, transferability, authenticity and triangulation together comprise trustworthiness, and can be used to judge the quality of qualitative research. Guba & Lincoln (1989), Jones (2015), Jones et al. (2013), and Sparkes and Smith (2014) all recognise this as the gold standard in qualitative work.

The researcher provided a clear and detailed description of the research steps from the beginning to the end of the research project. This allows an outsider to gain a clear understanding of the steps followed, the decision-making process, and the path the researcher followed throughout the study (Jones et al., 2016). The researcher included a full description of the methodology and methods adopted during data collection and the

analysis phase of the research. This evidence produced an audit trail, which allows readers to judge whether the research has dependability (Jones et al., 2016; Sparkes & Smith, 2013). As guided by current literature, the present study ensures consistency and comparability during the data collection and analysis phases. The researcher has demonstrated dependability by ensuring similar things were dealt with in a similar way (Jones et al., 2012).

Confirmability of the study interrelates with aspects of dependability, as confirmability is focused around the idea of inter-subjectivity of the research. Confirmability involves substantiating the data, ensuring analysis and interpretation of the study were embedded in phenomenon and participants were separated from the researcher, making certain that the study is not subjective or biased in any way (Jones et al., 2012). Following the suggested techniques to achieve confirmability, the present study as stated above has clearly described the decision making process of the research in full. The researcher has then made this available for judgment from other readers and peer debriefing (Jones et al., 2016; Sparkes & Smith, 2013).

Credibility relates to how believable the results and interpretation of the research is (Jones et al., 2016). To ensure internal validity of the research, the researcher utilised a process called member checking. Member checking is a process whereby the researcher can discuss their interpretations and conclusion with participants of the study (Jones et al., 2016). This occurred at two phases of the research. Firstly, after data collection participants were given a copy of their individual interview transcripts to review for accuracy and to check whether it was a true account of the interview. The second was to present initial data and interpretations to participants.

The present study exhibited reflexivity through the researchers' ability to fully account and reference the sports-based PYD programmes under investigation, in addition to a

rich description of the environment and distinctive characteristics of the benefits of such sports-based PYD programmes. As literature recommends, a good qualitative analysis clearly signifies the importance of the data collected and ensures it was at the forefront of the analysis (Jones et al., 2016). Reflexivity required the researcher to reflect critically on the position they took within the research, expressing and being mindful of this and how this may or may not have influenced the data collected and analysis of findings (Jones et al., 2016).

Transferability refers to the extent to which the results and interpretations can be transferred to comparable contexts with comparable participants (Jones et al., 2012). This was achieved in the present study through detailed, thick descriptions and a clear audit trail. This allows potential readers to appropriately find and make connections and comparison where possible to other settings and contexts (Jones et al., 2012).

Transferability has also been referred to as external validity (Sparkes & Smith, 2013).

Qualitative research is authentic when its procedures and strategies are appropriate and sound, a variety of alternative explanations have been analysed and the researcher has acted ethically at all times (Jones et al., 2012). Authenticity was apparent in this study as it used appropriate methodologies and methods in order to conduct the research needs. Evidence of this can be observed through the clear audit trail. Demonstrating authenticity in the research also ensured a true account of participants' experiences, and that their ideas were conveyed in the data collection and data analysis phase (Jones et al., 2016). The strategies and procedures utilised in the final analysis enhanced understanding of participants' social phenomena under investigation.

The semi-structured approach allows for the questions to be used for possible interview triangulation. Triangulation of data is a way of cross checking a research project from more than one angle, allowing the application of different perspectives to examine

phenomena (Jones et al., 2012). Data triangulation is the process of examining multiple means of data collection to explore and build a clear picture of the phenomenon under investigation (Jones et al., 2016). Through the application of multiple sources of data, the collection allows continual comparisons to be made prior to development and conceptualisation of theories (Jones et al., 2016). Data triangulation was limited in this study due to time and resourcing. However direct observations from the field were included as a secondary source of analysis.

Participant observation is a method utilised to explore and gain an understanding of a particular group (Jones et al., 2012). It provides a systematic description of experiences, behaviours, and interactions of the particular phenomena under investigation, providing a holistic view of the research setting (Jones et al., 2012). For the purpose of this study, the direct observations occurred as follows in the research project. Complete participation was utilised in the research project, this involved becoming a member of the group and part of the setting under investigation. During the data collection stage, the researcher was invited by the sports-based PYD programme to participate in the programme as a helper, assisting, and supporting with the day-to-day operations of the programme. The focus of the direct observations of the youth participants, their parents (or guardians) and the programme leaders allowed their interactions and behaviours to be examined. Once the observation component of the research project was confirmed there was only one week remaining of the sports-based PYD programme. Observation occurred over a total of four days out of the possible 10 days the programme ran over two weeks. One week in the July school holidays and one week in the October school holidays. The researcher made written documentation of the observations, explaining day-to-day activities as well as making interactions between each of the three stakeholder groups.

### **3.13 Research issues**

The researcher was aware of the issues faced during the process of this research project. Each of these was dealt with in accordance with Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) procedures and guided by best practice.

#### **3.13.1 Access.**

The completion of this study was reliant on the access that was granted to the selected sports-based PYD programme. The initial relationship between the researcher and research participants was established by communications that involved phone calls and emails containing written documentation. Face to face, meetings were arranged to help build a working relationship based on trust and professionalism. The concept of talanoa was built with Counties Manukau Sport, YIP and the researcher. It was stressed the research project was in no way harmful or threatening to the programme or the participants of the programmes. In fact, the inclusion of the study may provide opportunities for reflection and review of the programme. Offering data that supports and increases understanding and knowledge regarding the outcome the programme may have, could provide useful information to participants. This data may in turn assist with potential funding applications and opportunities in the future.

#### **3.13.2 Role of the researcher.**

The role of the researcher was to act as a neutral voice and record all information provided by participants. The sole task of the researcher was to record information presented by participants, however consideration must be given to the possibility that the presence of the researcher may have influenced the information given (Sandelowski, 2000). Participants may have adapted their answers to accommodate the researcher, giving answers they believed the researcher wanted to hear (Holt, 2016). With this in

mind the researcher placed particular importance on ensuring a professional, neutral manner was maintained, and assured confidentiality of all data obtained from participants from the individual interviews.

The researcher's involvement went no further than ensuring the fundamental investigative analysis into the perceptions of youth participants, their parents (or guardians), the programme leaders and the youth participant's school teachers of the potential benefits of sports-based PYD programmes. The research project sought to explore participants' ideas, perspectives, and experiences specifically relating to the sports-based PYD programme. The researcher began with an application to the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC), from whom ethical approval was granted. The researcher acknowledged participants may or may not want to share some information, and the researcher respected these sensitivities. Throughout the data collection phase, participants were informed that they did not have to share anything they did not feel comfortable sharing and could remove themselves from the study at any time prior to the final data collection phase being completed. Participants were also reassured during the data collection phase that there was no wrong answer. This attempted to support participants' well-being and ensured the researcher kept this at the forefront of their mind during the data collection process. This approach also ensured that the information collected was a true and honest account of the phenomena under investigation.

### **3.13.3 Biases.**

There is always potential for bias to exist and affect the research project, particularly during the data collection phase when interviews were conducted (Jones et al., 2016). The research project utilised semi-structured interview methods and it is acknowledged that this can result in a situation where the researcher prompts or guides the

participants' comments, together with the possibility of influencing them through non-verbal reactions (Jones et al., 2016). The semi-structured interview method is determined not only by the researchers' ability to conduct the semi-structured interview, but more specifically their conversation skills (Jones et al., 2012). Bias should promote inquiry without restricting the investigation (Sparkes & Smith, 2013). It is important to recognise that the bias exists and itself is not the problem, but requires the researcher to identify the stance they bring to the research project and foresee how this may or may not influence how they collect, analyse and interpret the data (Jones et al., 2016; Sparkes & Smith, 2013). Such reflexivity and self-awareness allows explicit bias and prevents prejudgments making their way into the findings (Sparkes & Smith, 2013).

In attempting to overcome such bias in the research, the researcher identified and utilised suitable prompts to use to probe deeper during the interviews. The use of predetermined phrases may have helped those participants who struggled to answer a question and or struggled with language, by assisting them with an answer but not influencing the answer they gave. During the interviews, the researcher ensured that the comments given back to participants were neutral and unprejudiced. The importance of ensuring a professional and reassuring environment was maintained during each of the interviews, contributing to authenticity (Jones et al., 2016).

### **3.14 Limitations of research format**

The researcher acknowledges limitations with the research format and participants' knowledge existed.

#### **3.14.1 Research format.**

The research format was limited to a single study of key stakeholder groups of a sport-based PYD programme in a low socio-economic area. Consequently, all findings and

results drawn from the research project were limited to the specific context and environment in which the programme operates. There may be a degree of generalisability and transferability to other sports-based PYD programme (Holt, 2016), but this will largely depend on the environment, socio-economic area, location and format of the other programmes.

#### **3.14.2 Participants' knowledge.**

The interviews conducted were limited to the information the participants possess and the amount of information they were willing to share, consciously or not. An issue that encompasses this was the ability of the participants to understand the questions asked, as well as the amount of knowledge they had relating to the questions asked. The participant interviews relied on three key factors. First, the amount of information the participants remembered about the programme. Second, the amount of information the youth participants shared with parents (or guardians). Third, the amount and type of information the programme leaders were willing to share and lastly what the school teachers were willing to share. Another factor that may have influenced the amount of information shared by the youth participants was if a parent (or guardian) was present during the individual interview. Due to youth participants being minors, it was out of the control of the researcher and solely up to the individual parent (or guardian) if they wanted to be present during the youth participants interview.

#### **3.15 Ethical considerations**

To ensure transparency, the researcher provided the participants with their transcripts to allow the opportunity for edits, additions, and or exclusions of their responses, and or to enable part responses to be changed if they wished to do so (Lichtman, 2013). It was also the responsibility of the researcher to ensure the safety of participants, that their privacy was maintained, and informed consent was given (Lichtman, 2013). The

researcher was guided by AUTECH's guidelines and procedures through the duration of the research project. Written, signed, and informed consent was given by each of the participants to participate in the research. In line with AUTECH procedures, the ethics consent clearly outlined all aspects of the research, explaining exactly how and why the data was being used and the length of time the data would be held for. This ensured privacy, confidentiality and clarity, which are all key components of ethics (Lichtman, 2013).

All research designs, sampling techniques, and methods chosen were carefully considered, including ethical issues associated with the research project (Jones, 2015). The necessity and ethical duty of the researcher to protect participants through the research process has been well documented (Jones et al., 2012). Accordingly, a requirement of this research project was to carefully consider any important ethical issues that may have transpired. Participants were reassured their identity and any identifiable data would be protected and that confidential data would not be revealed. Aliases were used throughout the research and for the transcription of the individual interviews (Jones et al., 2012). Furthermore, any identifiable confidential comments made by participants were excluded from the study. As required by AUTECH, data will be stored securely for five years within the faculty the research project sits within. Audiotapes along with full transcripts will be stored securely, and after this period will be destroyed.

### **3.16 Summary**

This chapter introduced the methodology adopted in the research project, that explored the perceived benefits of a sports-based PYD programme in a low socio-economic area: perceptions of youth participants, parents (or guardians), the programme leaders and the

participant's school teachers. The programme under investigation was Counties Manukau Sport's, Youth Impact Programme (YIP), Manurewa location.

This research project is an interpretive study because it seeks to explore people's experiences, interpretations and perspectives of a particular context. An interpretive descriptive methodology was adopted in the project, and semi-structured, individual face-to-face interviews were used to collect the data. Participants of the research project were those youth participants who participated in the YIP, the parents (or guardians) of the youth, the YIP programme leaders and the participant's school teachers. Individual face-to-face interviews were the primary source of data used to investigate the perceptions of the four stakeholder groups. Inductive content analysis analysed the data. The following chapter will present the results and emerging themes from the semi-structured interview data.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESULTS AND EMERGING THEMES**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the perceived benefits of a sports-based Positive Youth Development (PYD) programme. It begins by identifying the data analysis process and participant information. The chapter then describes the emerging theme from the data collected in the individual interviews, and the positive youth development outcomes described from the participants' perspectives.

#### **4.2 Data analysis**

As discussed in Section 3.8, the individual semi-structured interviews were analysed in three key phases. The data was prepared, organised and then reported on (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

In total, 26 qualitative interviews were conducted with four different stakeholder groups involved with Counties Manukau Sport (CMS) Youth Impact Programme (YIP); the youth who participate in the programme, their parent (or guardian), the YIP programme leaders, and their school teachers. Interviews produced over eight hours and 100 pages of data, which were analysed using the process outlined by Elo and Kyngäs, (2008) and Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas (2013). Table 3 provides some information about the stakeholders interviewed, including their gender and connection to the research. It also reveals how each group will be identified within the following section.

Initially all participants' responses were analysed collectively to allow common themes and comparisons to be made. Following this, each participant group was then analysed separately to allow perceptions of each participant group to be unpacked further, allowing for similarities, differences and themes to be identified (refer to section 3.10).

**Table 3: Participant information**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
Youth	YP	4	7	11
Parent/ Guardian	PG	0	10	10
Programme Leader	PL	3	3	6
School Teacher	ST	2	0	2

### **4.3 Emerging themes - Positive Youth Development outcomes**

The initial coding process revealed the following four emerging themes; personal development, social aspects, physical aspects and programme information.

#### **4.3.1 Personal development.**

Personal development includes skills and qualities considered by individuals to be important for ensuring they maximize their full potential. All sub-themes were self-identified by the participant groups as contributing towards developing their personal aptitudes. Participants reported nine sub-themes within personal development. The reported sub-themes were; confidence, the ability to learn new things, positive attitude, making good choices, academic ability, bullying, learning independence, values and goal setting. Table 4 provides an indication of how often the theme was mentioned (and by how many of the interviewees). Each of the reported sub-themes contributed towards

factors that influence an individual's personal development, and will be discussed within this section of the research findings.

**Table 4: Results: Personal development**

Sub-themes	Number of sources	Number of references
Confidence	22	46
Ability to learn new things	21	43
Positive attitude	21	52
Making good choices	16	50
Academic ability	15	35
Bullying	9	18
Learning independence	8	11
Values	7	20
Goal setting	2	4

#### ***4.3.1.1 Confidence.***

The most significant and frequently reported sub-theme was confidence, specifically how confidence changed and developed over the time spent at the programme. The majority of participants indicated development and growth in their personal confidence

either as a direct or indirect result of their involvement in the programme. The following comment by a youth participant illustrates an example of this:

What I really like about the programme is like, that people change instead of their old shell they, they turn into a new shell and they come out of their shell. Like cause in Term 1, no one used to speak but now they are like yeah speaking actually speaking now and I think that is really good (YP4).

Similarly, a programme leader also noticed positive developments in the confidence levels of the youth during the time they spent at the programme:

...I think the main one that you see is self-confidence. I think I saw that through many of the kids by the end of it. You know they believed in themselves a bit more, more comfortable around their peers, yeah I could definitely see the self-confidence (PL5).

What is noteworthy is that the parent (guardian) and school teacher participant groups all spoke about changes to participant's confidence levels outside of the programme context. One parent stated:

For me it's like I felt like she has more confidence, not just with sports but in everything. She does not know this but she sings aloud and she wouldn't before you know she wouldn't, you know she would be stand offish or would just sing somewhere private. I don't know if it was the programme or just my daughter but she is more confident (PG6).

This development in confidence was also noticed by a school teacher who said;

I would say it is a bit more confidence, a bit more confidence in their abilities maybe a bit more willing to try other new sports that they hadn't tried before (ST2).

#### ***4.3.1.2 Learn new things.***

The ability to learn new things included the capacity to identify new learnings through self-reflection, what was taught and learnings observed by others. Several youth participants spoke positively about the academic component of the programme, highlighting the knowledge acquired. For example, a youth participant mentioned, “I learn more stuff about different sports than I know but don’t really know much about.” (YP5). Similarly, another youth participant commented, “It helped me learn better stuff, like better reading and like better learning about other stuff” (YP7). A programme leader stated, “Learning the academic side and just for them the whole understanding behind the sport, we teach them rules, the history behind the sport as well, so that’s always good” (PL2). By highlighting the intentionally structured academic component, these statements recognise that the programme under investigation is more than just a sports programme.

In comparison, parents and schoolteachers spoke mostly about the sports aspect of the programme, suggesting they had limited knowledge of the academic literacy and numeracy component. For example, a parent said:

But she went and she learnt like soccer and she said it was really hard but she kept pushing herself to go and do things. So for me it was good to know that she endured and put herself out there, especially for a sport she has no idea about for me that was really good to see” (PG9).

This was reinforced by a schoolteacher who stated, “...that is the beauty of primary school and sport is the ability to expose them to a whole range of sports” (ST1).

#### ***4.3.1.3 Positive attitude.***

A number of parent participants mentioned a shift in attitude and mood. For instance, a parent said, “I noticed quite a bit of difference, she used to come home and would be quite happy about her performance” (PG9). The programme leaders also noticed a change in attitude of the youth participants over the duration of the programme. A programme leader said:

...could definitely see a couple of kids, you know when they first walk in they are like I am strong, tough, got this attitude and then by the end of the week they are all just getting along having fun (PL1).

Likewise, a school teacher observed a more general shift in youth participants’ attitude to sport. A school teacher said, “...it is their attitude towards sport that has changed like they want to be more involved, more a part of it” (ST1).

#### ***4.3.1.4 Make good choices.***

The ability to make good choices was acknowledged by the majority of participant groups. Good choices, refers to the ability to recognise good decisions and the ability to acknowledge a change in the types of decisions made by youth participants. Most youth participants recognised a shift in their ability to make mindful choices in their decision making processes. More specifically, this shift in youth’s ability to make better choices transferred from the programme context to other aspects in their life. One youth participant described a major shift in their decision-making processes and positive behaviour at school. A youth participant stated, “...today while we were doing kapa haka I got told to go because I was getting angry and then I went to my class and instead of playing on the laptops, I done my work” (YP1). The programme leader participant group also identified this transferability of capabilities and skills learnt about decision-making and choices as purposeful and intentional. A programme leader emphasised:

Last time we discussed leadership and what a good leader looks like as well as food and nutrition, so basically getting them to be a good role model and take that back to school to implement what they have learnt in their own environment (PL3).

The majority of parent participants identified a change in decisions with regard to health and well-being. For example, a parent stated:

I think it taught him healthier choices definitely, food wise. He was telling stuff and me about all of the healthy options, the wraps for lunches. He actually implemented healthy choices when we went out, instead of getting a juice he would say I will have a water today 'cause it is a healthier option, like you know small things like that made an impact on his choices (PG7).

#### ***4.3.1.5 Academic ability.***

A number of participants from all participant groups talked about different aspects of academic ability. Particularly, they talked about the types of academic activities they completed and how they found these activities. Several youth participants commented on their personal academic ability openly and constructively. A youth participant mentioned:

...we done maths and sometimes it was difficult for me. A little bit harder than school stuff. We did reading... I learnt new things when I was reading. It was different 'cause it was about sports. I liked it more, 'cause it was interesting (YP8).

The programme leaders identified several youth who found parts of the academic component challenging. Strategies were put in place to ensure that youth participants

were supported and still able to actively engage with the academic activities. Supporting this, a programme leader stated:

So we encourage them to firstly try to do it themselves, then with someone in their group or nearby and then if none of them know then work with their leaders. Not many kids learn that well from just sitting and being talked at. The doing helped with their learning (PL6).

Interestingly the parent participants' knowledge of the academic activities was limited. Those parent participants that acknowledged the academic component merely identified that youth participants partook in literacy and numeracy activities. The parent participants were unable to provide any detail on exactly what type and why youth participated in academic work as part of the programme. More specifically some parents gained knowledge of youth participant's academic ability through their certificates of achievement. A parent highlighted this with their comment:

YP1 got a maths certificate because she had improved in her maths or something. Every afternoon when they were finishing off they would give two or three certificates each to the children so they acknowledge what they achieved that day (PG1).

Another parent/guardian said, "I know they do a little reading and maybe writing, I am not too sure" (PG7).

#### ***4.3.1.6 Bullying.***

The youth participants focused on two aspects of bullying. First, the work they completed on the topic of bullying and second, the active identification of what bullying is. A youth participant talked about the work they covered on bullying:

I think last term she was teaching about us about bullies like how bullies do stuff to you and then what you should do when there is bullies are around and why do they bully people and we just learn that stuff yeah pretty much (YP5).

A large proportion of youth participants pinpointed a scenario where bullying occurred within the school environment. The same youth participant continued offering an example:

...yes... 'cause if I see a bully in the playground I just might go up to him and tell them that's not very nice and you shouldn't do that and if they keep on doing it then I'll just go tell a teacher (YP5).

#### ***4.3.1.7 Learning independence.***

Parents were the one group that reported on the youth participants learning independence. As one parent put it:

She did it herself, as she said she got the forms from school and brought it home I'm like 'What's this? Nah can't afford it'. And she like 'It's free'. It was like 'okay you can do'". She actually organised everything herself and wanted to do it and I knew she was into her sports so... (PG1).

The youth participants however shared differing perspectives to independence, expressing self-reflection as the tool for the decisions they made. This is illustrated in the following comment made by a youth participant:

Yeah it's yeah the choices I make it's different because I have friends that umm weren't that really good like they always naughty and I am a house captain and they always use to like go in the sports shed and so I have like cut them off and I have made new friends now. Instead of making old friends that bully people and that, so I am out of that (YP4).

#### ***4.3.1.8 Values.***

The youth participants did not report widely on the sub-theme values, which is surprising as values were a significant part of the intentionally structured portion of the programme. The youth participants that did speak about values acknowledged the programme values, the intention behind them and what they meant to them personally. The results revealed a significant gap with regard to what the programme leaders thought was being learnt and consequently being transferred to other aspects of youth's lives. A gap was also identified with what the youth participants reported and understood. As a programme leader expressed:

It was good to see that they actually put it into practice and it wasn't brought up just because it was the only one that they could remember from the values. The level of respect definitely improved in relation to how they were with like each other, all equipment and everything else (P6).

This contrasts to the views of a youth participant, who said, "I only remember respect and yeah 'cause everyone keeps saying it. You always have to respect the coaches when they are trying to teach you something 'cause if you don't listen you don't know what you have to do" (YP11).

#### ***4.3.1.9 Goal setting.***

Only a small number of participants indicated goal setting as having an impact because of their participation in the programme. However, those youth participants who did comment on goal setting identified this as having a significant influence on them personally. One youth participant said:

Yeah, I have been focused on my work now that I am going to Intermediate next year. Because I think the programme taught me and I don't really want to fail when I go to intermediate. It help me set goals and stuff (YP11).

#### **4.3.2 Social aspect.**

Social aspects refers to all those PYD outcomes that relate to individual social development skills. More specifically, social aspects are those skills and qualities that an individual needs to effectively engage and interact with others and their environment. Participants reported six sub-themes that contribute towards social. The social aspects included; new opportunities, developing new friendships, teamwork, communication, supportive environment and leadership. Table 5 provides a breakdown of the themes in terms of frequency.

**Table 5: Results: Social aspects**

<b>Sub-themes</b>	<b>Number of sources</b>	<b>Number of references</b>
New opportunities	22	75
Developing new friendships	19	52
Teamwork	15	33
Communication	13	18
Supportive environment	13	42
Leadership	9	33

##### ***4.3.2.1 New opportunities.***

Almost all of the participants identified new opportunities when talking about the social aspects of the programme. More specifically, all of the participant groups positively commented on exposure to new opportunities and further described the impact of such opportunities. A large proportion of the youth participants identified new opportunities as having the chance to learn and experience new sports. This was highlighted by a youth participant who said, "...like learning different sports and that, that I haven't played, like judo. I didn't even know what that is and I thought it was tennis but it was its like karate" (YP4). Another participant revealed:

Trying new things and stepping up my sport games and stuff. When I didn't like sports I would sit on the side but now I am like joining in. Because I have more confidence to try. Before I didn't want to fail in front of people but now I think I can do it and try new stuff (YP10).

A school teacher participant also observed this, stating:

If I look at the children who went to that Youth Impact, they now tried out for the other teams. This term we had touch and softball and that core group of kids had tried out for those things and also have dance at our school and I would say a few of those children tried out for that. I would say it is a bit more confidence, a bit more confidence in their abilities maybe a bit more willing to try other new sports that they hadn't tried before and the ability to be exposed to some of the sports we haven't done at our school (ST2).

This reinforces the impact exposure to new opportunities had on the youth participants. It also supports the transferability of skills learnt through the programme to different aspects of individual's lives.

#### ***4.3.2.2 Developing new friendships.***

Collectively, all participant groups recognised developing new friendships and, entwined within that, meeting new people. Youth participants positively associate their experiences at the programme with meeting new people and developing new friends. Intriguingly youth participants also critically reflected on the impact that meeting these new people and forming new friendships had on them personally. A youth participant highlighted this with their comment, “Yeah the people I became friends with were nice. They made me change my behaviour” (YP8). The parent participants also spoke about the impact that meeting new people had, and that they had noticed changes in behaviours and choices. As one parent, put it, “But even saying the word S.H.I.T was quite a habit especially with his friends the two boys that he was hanging out with and that has stopped. So, yeah it has impacted on his friend choices definitely” (PG7). Similarly, the school teacher participants recognised positive changes in behaviours, actions and choices of youth who partook in the programme. The school teacher participants also positively acknowledged that consistent messaging of what youth were taught at school, was being reinforced within the programme context. A school teacher shared an aspect of their teaching curriculum stating:

We have key competencies that we incorporate in our teaching within the classroom. Some of those key competencies like relating to others, participating, thinking, that is three of them and thinking and managing themselves. You can see those attitudes and key competences come through after they have participated in the course (ST1).

The participants not only reported the influence of meeting new people, but also talked about the friendships formed and developed as a result. The comments below illustrate the friendships that were established and the strong connections made by youth participants. A programme leader said:

...making friends you know and not only friends for that week but I guess lifetime friends that they will see if they go to another cluster sports tournament or something, they can relate to that person 'cause they have spent time with them at the YIP programme (PL2).

Another programme leader spoke of the close friendships formed, stating:

I think going back to camaraderie, the relationship aspect of the group and those particular children. I think they really came together over joint experiences I suppose and it would be nice to see those kids in their own environment get together too, not just in the YIP Programme but like on the streets of good old 'rewa and see what happens (PL3).

#### ***4.3.2.3 Teamwork.***

The majority of adult participant groups commented constructively on individual growth with respect to teamwork. A programme leader participant highlights this, saying:

I think some of the major ones were kids that were very much individuals in sports and would try and do it all themselves and not want to pass or would not get involved in team events but had obvious leadership potential as well. I think they stood out and seeing them stepping up as well, especially working with our values as well as the changes in their attitudes, how they started to work with their teams in activities over the time even from the first programme to the end of that week and then going to the next programme over that time (PL6).

Similarly, a school teacher commented on the comparable shift that was noticed with how youth interacted and engaged with each other within the school environment:

I think that understanding of what it takes to have effective teamwork. I think that they understand... It is something that has been repeated throughout the year and then that is repeating in a different context by different people that in order to win or in order to be successful you need to be an effective team and so yeah that is just something that we continually reinforce. I can see those kids understand more about what it takes (ST2).

In contrast to this, the youth participants' remarks focused on what was learnt from working with others. They also commented on the benefits they experienced from working together in a supportive and encouraging environment. As a youth participant put it:

Well I learnt... before I wouldn't like work with others 'cause I would be independent but now I know that it is better to work with teams so we can get all our ideas in together and talk about it together and get one answer (YP6).

#### ***4.3.2.4 Supportive environment.***

Participants recognised and acknowledged a supportive and positive environment in differing ways. Nearly all youth participants described the environment and individuals within it as supportive and encouraging, which in turn made them feel comfortable. A youth participant stated:

Yeah, I struggled at the beginning, was scared to go down the hill but yeah people encouraged me to go down and I made it. 'Cause I felt that um it's just a safe environment for me to like express myself there and make new friends there (YP6).

By comparison, the programme leaders observed a shift in behaviours and attitudes by the youth, which positively influenced how they interacted with each other. A programme leader emphasised this with their comment:

Then there were others who were pretty shy to start off with and I think once they got to know everyone and got involved in sports and knew they could do it then they participated quite a bit which was pretty cool. Seeing their confidence in them change over the week (PL6).

#### ***4.3.2.5 Communication.***

Communication was identified as being a main competency incorporated into multiple aspects of the programmes content. A programme leader shared an example of how a session was delivered, highlighting the importance of effective communication when engaging and delivering workshops with youth, by saying; “It is not like she just talks and they just take in information, they have the opportunity to discuss a lot of things” (PL4). This also demonstrated how these skills were role-modelled and fostered throughout the programme by the programme leaders. A youth participant reflected on this with their comments about the opportunity they were given to discuss activities and tasks with their peers. She reflected that “It was good working in a group, we would tell each other the answers and try fit it in and see if it was the right one. It was good we could talk about stuff lots to each other” (YP11).

The development of communication as a key competency was observed in other facets of the youth participants lives. A parent/guardian participant talks about this transferability of effective communication skills to their home life, stating:

...it made him more out spoken, very out spoken. Helped build his confidence a bit more, um and talk to family about what he learnt at the YIP programme,

especially my dad, my dad is quite an icon for my son and drives him forward in a lot of things (PG7).

#### **4.3.2.6 Leadership.**

Leadership was commented on the least by all participant groups. Those who did mention it, however, communicated common ideas.

Youth participants identified leadership, recognising the importance of possessing good leadership skills, but were unable to unpack this further. As one youth participant put it “...you learn about leadership you grow leadership...” (YP4).

Conversely, the adult participants spoke about the youth as having leadership potential. Adult participants also spoke about how the YIP programme could develop youth’s leadership skills and the transferability of those skills. A programme leader’s comment supports this, stating, “...some leadership exposed itself at the end and I think some of those kids will definitely be leaders when they get older” (PL5). This opinion was expanded on by another programme leader who spoke about the importance of leadership, positive role models and the impact this has on youth’s development. “...the more a child has contact with positive role models, mentors or leaders the bigger the impact it will have on their development.” (PL3). Similarly, a school teacher recognised the importance of sport and the skills that can be fostered and developed through it, saying, “So we see the value of sport and the things that sport teaches, you know leadership, communication, team work all the things that they need in sport that can translate into life” (ST2).

#### **4.3.3 Physical aspects.**

The physical aspects refer to all those PYD outcomes relating to youths’ physical development. According to the World Health Organisation (2006) physical

development starts from infancy and continues through until a young person reaches adolescence. It incorporates development of fine and gross motor skills as well as physical abilities that continue to develop through a young person's life, contributing to their physical well-being (Weiss et al., 2012). Four key sub-themes emerged from the data collected that contribute towards outcomes related to the overarching physical aspect. Participants recognised each sub-theme as influencing elements of their physical well-being. The physical aspects included sport, education, healthy living and fundamental movement skills (refer to Table 6).

**Table 6: Results: Physical aspects**

<b>Sub-theme</b>	<b>Number of sources</b>	<b>Number of references</b>
Sport	27	84
Education	20	61
Healthy living	18	46
Fundamental movement skills	15	31

#### ***4.3.3.1 Sport.***

All the participants spoke about sport, although each participant group referred to it slightly differently. Since sport was the vehicle utilised to positively impact youth, it was imperative that youth participants had some interest in sports. A programme leader stressed this saying, “they need to be interested in sport because if they are interested in sport it provides a means to get them involved in all of the activities that we do as that’s the basis” (PL6). In contrast, the youth participants identified the sports played during

the programme and how they found them. Only a few of the youth participants were able to unpack this further and were able to recognise the impact the experience of being involved in the programme had on them personally. This was demonstrated by a youth participant who said:

‘Cause when I went to the YIP programme I thought it was pretty cool playing sports with other new people and then when I went back to school I started to play sports and knew other people would come and play and I got the opportunity to play with new people and yeah (YP10).

A clear difference in the behaviour of those youth who participated in the programme was recognised in the school environment. A school teacher elaborated on this by stating, “I can see from those students that they are more willing to participate in sports and try sports um, that they may not have tried before...” (ST2). However, parents merely saw this as a good opportunity and experience for their children to be a part of. One parent said:

How do your kids know what they are into if they aren’t allowed to experience it. For instance tennis, she found it boring, it isn’t something that I would have thought to put them in because for me it’s something that I don’t like, but you see I like softball but she doesn’t, she thinks it’s boring. Now she knows, she has options of what she might want to do (PG6).

#### ***4.3.3.2 Education.***

Each stakeholder group referred to education and the academic component of the programme. For the most part, both parent and school teacher participants had limited knowledge about the details of the programme. Both parent and school teacher participants did acknowledge that the programme had an academic component, but they

were not aware of the details. A parent participant expressed this by saying, “I know they do a little reading and maybe writing I am not too sure” (PG7). A school teacher similarly said, “I think it does touch on the academic side...” (ST2). By comparison, the programme leaders shared their experiences of engaging with the youth during the academic component of the programme.

The academic component had been purposely structured and incorporated into the programme. As a programme leader stated, “Yeah exactly, they are doing school work every morning of the holidays and aren’t complaining too much. So yeah it’s good” (PL6). More importantly, the youth participants critically reflected on what they learnt, how they found the work and some of the skills they learnt from doing it. A youth participant highlighted this, stating “It helped me learn better stuff, like better reading and like better learning about other stuff” (YP7). Another youth participant also mentioned, “Some was like what we do at school, some was really challenging, especially the maths” (YP9).

#### ***4.3.3.3 Healthy living.***

As a collective group, the stakeholders reported on all kinds of aspects relevant to health and well-being. They also provided their thoughts on how they felt this had affected the youth participants. The parent participants commonly reported on how youth participants could now confidently talk about healthy food and making healthy food choices. A parent participant shared an experience she had with her child:

... I think it taught him healthier choices definitely, food wise. He was telling stuff to me about all of the healthy options the wraps for lunches. He actually implemented healthy choices when we went out, instead of getting a juice he would say I will have a water today 'cause it is a healthier option, like you know small things like that made an impact on his choices (PG7).

Not surprisingly, the programme leaders described the health and well-being content as being interwoven and entwined with all other aspects of the programme. A programme leader described this:

Last time we discussed leadership and what a good leader looks like as well as food and nutrition, so basically getting them to be a good role model and take that back to school to implement what they have learnt to their own environment (PL3).

Complementary to this is the work the school teachers cover in the health curriculum. A school teacher identified positive changes in those students that had been involved in the programme, illustrated by the following comment, “But we promote sport and active lifestyle at our school. I guess if there is a change it is a desire to participate and be in part of the teams” (ST2).

The youth participants expressed varying thoughts on a healthy lifestyle, some providing deeper reflection than others. The majority of the youth participants identified healthy living in relation to food and nutrition. As a youth participant described, “I learnt that some of the foods that I thought were healthy but actually weren’t” (YP9). Others expanded on their knowledge of a healthy lifestyle talking to aspects of spiritual, mental and emotional well-being. A youth participant alluded to this by stating:

Umm, we learn about life in the Life Ed I know I told you about the muscles and the bones part. But I think last term she was teaching about us about bullies like how bullies do stuff to you and then what you should do when there is bullies are around and why do they bully people and we just learn that stuff yeah pretty much (YP5).

#### ***4.3.3.4 Fundamental movement skills.***

Although it was not a popular topic of conversation, all participant groups shared a common idea in terms of the exposure to, and opportunity to learn, the fundamental movement skills attached to the different sports included in the programme. A number of parents spoke about the programme as a valuable opportunity for their children to try various sports that they may not have tried otherwise. A parent highlighted this by saying, “It’s good for kids that want to be introduced to sports and you know it’s good for leadership skills and um introducing them to different sports” (PG 4). Similarly, a school teacher mentioned the significance of exposure, highlighting the opportunity it offered those youth who are not necessarily sports-focused. As the school teacher said: “They are right into their learning, but quite often the physical aspect of sport at school was not a part of who they are, their make-up. Which is good for them to be exposed to” (ST1).

Likewise, the youth participants spoke of their experience in terms of both exposure and opportunity to try new sports. In particular, one participant spoke about his understanding and learning about a specific sport, “like learning different sports that I haven’t played, like judo. I didn’t even know what that is and I thought it was tennis but it wasn’t, it’s like karate” (YP4). Another youth participant talked about an opportunity, stating, “I didn’t really think I would like basketball but once I tried it I actually really enjoyed it” (YP9).

#### **4.3.4 Programme information.**

Participants revealed a range of information about the programme. Each stakeholder group provided comments about the programme, including why they wanted to attend, what they would usually do during the holidays, the programme leaders, the programme selection process, programme highlights, programme recommendations and what impact they believe the programme had.

#### ***4.3.4.1 About the programme.***

Excluding the programme leaders, the majority of adult participants were unable to provide specific details about the programme. A parent conveyed this saying, “Nothing, know nothing about it. All I know is that it was a sports programme and something that she wanted to try” (PG10). In saying that, a few of the parent participants had more in depth knowledge of the programme. As another parent commented;

I know um that every day they teach the kids um some sort of sport or they play sport with the kids and basically it teaches them leadership skills and um yeah and introduces sport to some kids that have never played sport and then of course some of them have (PG4).

#### ***4.3.4.2 Why youth wanted to attend.***

A number of common themes emerged around the question of why the youths wanted to attend, and why their parents gave the necessary permission. The youth primarily wanted to participate in sports, with some of the participants also admitting that they wanted to try new sports in a safe and supportive environment. As one youth participant said; “Um, cause I don’t really do any sports, so I just felt confident doing some in the holidays” (YP10). Another view expressed by most of the youth participants was a desire to meet new people. As one youth participant said, “Cause I heard there was going to be lots of sports and other kids” (YP2).

For the most part, the parents communicated that their children wanted to attend the programme because sports was an interest area. The parents further explained that it was something for their children to do during the holidays that was free of charge. One parent revealed that;

...she [her daughter] got the form from school and brought it home. I'm like, what's this, nah can't afford it, and she's like, its free, it was like, okay you can do [it]. She's actually organized everything herself, and wanted to do it, and I knew she was into her sports so...[pause] ...and they provided everything, lunches, afternoon tea, water (PG1).

#### ***4.3.4.3 Why youth wanted to return.***

Reflections were also made as to why the youth participants wanted to go back to the second component of the programme, as well as why their parents gave permission. Ultimately, all of the youth participants questioned thoroughly enjoyed the time they spent engaging in the first part of the programme. Consequently, they were all very enthusiastic about attending the second part of the programme. A parent communicated this saying;

Yeah, he couldn't stop talking about it. When he got the letter again, he was like, mum, you have to sign my paper, I need to go back the first week of the holidays again, like, you know okay, that is awesome (PG7).

In addition, youth participants reiterated that learning and sharing sporting experiences with new people was a reason why they wanted to return to the programme. The youth participants further explained that the programme provided a safe environment that made them feel comfortable among their peers, not only to try new things, but to also practice things that they were not that confident at. As a youth participant commented; "Because it was really fun learning each sport, and I got confident on all sports. I hated soccer and then we tried soccer and it started getting really fun" (YP11). In support of this, another youth participant said; "'Cause I felt that, um, it's just a safe environment for me to, like express myself there, and make new friends there" (YP6).

#### ***4.3.4.4 Usually during the holidays.***

Almost all the parents stated that their child would have been at home, either sleeping or watching television, during the holidays if they did not participate in the programme.

The comments of a youth participant highlighted this;

Umm, I don't really know, 'cause I don't really spend much time with other people, 'cause I am usually at home, just watch T.V. [sic], and I never go out with my family to, like places, and I want to, but yeah, but we don't go. Yeah, 'cause they can't afford sometimes... they can't afford the money of it sometimes, 'cause it's expensive (YP5).

#### ***4.3.4.5 The selection process.***

All of the parents said that they received communication about the programme via a letter from their child's school. One confirmed that; "Um, my daughter brought a form home, telling me she was selected to be a part of that, and I was like, for sure, yes of course, 'cause that's her thing" (PG6). Likewise, all the youth participants identified that it was their school teacher who selected them for the programme. What was noteworthy, however, was the differentiation in the participant selection process between the programme leaders and the school teachers. The discrepancy seems to lie with the messages communicated by the programme to the school and the school teachers. More specifically, the programme leaders identified the type of student that they would like to attend the programme, which differed to the type of student that the school teachers actually selected and sent to the programme.

The programme leaders consistently identified that the programme would like to attract students who are from low socio-economic households, are interested in sports and need additional support with their academic work. One of the leaders claimed that; "Its not so

much those kids that are really struggling on their academic side. So it's, I guess, those who sort of need a hand with their academics, but have an interest in sport as well" (PL2). By comparison, the school teachers acknowledged that the programme sent out a specific selection criterion. However, the school teachers chose to send those students who they felt would benefit the most from the programme (based on their own criteria and not that of the programme). One school teacher shared;

Yep, Counties Manukau do send out a criteria. But I kind of base it around a balance, I have students who are academically sound but are also really good at sport so they were half the students that I pushed through. The other half were academic but they weren't really good at sport but they wanted to participate. The thing is they knew they would be able to pick up other key competencies like participating with others, which they were good at, thinking, relating to others that sort of thing. No knowledge of sports or not good at it but they just loved the fact that they could be a part of something that was out of their context. They are right into their learning, but quite often the physical aspect of sport at school was not a part of who they are, their make-up. Which is good for them to be exposed to (ST1).

#### ***4.3.4.6 The programme leaders.***

Surprisingly, the parents and school teachers did not make any significant comments about the programme leaders or the potential impact that they may have had on the youth participants. The programme leaders themselves, however, were quite reflective of each other and the impact they made as a collective group. The programme leaders believe that as a group they make a positive impact on the youth participants. This is adequately illustrated by the following comment, made by a programme leader;

I would say, from my point of view, I would just say, being positive role models and, for some of these kids, they don't get that, at home. So being a positive role might only make a minor difference, but that could be huge in the long run. I think just having a positive role model in your life is awesome (PL5).

The above idea was positively supported by all youth participants, who made constructive comments on their interactions and engagement with the programme leaders during the programme. As one youth participant said; "They helped me with doing better stuff" (YP7).

#### ***4.3.4.7 Programme highlights.***

The main highlight reported by all the stakeholder groups was the programme environment. More specifically, each of the adult participants emphasised a different aspect, regarding how the programme environment affected the youth and the impact that this had. A parent made the following comment about how enjoyable her daughter found the programme;

I know for that holiday period, with the one week of the two-week holiday. The second week she would be like, can we go back to the YIP programme, and I would say no, it is only a one week thing, and she would ask why? She really liked it... she wanted to keep going back. I had to keep reminding her that it was just a one-week thing, and then the second week she was like, now what am I going to do for the last week? ...she wanted the whole two weeks (PG9).

Likewise, another parent supported this, sharing;

Just his happy vibes, when he would come home, he was always happy and explaining everything. He had all these medals, and he was like, explaining to me, mum these are from swimming, and my certificates, and all sorts of little things (PG7).

One school teacher commented on the meaningful relationships formed between the youths and the programme leaders, whilst another spoke about the impact of these positive experiences on the youth participants.

Probably the relationships that they have built with the people who run the programme, and also the relationships that they build with each other, getting to know each other a little bit better. That is reflective of them wanting to be a little more involved in other things not just school sports, like other roles... (ST1).

Similarly the programme leaders spoke about the environment the youths were in and the outcomes that resulted. These outcomes identified by the programme leaders included the making of new friendships, the building of team relationships and the significance of working together as a team. This was exemplified by a programme leader who said;

I think so, it works well in putting kids in an environment where they have to work together and then actually look at values and education. Just bringing that into sports and just everything across their life. It has a sports focus but it actually goes across everything else they do. (PL6).

Likewise, another programme leader further explained how these relationships might continue beyond the programme, saying;

Yeah, I guess there are quite a few factors that stand out. Um, just like I said, the change in attitude, making friends, you know, and not only friends for that week, but I guess lifetime friends that they will see if they go to another cluster sports tournament or something. They can relate to that person 'cause they have spent time with them at the YIP programme (PL2).

Again the youth participants offered similar viewpoints when sharing their highlights, which included the enjoyment of participating in new sports, having fun and making new friends. As one youth participant put it; “It was a lot of fun and I got to make new friends that I have never seen before” (YP8).

#### ***4.3.4.8 Programme impact.***

The majority of interviewees reported that the programme had had a positive impact on the youth participants. Re-occurring themes emerged from the three adult stakeholder groups around the noticeable change in youth participants' attitudes, confidence and desire to participate in activities, not only sport, but also academic and other extracurricular activities. One of the programme leaders noted; “I think it does for me, it's the changes that I see. Yeah, we just try and change attitudes, teach values, self-confidence, self-esteem, to just change those types of things I definitely see that at the end” (PL5). Similarly, a school teacher observed these same changes in attitude, commenting on how they had seen this translate into other aspects outside of the programme context. The school teacher stated:

Oh yeah absolutely, I mean, one would be their attitude, not only towards sports, but also towards their schooling, cause both of them integrate and link with each other. Like um, quite often they take what they have learnt inside the classroom to other aspects, like how they react to others during

morning tea and lunch time out in the playground, and that is vice a versa, and also I guess building relationships with others as well (ST1).

Likewise, a parent noted quite a dramatic change in the attitude and willingness of their child to participate, revealing; “Her [daughter] being active, like actually participating in the activities and learning sports, ’cause she doesn’t [usually]” (PG9). The school teachers also mentioned that they had noted an increase in student confidence and their desire to be involved in activities. As one school teacher participant commented;

The only thing is, I am not sure if I can see the impact on the kids. But I can see that, from those students, that they are more willing to participate in sports and try sports, um, that they may not have tried before... but a lot more self confidence in that area, and then I think a lot more of those skills, like cooperation and team work and that (ST2).

The youth participants identified similar impacts as making a difference to various aspects of their lives. More precisely, they collectively identified the programme as making a positive impact on the many choices that they make, including the types of choices that they make with regard to their behaviour, both in an academic setting and in social situations with friends. A youth participant specifically highlighted how their behaviour and attitude had changed towards their school work, saying; “Because I think the programme teached me and I don’t really want to fail when I go to intermediate. It help me set goals and stuff” (YP11). A number of the youth participants also spoke about the impact that the programme had on their choice of friends. One student acknowledged;

Yeah, it’s yeah, the choices I make, it’s different because I have friends that, umm, weren’t that really good [sic], like, they always naughty [sic]..., I have made new friends now. Instead of making old friends that bully people and that,

so I am out of that. Yeah I learnt that here. It made me realise yeah, umm, just chop them off and leave them there (YP4).

The youth participants talked about their choices and the types of choices they made around their behaviour and attitude towards others. The youth participants identified good influences; as one youth participant put it; “Yeah the people I became friends with were nice. They made me change my behaviour.” (YP8). Other youth spoke about behaviour and attitude shifts towards wanting to, and being able to, work with others. As a youth participant stated:

Well I learnt... before I wouldn't like work with others 'cause I would be independent but now I know that it is better to work with teams so we can get all our ideas in together and talk about it together and get one answer. (YP6).

The youth participants identified that the safe environment and positive encouragement offered by the programme leaders gave them the confidence needed to try new opportunities, and to engage in new experiences. This was adequately articulated by one of the youth participants, who said; “I didn't want to fail in front of people, but now I think I can do it and try new stuff. And all the people are nice here so I just tried stuff” (YP10). The youth participants also identified the programme values (i.e. achievement, success, passion, integrity, respect and education) as having a positive impact on their life. As one youth participant put it;

...some values I didn't really know much about, like, um, integrity, I didn't know what that word was when I came here, and then I started to get used to the word, and now I know what it means. Umm, because integrity means like, encourage other people to do what they love most, so I want to do that to other people in life, so they can like, feel happy and, like, so they can like, be proud of them self [sic] (YP5).

In terms of the programme values, respect was the value the youth and programme leader participants mentioned the most. As a youth participant said; “You always have to respect the coaches when they are trying to teach you something cause if you don’t listen you don’t know what you have to do” (YP11).

#### ***4.3.4.9 Recommending the programme.***

All of the participants agreed that they would highly recommend the YIP programme, although the reasons why differed slightly within and amongst the stakeholder groups. A common recommendation from the parents was that the programme should run for the entire two weeks of the school holidays. As one parent stated;

...it should be for two weeks. Free child care [laughs]..... It is a good programme and they totally enjoyed it. The people there were nice and I was buzzing out that it was all free and they provided lunch and everything. YP1 would have missed out if there was a cost and that was one of the main reason that she was able to do it 'cause it was free (PG1).

Another reason that was highlighted was the opportunity to be in an environment that was different, challenging and that provided an experience that they might not have had the opportunity to experience otherwise. Another parent stated that they would recommend it because her daughter; “is not a sporting person” but “now she knows quite a bit about sports” (PG9). The same parent went on to further elaborate;

“She did rock climbing or something, see she doesn’t do that type of stuff. ...I would recommend this for others to do. I know there are so many talented kids out there who know how to play sports and stuff, but there you get some kids who are more academically clever that can’t even catch a ball. So to be able to participate in that, and give them that experience,

and, having my own child have that experience and come back and tell me about soccer! Is really good. Yeah, and rock climbing, and be excited about going to something like that, when normally I am forcing her to do something like that, it's really good, its good. It's trying to find a passion or something (PG9).

As expected, the programme leaders also acknowledged the opportunities provided, highlighting the significance of youth being given the opportunity and chance to participate. One admitted; "I wish I got into that programme when I was young. It seems so cool" (PL4).

Another reoccurring reason highlighted by the programme leaders was the impact that they believe they make on those who participate. One claimed that he would recommend YIP "because of the impact that we make; it makes" before adding that "It is only a short time that we spend with the kids, but I think we make an impact. Um, it is pretty hard, it's pretty tough to leave the kids at the end of the two weeks, you get pretty attached to them" (PL5). This comment was reinforced by a school teacher who also spoke about the changes that he had observed in the youth. The teacher was happy to recommend YIP, based on; "the change I have seen in my own students" and their increased "ability to build relationships, not only with the people they know, but also [the students] that they have only just met, or new people they don't usually interact with at school" (ST1).

The youth stakeholder group cited the general enjoyment experienced over the time that they spent at the programme as being the most prominent reason for recommending YIP to others. One interviewee from this group said; "my friends always see me happy after my holiday programme... but they have had a stink holiday programme" (YP1). The same participant said that they would recommend it because "you can get fit instead of

fat” (YP1). The youth also mentioned the opportunity to learn new things, including new sports, and to make new friends from within their local community.

#### **4.4 Chapter Summary**

In summary, all of the interviewees described YIP as more than just a sports programme. This was reinforced by those who identified the programme as having an impact on more than one aspect of their lives. The participants in this study all identified the programme as making a lasting positive impact (noticeable at home and at school). The next chapter will discuss the emerging themes and link these to recent literature and theory discussed in Chapter 2.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

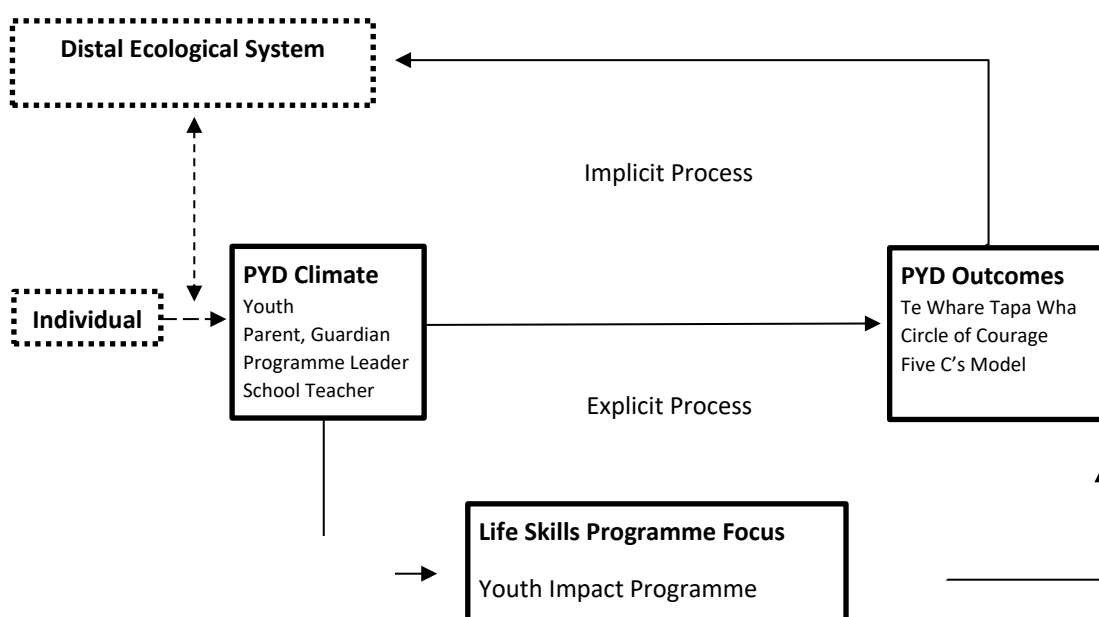
This research project investigates the perceived benefits of a sports-based positive youth development programme (PYD) in a low socio-economic area, examining the perceptions of the youth, their parents, the programme leaders and school teachers. The empirical component of this thesis included interviews with each participant followed by an analysis of the data. This chapter provides a discussion of the findings of this study, based around each of the guiding research questions. This chapter also provides a synopsis of the programme's impact, as well as implications of the study to guide future research and practice.

#### **5.2 Theoretical model and conceptual frameworks**

To date, the existing PYD literature has not reliably followed one particular theoretical model or conceptual framework. This is also the case when considering PYD within the context of sport. Researchers of PYD through sport have identified consistencies among the different frameworks and models that connect PYD literature (Lerner et al., 2005; Lerner, Lerner, & Bowers, 2015; Petitpas et al., 2005). The theoretical models applied in this research are unique in their own right, yet provide enough similarities to allow for a multicultural and universal application (Rauland & Adams, 2015). Critically reflecting on the practical application of the research project, indigenous models and modern theories, a number of connections can be made.

The research conducted by Holt et al. (2017) provided a comprehensive framework concerning the significant themes and underpinnings of theory (refer to section 2.5). This research took a similar approach, examining the themes and concepts presented

within the studied context, and discusses the perceptions of participant groups in addition to direct observations. The uniqueness of this research is that it was undertaken in New Zealand, with all participants being of either Maori or Polynesian decent. These unique aspects allowed indigenous world views and models to guide, inform and be applied in the analysis of this research. The indigenous model the Circle of Courage and Te Whare Tapa Wha, in addition to the modern Five C's model, were applied in this research (refer to Section 2.4.2). All four models have similarities, as they are holistic and focus on a strengths-based approach to development (Rauland & Adams, 2015). The holistic approach of the model of PYD through sport aligns to the philosophies of the indigenous models. Both models consider not only the individual but also the complex environment they live in. The indigenous model to New Zealand, Te Whare Tapa Wha will be the foundation on which the impacts of the programme will be analysed, strengthened with the Circle of Courage and Five C's model. Figure 6 shows the practical application of Holt et al's (2017) model to this study.



**Figure 6: The social environment - Positive Youth Development climate** (adapted from Holt et al., 2017)

The social environment is the PYD climate that exists and the interactions between the youth participants, their peers, parents, the programme leaders and the school teachers. It is significant to note the importance of each of these adult and peer relationships. Another important consideration is how these relationships can affect an individual's ability to develop positively through the programme under investigation. Positive influencers can be both peers and adults. Positive influencers can assist with the transfer of skills learnt in the programme to other aspects of youth's lives. These positive relationships and connections that develop, can help reinforce and encourage the maintenance of positive behaviours that have been learnt (Riciputi et al., 2016).

#### **5.4 Programme leader - youth relationships**

Advocates of PYD have emphasised the importance of structured learning within a safe, empowering environment that nurtures leadership and encompasses supportive relationships with both peers and adults (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2013; Holt, Sehn, Spence, Newton, & Ball, 2012; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Weiss et al., 2012; Whitley et al., 2013). The relationship between the programme leaders and the youth participants can significantly influence the programme environment and in turn influence how youth engage in a PYD context (Ford & Lerner, 1992; Hemphill & Richards, 2016; Holt et al., 2017, 2011; Riciputi et al., 2016; Terry et al., 2014). A socially supportive environment that promotes youth to develop positively was reported directly by the programme leaders and youth participants, as well as being noticed indirectly by parent and school teacher participants. The youth participants highlighted this with the multiple references they made to the positive, supportive behaviour of the programme leaders. Literature suggests this result can be attributed to the strong positive relationships developed

between the programme leaders and the youth throughout the programme (Bean & Forneris, 2016; Camiré et al., 2014).

The literature recognises that the programme leader relationships and the environment are interconnected, one impacting on the other (Hemphill & Richards, 2016; Holt et al., 2017; Riciputi et al., 2016). The youth participants commented on both their environment and the programme leaders as being both positive and encouraging. This result highlights the significance of the programme leader, youth relationship. It is essential that youth are supported and are actively engaged to ensure the opportunity to be involved in a PYD experience is maximized and youth benefit.

### **5.5 Youth – youth relationships**

The relationship between the youth and their peers can be another influence on the social environment the PYD programme operates within. The youth participants identified that the new people they met and the friendships they formed during the programme constructively influenced their decisions, behaviours and feelings. In accordance with other studies (Agans et al., 2016; Bean & Forneris, 2016; Bean et al., 2014; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005), the programme leader participants supported this with their observations of camaraderie that developed and shared between the youth participants. The relationships and bonds youth participants formed with each other can influence the environment of the programme. The complex relationships that exist, in turn influence how youth individually engage within the PYD programme and ultimately affect the opportunity for gaining positive development outcomes.

### **5.6 Parent/guardian involvement**

A large body of literature suggests parental support is critical in promoting positive developmental outcomes in sports-based PYD programmes (Camiré et al., 2014; Holt et

al., 2017; Turnnidge et al., 2014). The importance of parental support sits with consistent messaging, being aware of the skills and lessons learnt at the programme and being able to reinforce these within the home environment. Not only does parental support strengthen the lessons learnt at the PYD programme, but it also contributes to transferability of PYD outcomes (Camiré et al., 2014; Holt et al., 2017; Neely & Holt, 2014; Turnnidge et al., 2014). Contrary to expectations, this study found that parent participants had very limited knowledge, involvement or detail of the programme under investigation, thus identifying a gap where further work could be done to involve and engage parents to enhance PYD outcomes.

### **5.7 Life skills focus - Youth Impact Programme**

The programme focus was the specific activities utilised to foster the more than just the sport aspect, in attempts to foster PYD. The more than just sport aspect focused on the development of general life skills, academic literacy and numeracy. Youth engaged in opportunities and activities that built key competencies and provided occasions for transferability to other aspects of life. The programme in this study did not only concentrate on the development of physical sport-based competencies but also utilised activities that would nurture life skills, which promotes PYD. Programmes that have a more than just sports focus provide youth with opportunities to engage in life skill building activities, but must also work to ensure the transferability of such skills (Camiré et al., 2014; Holt et al., 2017, 2014; Neely & Holt, 2014; Turnnidge et al., 2014).

Literature has identified it as imperative to ensure a pedagogical focus when teaching life skills (Holt et al., 2017). The programme under investigation was intentionally structured and designed to determine the impact it could make on youth's development from a multiple stakeholder perspective. Literature suggests that PYD programme

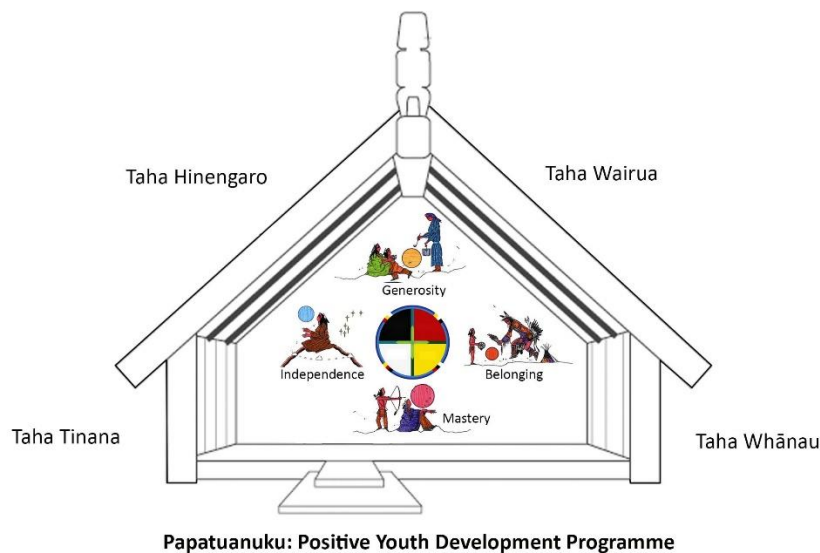
design and structure is critical to achieve overall goals and effect change in youth participants (Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Riciputi et al., 2016; Spruit et al., 2016; Wright et al., 2016). This is especially true for sports-based programmes, as sport can cultivate attitudes and behaviours that negate PYD (Rauscher & Cooky, 2016). The design of this programme created a supportive environment that promoted intentional developmental learning experiences for youth (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2013; Bean & Forneris, 2016; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Riciputi et al., 2016; Spruit et al., 2016; Wright et al., 2016). Previous research has identified intentional structure and environment as key for youth to develop positively (Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Weiss et al., 2012). The programme leader participants' supported this with references they made to the structure of each day of the programme. Additionally the programme leaders also spoke about the guidance received from qualified teachers to ensure the academic component of the programme was suitable for the youth participants. One point that became evident, more by accident than intent, was the programme values. The programme values aligned to the values identified by the school teacher participants. This then raises the question; if the programme had focused more purposefully on aligning their values with the values in schools, would this have had a greater impact on the youth participants?

To strengthen the competencies of youth and promote transferability, a supportive and safe environment has been identified as key (Bean & Forneris, 2016; Holt, 2016; Holt et al., 2017; Johnson et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2016; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Riciputi et al., 2016). All participants recognised the transfer of knowledge, skills and competencies from the programme to other areas of the youth's lives. This predominantly involved self-identification by youth participants who reported on things they do differently now because of the programme. Specifically the youth identified key capabilities and competencies such as self-confidence, development in their sporting

abilities, being healthy, and the ability to meet new people and make new friendships. Youth participants also identified a shift in their own decisions, as well as being able to recognise and make better choices, recognise values and identify and acknowledge bullying behaviour. Both parent and school teacher participants observed these key skills identified by the youth. The adult participants noticed these as being developed and strengthened during the time spent at the programme, and they were able to notice these aspects in other settings of the youth's lives.

### **5.8 Positive Youth Development outcomes**

The PYD outcomes reported by participants in the research project were initially analysed and coded into personal development, social aspects, physical aspects and the programme information. Guided by literature and further reflection on these aspects, the researcher used a model underpinned by a Maori pedagogy, Te Whara Tapa Wha. This model saw the use of taha tinana (physical), taha hinengaro (mental and emotional), taha whanau (family/social), and taha wairua (spiritual), as the four cornerstones encompassing one's hauora or well-being. The researcher additionally added Papatuanuku (the land), being the floor of the wharehau (meeting house), representing the sports-based PYD programme. Papatuanuku signifies the PYD programme as being grounded in the holistic foundation of youth's total well-being. The role Papatuanuku has represents the PYD programme, its impact, and the giving of life to positive developmental outcomes. Considerations and reflections were also given to the Circle of Courage and the Five C's model.



**Figure 7: Taha Tinana, mastery and competence** (Adapted from Durie, 1994)

PYD outcomes reported in tinana are those associated with the physical aspects of the developmental outcomes of youth. Tinana refers to the physical development of youth and the physical skills and abilities that can be learnt.

Sport was the most frequently reported positive outcome by all stakeholder groups. This result is not surprising as sport is the foundation of the programme under investigation. Sport is also the vehicle used to positively impact on youth participants; “Each day has a particular sports focus.” (PL1). The programme leader participants and supporting literature suggest it is essential that youth be interested and motivated by sport for the programme to affect any positive change or influence youth to develop positively (Jones et al., 2016). This was supported further by all participant groups who identified increased exposure to various sports and having the opportunity to have a go as having a positive impact on youth participants (Jones et al., 2016; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Spruit et al., 2016; Vierimaa et al., 2012). As a youth participant said, “Yeah sports helped me and they got me into doing more sports” (YP6). It could be argued that the positive results associated to the aspect sport are due to the fact all youth participants

who partook in the programme opted in by choice. Therefore, assuming all youth participants wanted to be there, they all enjoy sport and sports-related activities.

Participants reported widely on education. The pedagogical focus of the programme on academic competencies of literacy and numeracy were perceived as beneficial to the youth participants. The youth participants constructively recognised the academic component of the programme as helpful to their academic performance at school. However, no other participant group identified this association to youth's academic capabilities. The programme did not actively monitor youth participant's academic competencies, therefore making any interpretation of this result somewhat limited. Comparing this to other sports-based PYD studies, the majority did not specify intentional delivery of activities relating to development of academic competences. However, these studies did monitor and report on participant's academic performance (Burnett, 2015; Holt et al., 2017, 2011; Riciputi et al., 2016; Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012).

Healthy living was reported in numerous studies (Anderson, 2017; Bean & Forneris, 2016; Bean et al., 2014; Holt et al., 2017; Jones et al., 2016; Neely & Holt, 2014; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Riciputi et al., 2016; Turnnidge et al., 2014). An important finding observed was the transferability of healthy living, specifically in relation to healthy decisions and behaviours being reported by both youth and parent participants (Bean & Forneris, 2016; Bean et al., 2014; Danish et al., 2004; Holt et al., 2011a; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Turnnidge et al., 2014). Contradictory to literature surrounding intentionally structured activities and transferability of PYD (Armour & Sandford, 2013; Bean & Forneris, 2016; Hemphill & Richards, 2016), this positive result was achieved through general healthy theming rather than structured activities on

healthy living and making healthy choices. Further research could explore the relationship between structured, unstructured PYD activities and transferability.

The impact that was reported on the least, was fundamental movement skills. All youth participants commented openly about their sporting abilities, one youth participant said, “Well I know how to do the sports that we learnt” (YP11). However in other studies the participants have reported more robustly and reflectively on their skill development relating to their fundamental movement skills (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2013; Bean et al., 2014; Gould & Carson, 2008). Interestingly, parent participants articulated wanting their child to continue the development of sports-based fundamental movement capabilities. Similar comments were made by parents in a study by Neely & Holt (2014), whose findings reported in more detail on parents’ perspectives of the benefits of sport-based PYD programmes. This slight variance in result could be due to the small sample size of this study, in comparison to those of other studies.

According to this data, we can infer that youth’s tinana was strengthened by participating in the programme. The programme fostered youths’ physical skills, as it gave them an opportunity to work on skill mastery and competencies not only specific to sport but also the fundamental skills associated with their broader physical well-being (Brendtro et al., 2014; Little & Johansen, 2013). Emphasis being given to the holistic view of health, the importance of bodily care and physical well-being being inseparably and interrelated in development of youths’ tinana.

#### **5.8.1 Taha whanau, belonging and connections.**

Outcomes in whanau are those associated with the social aspects of developmental outcomes of youth, including a sense of belonging and connections to others and the environment. All participant groups described exploring and participating in new opportunities. In particular, both parent and school teacher participants recognised the

influence that increased exposure to new opportunities had on youth participants. They also identified this impact as transferring to other domains of youth's lives. This result is consistent with current literature that suggests increased opportunities positively impacts youth's future choices (Armour & Sandford, 2013; Bean et al., 2014; Camiré et al., 2014; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Holt, 2008; Holt et al., 2011; Holt & Neely, 2011). Youth from low socio-economic areas are often faced with lack of opportunity (Armour et al., 2013; Bean et al., 2014; Camiré et al., 2014; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Holt et al., 2011, 2012; Lerner et al., 2005; Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012; Spaaij, 2009; Terry et al., 2014). The youth who participated in this project are from low-income families and live in low socio-economic areas, suggesting this result is consistent with other research.

The idea that developing connections with people is interwoven with an individual's view of their environment (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2013) is supported by the findings in this study. Both adult and youth participants positively identified meeting new people and developing new friends as benefits of the programme. The youth participants often describe their new friendships together with the enjoyment they experience during the programme. As one participant said "Yeah our group were like best friends" in relation to "having lots of fun". The comments of the youth participants highlight the meaningful connections formed and the impact they had on each other. The study conducted by Ullrich-French & McDonough (2013) supports this result, suggesting that peer relationships play a significant role in youth actively participating in a PYD programme. The literature also implies that meeting new people and developing new friendships is a common social competency that can be developed through sports-based PYD programmes (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2013; Bean & Forneris, 2016; Riciputi et al., 2016; Spruit et al., 2016; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013).

A note of caution is suggested here, as all youth participating in this research programme were interested in sports. The youth participants were more likely to bond and form a connection over a common interest, therefore supporting and creating a positive environment. This links to, and is directly supported by, belonging in the Circle of Courage and the connections component of Learner et al's (2005) Five C's model. Even though this finding is supported by previous research, it is valuable to recognise the importance of connections and interactions with others and the consequential impacts. An unanswered question remains. If youth do not form positive relationships and connections with others, how would this affect their experience and potential development on the programme?

Teamwork referred more specifically to doing things together and learning to work with and beside others as a team. These results are in accordance with recent studies indicating that teamwork can be developed within the programme context but can also be transferred to other areas of youths' lives (Holt et al., 2011, 2012; Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012). There are several possible explanations for this result, one being that all youth participants had previously or currently play a team sport. This prior experience provides youth participants with opportunities to practice, implement and have reinforced, teamwork competencies both learnt at the programme and in other sporting contexts. Alternatively, had youth already learnt teamwork competencies and they were merely displaying what they already know?

An interesting finding was the impact the emotional environment had on youth participants. As one youth said, "everyone was very encouraging and the coaches were encouraging". These findings are supported by research that suggests a supportive environment is important to ensure positive developmental outcomes in youth (Bean & Forneris, 2016; Riciputi et al., 2016; Zaff et al., 2015). The positive relationships and

connections formed during the programme could be linked to influencing how youth viewed both their physical and emotional environments, possibly explaining the result. Riciputi and colleagues (2016) alluded to similar associations, suggesting that by providing youth with a safe, supportive environment, a positive relationship with peers and adults is promoted.

Communication was a competency not widely reported on and conveyed slightly differently by each stakeholder group. This is also reflected in literature, as a number of studies did not report on communication as an associated benefit of sports-based PYD programmes (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2013; Holt et al., 2011; Lerner et al., 2012; Ullrich-French et al., 2012). However, a number of studies have reported on the impact sports-based PYD programmes have on the growth of social skills and the connections to youth participation, of which communication is a key part (Bean & Forneris, 2016; Riciputi et al., 2016; Spruit et al., 2016). An explanation could be that the development of communication skills is underpinned within the wider scope of the programme and supported by the social relationships formed through the ability to communicate with others, suggesting that most programmes rely on sport itself to teach and develop youths' communication skills. Future investigations could explore the purposeful and intentional development of communication skills through sports-based PYD programmes.

The majority of adult participants commented on aspects of leadership, while the youth participants did not. This could be attributed to the programme not explicitly focusing on the development of leadership. Instead, the activities in the programme subtly explored areas of leadership skills.

The relationship that each of the results has to whanau is interconnected with the social bonds individuals form with each other and their surrounding environment. Findings

related to the social connectedness, relationships with others, teamwork, communication and leadership are well documented (Bean & Forneris, 2016; Curran & Wexler, 2017; Hemphill & Richards, 2016; Holt et al., 2017; Jones et al., 2016; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Riciputi et al., 2016; Spruit et al., 2016). The finding also indicates the potential for the development of social skills to be acquired through participation in sport-based PYD programmes (Bean & Forneris, 2016; Holt et al., 2017; Jones et al., 2016; Rauscher & Cooky, 2016; Riciputi et al., 2016; Spruit et al., 2016).

The literature supports the development of a strong sense of belonging and positive social connections as playing a vital role in both developmental and achievement outcomes for youth (Holt et al., 2017; Ullrich-French et al., 2012). A strong sense of belonging and positive social connections has also been identified as particularly important for youth from low socio-economic areas (Holt et al., 2017; Riciputi et al., 2016; Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012). How strong one's sense of belonging is and how positive or not one's social connections are, would impact how one would engage within their environment. This idea of how youth engage within their environment suggests that youth can be both influencers and influenced by their environment. Research conducted by Riciputi et al, (2016) support this, suggesting that the social environment in which sports-based PYD occurs directly impacts the PYD outcomes of the participants. Consequently, this highlights the important relationship that exists between people and their whanau dimension of well-being.

### **5.8.2 Taha hinengaro, independence, character, confidence.**

The outcomes reported in hinengaro are those associated with the mental and emotional aspects of one's well-being. Hinengaro refers to how youth reflect, feel and behave. The research suggests that if their mental, emotional and physical needs are met, then the

youth participants will have positive experiences to support their development and growth (Bean & Forneris, 2016).

Camiré's (2014) study identified a declining number of youth participating in skill-acquiring sports-based activities and suggested that opportunity and exposure could be linked to this. However, the results of this study differed as a number of participants' self-reflected on their ability to learn new things at the programme, particularly the new skills and knowledge they learnt. The findings align with studies that suggest programmes that are structured and have intentionally taught activities, provide youth with greater skill building opportunities (Armour & Sandford, 2013; Bean & Forneris, 2016; Bean et al., 2014). The findings from this study emphasise the importance of ensuring sports-based PYD programmes have a comprehensive understanding of intentionally structured programmes, and understand how this can influence developmental outcomes for youth.

The findings of this study revealed a shift in the youths' ability to acknowledge good choices and the recognition of a shift in the types of decisions made. The youth self-identified this change in decisions together with observations from their parents who also commented on the changes they noticed. A further study conducted by Riciputi et al. (2016) reported similar results, suggesting that youth felt a sense of empowerment when they made positive changes in their decision-making processes. Riciputi et al. (2016) also reported positive choices as linked to goal setting competencies of youth. In this research project, goal setting was not highly reported within the stakeholder groups. Therefore, a note of caution should be taken as to how much youth actually understand about the shift in their decisions and why such shifts occur. It may be useful for future sport-based PYD programmes to provide more structure and intentional activities on making good decisions. This would then provide youth with a better understanding of

their own intentions and reflect on their thought processes, thus supporting the development of pro-social behaviours. It is also important to consider whether there is longevity in the shift of youth decision making, or if youth simply revert to old habits on completion of the programme.

The results in this investigation align with studies suggesting sports-based PYD programmes that have an academic component contribute positively to cognitive development (Curran & Wexler, 2017; Hemphill & Richards, 2016; Holt, 2008; Turnnidge et al., 2014). The participants in the study conducted by Hemphill and Richards (2016) reported that the programme created quality educational enhancement that improved students' performance. Similarly, youth participants in this investigation described the academic component of the programme as enriching their academic abilities (refer to section 4.3.1.5). It is possible that youth participants reported benefits of the academic component because they were actively engaged in the literacy and numeracy activities within a sports-based environment, rather than a structured classroom situation. It is also important to bear in mind that academic benefits were self-identified by youth participants, whilst no formal follow up or progress reports were obtained from school teachers.

Studies that have included an academic component utilised academic progress reports to measure success and progress of youth participants. However, a programme leader from this investigation mentioned, "Keeping tabs on the kids after school holiday programme, it's kinda hard 'cause teachers are busy with their curriculum stuff". The study by Hemphill & Richards's (2016) reported that the use of academic progress reports showed improved academic performance within the school environment. It is therefore noteworthy for future sports-based PYD programmes that have an academic component to utilise academic progress reports. Utilising progress reports will ensure

purposeful engagement, structure of academic activities and provide accountability. A question for future studies could be ‘to what extent does interest in the academic content affect youth engagement and therefore learning within the sports-based PYD programme?’

Hinengaro is intertwined with the psychological health of youth, participants of the study made their mental and emotional well-being and connections evident in responses. The results highlight youth beginning to develop a sense of autonomy in their thinking and actions. The comments made by youth participants identified personal growth in their ability to identify and make good decisions (refer to section 4.3.1.4). Participants also identified development of their positive behaviours and actions to others that eventually impacted on youth’s sense of self-worth and positive actions (refer to section 4.3.1.3). These findings are consistent with those reported by others (see, for example, (Brendtro, et al., 2005; Brendtro, Brokenleg, et al., 2014; Brendtro, Mitchell, et al., 2014; Lerner et al., 2005; Lerner, Lerner, & Bowers, 2015; Little & Johansen, 2013; Rix & Bernay, 2014). Given the fact that youths inherit characteristics to achieve, fostering the positive development of youth’s mental and emotional health has also been identified and discussed prior to this study, with several researchers highlighting the important role that this dimension of health has on youth’s well-being and ultimately, development (Brendtro, et al., 2005; Brendtro, Brokenleg, et al., 2014; Brendtro, Mitchell, et al., 2014; Lerner et al., 2005; Lerner, Lerner, Urban, et al., 2015; Rix & Bernay, 2014).

### **5.8.3 Taha wairua, generosity, caring and compassion, confidence.**

Outcomes recognised in wairua are those related to spiritual well-being; the values and beliefs that guide individuals through their life (Little & Johansen, 2013). It is how youth learn to balance individual interests and needs with those of others, teaching

youth to be generous with the giving of kindness and understanding (Lerner et al., 2005). Numerous studies have reported on aspects of wairua, which include positive attitudes, bullying behaviours, values, independence and confidence. These aspects are often linked to youth development generally, and not just specifically the spiritual well-being of participants (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2014; Anderson, 2017; Armour & Sandford, 2013; Armour et al., 2013; Riciputi et al., 2016).

It was interesting to note that all participants commented on attitude and behaviour in correlation to each other and their environment. The youth participants often spoke about how their own behaviours and actions could be influenced by others, which resulted in self-reflection of their own attitudes. In keeping with the findings of Riciputi et al., (2016), many of the youth participants recognised their actions could affect others, specifically the identification of action, consequence and effect (refer to section 4.3.1.3). The existing research supports this, identifying youth perceptions of their peer and coach relationships as a significant indicator for positive developmental outcomes (Turnnidge et al., 2014).

In line with other studies, participants within this investigation identified an increased awareness of others' perspectives and feelings (Riciputi et al., 2016; Turnnidge et al., 2014). Participants also demonstrated a compassionate perspective, commenting on their behaviours and actions as having an effect on them and others around them (refer to section 4.3.1.8). A possible reason for this link and result could be that all participants felt connected to the programme, experiencing enjoyment from both the people and the context. It could also be argued that this result was firstly due to participants opting to attend the programme, and secondly sharing common interests and backgrounds. Youth participants were all interested in sport, from low socio-economic areas, low-income families and of similar cultural backgrounds.

A positive and supportive environment was not only reported by youth participants as improving positive attitudes, but also in recognising bullying and associated negative behaviours (refer to section 4.3.2.4). Most youth referred to their peers in the programme as “good people” and referred to their school friends as “bad” (refer to section 4.3.2.2). Youth further identified that the positive people at the programme and the intentionally structured programme sessions on bullying contributed to these realisations. Similarly other studies reported intentionally structured activities and positive peer influence, in addition to a supportive environment, as all promoting the transfer of positive developmental outcomes learnt in sports-based PYD contexts to other aspects of youth’s lives (Armour & Sandford, 2013; Beals & Beals, 2014; Bean & Forneris, 2016; Riciputi et al., 2016). Despite this promising result, it would be interesting to know if a shift in knowledge and behaviour by youth resulted in long-term change. Furthermore, it would be fascinating to explore the impact the programme had on youth participants’ choice of friends and whom they chose to associate with once returning to their usual environment.

The programme offered youth participants’ opportunities for intrapersonal reflection of their thoughts, feelings, behaviours and values. A foundation of core values helped guide and shape the youth participants in lessons of achievement, success, passion, integrity, respect and education. Analysis of the results revealed it is more than likely the positive values instilled in the youth participants from the programme are in fact multifaceted and cannot be attributed to the programme alone. Multiple environments, school, home and the sports-based PYD programme, are all reinforcing positive values, making it hard to attribute the result to one particular environment.

All participant groups reported on improved confidence in relation to skills acquired and developed (refer to section 4.3.1.1). This is consistent with other studies that

reported improved physical competencies and was typically aligned with improved overall confidence (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2014; Anderson, 2017; Holt et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2011; Kay, 2009). The underpinning values of the programme that supported a positive environment and fostered development of physical competences, which in turn nurtured youths' confidence, could be a possible explanation for this results. Supporting literature identifies the strong link between competences, environment, peer connections and confidence (Jones et al., 2011). This suggests that an individual's confidence is a complex interaction between their social competencies, peer relationships and physical skills. Further investigations are needed to consider the interaction and relationship between these variables that may or may not support confidence.

The complex relationship that exists between youth's wairua, their physical competencies, and their connection to others was observed during this study. The foundations of YIP have been built on a number of values, societal lessons of behaviour, cultural rules that set the standard for appropriate behaviours and a sense of right and wrong (refer to section 4.3.1.8). The warm and welcoming culture offered youth a safe environment that supports character-building free from vulnerabilities and judgment from peers (Riciputi et al., 2016). The parent participants were the predominant group that commented on learning independence (refer to section 4.3.1.7). It is important to bear in mind the possible bias in the responses from parent participants in relation to their own children. Another area of uncertainty were responses reporting independence which referred to youth being proactive in wanting to attend the programme, rather than independence being developed because of an intentionally structured activity. No clear assumptions can be made other than the programme initiated an opportunity that encouraged independence. A future study could look at the impact sports-based PYD programmes have on developing independence.

#### **5.8.4 Papatuanuku – The sports-based PYD programme and hauora.**

Papatuanuku, the sports-based PYD programme represents the floor of the wharenui and the holistic approach of this sports-based PYD programme. It is grounded in the foundation of youths' total well-being, the role it can play, the impact it can have and the giving of life to positive developmental outcomes. The PYD outcomes that result from the programme actively influence all four walls of the wharenui, signifying if one wall is affected it affects the whole structure, or a youth's hauora or total well-being. This positions the sports-based programme as the microsystem and the exchanges that occur within it as being influenced by aspects of the wider macro-system, which the sports programme operates within (Holt et al., 2017). Thus, the proposed resulting PYD outcomes are that youth will be contributing and thriving members of their communities. Also, acknowledging the many influences and the diverse systems that can impact PYD outcomes is an important consideration. The comments of a school teacher highlight this:

Quite often they take what they have learnt inside the classroom to other aspects like how they react to others during morning tea and lunch time out in the playground and that is vice a versa and also I guess building relationships with others as well. (ST2)

Interactions within the social environment affect development, highlighting that youth thrive when they are exposed to positive relationships and are socially connected with both adults and peers (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2013, 2014; Riciputi et al., 2016; Riley & Anderson-Butcher, 2012; Ullrich-French et al., 2012). Both youth and adult participants made engaged comments about how youth connected and interacted with the sports-based PYD programme, which supports this finding. This indicates that if youth enjoy their environment, it will influence their ability to engage with the sports-

based PYD programme therefore having further implications on their ability to develop positively. The multifaceted four corners of the wharehau influence and vary the possible outcomes. Feelings of competence are a fundamental need for individuals, as well as being linked to how individuals view their environment (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2013). It is suggested that the more a programme can intentionally foster and promote these feelings the more an individual will want to actively engage in activities because they are interested and enjoy it.

### **5.9 Distal ecological system: The community**

Holt et al.'s (2017) model provides a comprehensive approach to identifying relationships with a realistic focus specific to sports-based PYD programmes (refer to section 2.5). It also concentrates specifically on a programme instead of the wider social system, a sporting environment, or an organisation or individual athlete (Holt et al., 2017).

The significance of this model of PYD through sport is centred on a particular moment of analysis and how this interacts with the individual and PYD programme (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2013; Overton, 2015), therefore making the model of PYD through sport a suitable model to apply to this research project.

### **5.10 Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to provide a discussion of the findings of this research project, accompanied with an interpretation on the benefits of the sports-based PYD programme from the perspective of the youth, parent, programme leaders and school teacher participants. The theories and models applied allowed for a practical and holistic interpretation of PYD outcomes. The following chapter provides implications for future research, limitations of the study as well as final conclusions and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

The aim of this study was to explore the perceived benefits of a sport-based PYD programme in a low socio-economic area in Auckland, New Zealand. The study investigates the perceptions of four key stakeholder groups: programme participants, parents/guardians of the participants, programme leaders and the participant's school teachers. This chapter will provide recommendations for future research, cover limitations of the study and provide a final summary of the research project.

#### **6.2 Implications for future research**

This research has contributed to the extension of sports-based PYD programmes, by providing a preliminary extension of Holt et al.'s (2017) model of PYD through sports (Holt et al., 2017) in a New Zealand context. It has amalgamated Te Whare Tapa Wha, the Circle of Courage and the Five C's model to provide a holistic approach to PYD outcomes, utilising and having consideration for indigenous worldviews. It has also presented and introduced possible future research questions to investigate further benefits of sports-based PYD programmes. This research acknowledges the similarities of sports-based PYD programmes to those featured in literature and will ideally contribute to the advancement of further investigations of sports-based PYD programmes.

In relation to future academic considerations, there is a need for further strength-based research that identifies positive attributes and the development of youth. A gap exists due to a failure to acknowledge a holistic view of youth development and give consideration for all four cornerstones of hauora or well-being. Future work should

endeavour to investigate how each cornerstone can be, and is being, developed through sports-based PYD programmes.

While there are numerous models and measurement tools, of which many share similarities, the adaptation of Te Whare Tapa Wha that encompasses consideration of the Circle of Courage model and the Five C's model will be enhanced by developing specific measures for each of these fundamental dimensions. This will allow future researchers and professionals to support youth through their development towards a balanced and complete state of hauora.

Various studies conducted on PYD programmes identify benefits. The challenge is each investigation uses complex approaches to achieve the same goals. Furthermore, the adoption of different tools for measuring PYD outcomes makes it difficult to isolate and draw comparisons or conclusions about what component of the programme directly benefits the participants (or their parents). This also makes it challenging when linking the body of knowledge around intentionally structured programmes and how this may or may not affect PYD outcomes. There is also a need to explore the role intentionality plays in fostering PYD outcomes. This raises a number of questions, including; should future research focus more purposefully on youths' hauora or total well-being, to provide more in-depth knowledge of how each dimension of well-being is influenced by PYD programmes?

Future empirical testing of the proposed adaptations to the model of PYD through sport with the adaptation of Te Whare Tapa Wha also requires validation for use in future research. Larger qualitative investigations or a larger mixed method approach may be useful to test generalisability across a larger sample size. This may then contribute to the potential development of a robust conceptual framework that includes a holistic approach to PYD within a sport context.

There is also potential for future research to provide more structure and intentional activities in the area of the types of decisions youth make. A number of participants referred to their ability to now make good decisions and to identify good choices (refer to section 4.3.1.4). It would be interesting to gain more in-depth insights into the longevity of the change in decisions made by youth, or do youth revert back to their old ways after the programme? Or were they simply just saying what they thought the researcher wanted to hear?

### **6.3 Limitations of the study**

As previously suggested, future research that recognises a holistic approach to how youth develop in sports-based PYD settings could broaden the knowledge base in this area. Individual qualitative studies are often critiqued for having relatively homogenous and small sample sizes, which dismisses generalisability of the results. It would also be interesting to gain insights from larger studies that could also include statistical analyses of data. While the researcher did proactively recruit from a wide range of stakeholders, it was limited to a set number that could participate in the programme. This resulted in a relatively small sample size as not all participants wanted to share their thoughts with the researcher.

Due to the nature of the study, there were inconsistencies with the environment the youth and adult participants were interviewed in. Some youth participants had their parent/guardian present and some did not, which is likely to have influenced the information they shared (Gill et al., 2008; Gray, 2014). This inconsistency could not be mitigated due to the youth participants being minors. There is also a possibility that the youth participants shared comments and reflections that they thought the researcher wanted to hear, which would have influenced the results reported in this project (Gill et al., 2008; Gray, 2014; Jones et al., 2016; I. Jones et al., 2012; Sparkes & Smith, 2013).

Due to time and resourcing constraints the researcher was unable to triangulate the data collected. However, the researcher did take all practical steps to provide a clear audit trail, describing the methodology and methods used during the data collection and analysis phase. The researcher also took steps to ensure consistency and comparability during the data collection and analysis phases.

The lack of questions asked relating to the PYD programme, inherently assumed that the programme was unproblematically good. This was another implication of time and resourcing that the researcher found problematic through the duration of this project.

Finally, while participants did outline the benefits of the sports-based PYD programme, this study is unable to examine if these benefits have longevity after the completion of the programme. To complement and assess the findings, a longitudinal perspective may prove beneficial in examining the full extent to which such programmes affect youths' ability to develop positively.

#### **6.4 Conclusion**

The significant positive outcomes identified in this research project are as follows:

- The importance of positive adult-youth relationships;
- The transferability of the life skills taught; and,
- The opportunity to participate in a sports-based PYD programme.

The significance of the adult-youth relationship highlights the role and the influence the programme leaders have on developmental outcomes of youth who partake in a PYD programme. The life skill component to this programme demonstrated transferability to other aspects of youths' lives, making it an asset to their development. The last and possibly the most vital outcome identified by participants in this research project was

the opportunity to participate in a sports-based PYD programme. It is not common that youth from low socio-economic areas and from low-income families are able to participate in programmes like this, as they are relatively limited. In line with literature and the participants of this study, these outcomes are essential components of a youth development programme to ensure positive developmental outcomes can be nurtured.

The focus of this study was to explore the positive outcomes. However, a couple of negatives were identified. These were:

- Programme selection; and,
- Opportunity cost.

Programme selection was an important and significant factor to youth participate in the YIP. If youth were not selected, they would not be given the opportunity to participate in the PYD programme. Closely related to the opportunity to participate, and identified by participants, was opportunity cost. Although the programme was ‘free’ for youth participants and that increased participation, nothing is free. So, for youth to participate, someone or an organisation(s) must cover the cost associated, which means accessibility for youth from low income families and low socio-economic areas are reliant on such opportunities being free of charge to them.

This research project aimed to provide an overview of the benefits of the sports-based PYD programme from the perspective of the four stakeholder groups. The model for PYD through sport provides an exceptional model of analysis. It is both unique and reasonably consistent with other PYD and sport-based PYD research (Bean & Forneris, 2016; Curran & Wexler, 2017; Hemphill & Richards, 2016; Holt et al., 2017; Lerner, Lerner, & Bowers, 2015; Neely & Holt, 2014; Spruit et al., 2016; Turnnidge et al., 2014; Ullrich-French & McDonough, 2013; Vest Ettekal et al., 2016). The holistic

interpretation of PYD outcomes from within the model of PYD through sport that this research project utilised, allows for reflections and considerations for youths total well-being. The utilised models also reflect ways in which PYD outcomes have been assessed in previous research. The four cornerstones from Dr. Mason Durie's 1994 Te Whare Tapa Wha model (Durie, 1994) are similarly reflected in the Circle of Courage and the Five C's model; for instance, taha whanau is reflected as belonging within the Circle of Courage (Hatter & Vanbockern, 2005) and connection within the Five C's model (Lerner et al., 2005). Adapting the way PYD outcomes are viewed allows for further considerations beyond just social, physical and personal outcomes. It therefore provides a template for future sport-based programmes to focus on to ensure activities are intentionally structured, with all aspects of youths' well-being at the centre. The utilised model also considers the entire environment that interacts and influences youth. This provides complementary analysis and reflection of PYD outcomes when all factors such as the PYD climate and the ecological system that youth encounter are considered.

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