

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF
A POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME'S
INDIVIDUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

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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:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

Shona Ballinger

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Four and a half years ago I started this journey with both purpose and uncertainty. Through this journey I have gained and cemented knowledge that will advance my practice in the Youth Development field and, I hope, assist others in their journey.

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the overarching question of 'How do we know if young people in a positive youth development (PYD) programme have developed?' The specific focus is on a particular PYD self-assessment measurement tool which was developed in 2009 as a means of supporting YWCA Auckland to assess individuals' growth and development through the period they participate in the organisation's PYD programme. The aim of this research is to determine the success of the tool in supporting the programme's objectives for positive development by critically examining the experience of using of the self-assessment tool by YWCA staff and programme participants. A qualitative methodology approach based on interpretivism is used. Research findings are formed from interpretation of the research participants' voices from semi structured interviews. The findings of this research provide a basis for recommendations to enhance the use and outcomes of the tool in the future.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This research is focused on the use of an existing self-assessment measurement tool in a positive youth development (PYD) programme run by YWCA Auckland, New Zealand. The programme has been administering the individual self-assessment tool with their participants on a youth mentoring programme since 2009. The aim of the research is to critically examine the experience of using the tool and to ascertain its success in supporting the programme objectives. The intention is provide the basis for recommendations to enhance the use and outcomes of the tool in the future.

The motivation for this research was a desire to answer the following question: How do we know if young people in a PYD programme have developed? This research is grounded in a commitment to a PYD approach. This approach has become prevalent in youth development work over the past 20 years. Over this time there has been a shift in youth development programmes from deficit approaches to strengths-based approaches, which led to the development of the PYD movement. PYD programmes strive to influence young people's paths to positive outcomes by countering risk factors and enhancing protective factors (Damon, 2004; Ministry of Youth Development, 2002; Seymour, 2012; Wayne Francis Community Trust, 2011). These programmes focus on supporting youth participants' personal achievement through identifying and building their strengths, rather than focusing on negative traits or the need to correct behaviour. Programmes are designed to build youth participants' protective factors, positive identity, self-efficacy and resilience. While such approaches are considered far more successful in enabling PYD, there tends to be little knowledge of how well specific methods are working for programmes, and how the development of individual young people who participate in PYD programmes can be tracked.

While it is agreed that understandings of PYD programme outcomes are important, real understanding of the place of evaluation and evaluation tools in PYD programmes is lacking. The literature has highlighted that despite an increase in PYD programmes, efforts at measuring outcomes typically fall short in providing any rigorous evaluation evidence (Kenyon & Hanson, 2012; Martin, 2006; Mundy-McPherson, Fouché & Elliot, 2012; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 1998, 2003).

The background to this study is my own practice as a youth development worker. I have been specialising in youth development practice for the past 12 years. I developed a PYD programme in my role as Youth Development Manager for the YMCA before becoming a consultant and trainer in the youth development sector. It was in this capacity that I was contracted by the YWCA of Auckland (along with AUT Public Policy staff) to conduct an external evaluation of the YWCA Future Leaders youth mentoring programme. The aim and objectives of that programme at the time of the evaluation were:

For young women on the Future Leaders Programme to become capable and confident leaders in many areas of society, acting as role model for other young people and taking their leadership skills back into their communities.

Objectives of the Future Leaders programme:

To increase young women's self-confidence by providing access to a range of experiences; to support and encourage young women to achieve their self-defined goals; to support young women's educational achievement; to facilitate opportunities for young women to actively lead (Ballinger, Mason, & Waring, 2009, p. 9).

Within the external evaluation contract there was a request to develop a longitudinal self-assessment tool to be used by programme staff with the young people participating in the Future Leaders programme. The tool was introduced in 2009 with four key objectives. These were:

- Develop a measurement tool to monitor the participants' growth and development through the length of time on the programme and aligned to the four objectives of the programme.
- For programme staff to monitor areas of growth and identify areas where participants require additional support.
- To utilise information to inform participants, mentors, families, and school liaisons (with permission from the young women) of areas of success and areas requiring improvement.
- To track and show progress of the programme over the four year period. (Ballinger et al., 2009)

Following research and informal consultation in terms of determining the best approach, a questionnaire (or tool) was designed that aligned with the programme objectives. A set of instructions and an analysis approach aligned to the programme objectives, along with pilot testing instructions, were given within the full report to YWCA Auckland (Ballinger et al. 2009).

The tool has 32 questions aligned to five 'constructs' which support the programme objectives. The constructs are resiliency, self-efficacy, educational achievements, goal setting, and leadership. Each construct has four to 10 questions, with three of the five constructs having six questions each. The constructs are more for the purposes of analysis than to lead that structure, and the participant's version is laid out over two pages with the construct headings not stated and questions from each construct mixed up. The programme staff were given a copy with constructs and subsequent questions clearly identified and coded for data entry. Each question in the tool has 'I' statements and the students are asked to rank themselves 1 through to 7 on a Lickert-type scale as to where they feel they best relate to that statement. For example, 1 = (False) not like me, 3 = Bit like me, 5 = mostly like me, and 7 = (True) A lot like me (see Appendix A).

In my own practice, I have used and developed the tool further in other PYD programmes in a number of contexts. In these cases I have been the person administering and describing the assessment tool to young people and collating data at the beginning, middle and end stages of their time on a programme. This has enabled me to learn from participants' responses how best to explain the tool to them, and to have confidence to adapt the tool to fit different programme contexts. This has led to some changes being made to the original design of the tool.

From my preliminary consultations with the YWCA for this research study, I ascertained that the YWCA had been using the tool since its inception with all participants at six-month intervals, in a form unchanged from its original design. I have not been involved in the use of this tool in terms of its administration or in the data collection, analysis, or sharing of findings. This provides good grounding, therefore, for me to conduct this research to examine the experiences of others in using this tool, and to analyse how well the tool has worked for others.

In light of the above, the aim of this research is to determine the success of the self-assessment tool in supporting the YWCA Auckland programme objectives for positive development by critically examining the experience of users of the tool. The research is designed to answer the following key questions:

1. How has the tool been understood, delivered and used by the programme staff?
2. How has the use of the tool affected the actual experience of the youth participants in the programmes?
3. In what way has the data collected from the tool been utilised to meet the programme objectives?

The analysis of the data collected and the overall findings will provide the basis for recommendations for future improvements to the tool and its use, in order to continue to improve the development of young people participating in the YWCA programme. Further, it is hoped that the findings will provide learnings that will be applicable and useful for other PYD programmes.

This research makes an important contribution by increasing understanding of the role carefully developed assessment plays in youth development programmes, and by focusing on participants' individual development within PYD programmes.

1.1 Thesis structure

This thesis is structured in six chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 presents the literature review, which begins with an overview of the literature related to adolescent development and what adolescents need to achieve adulthood successfully. The review then focuses on literature on PYD approaches and identifies the dominant models that provide support for young people's development and promote self-efficacy and resilience in young people. The literature review goes on to discuss the importance of evaluation and measurement of PYD and

compares the existing PYD individual measurement assessment tools. Finally, best practice principles in PYD evaluation are outlined, which will later guide parts of the discussion chapter.

Chapter 3 presents the research's methodology and methods and outlines the qualitative approach adopted based on an interpretivist paradigm. The main data were collected through semi-structured participant interviews that investigated participants' experiences of using the self-assessment tool. The chapter covers the rationale for the methodology and how it aligns to PYD approaches. There is also some discussion of the researcher's 'insider' position, the participants involved in the research, and an explanation of the data collection, coding and thematic analysis processes. These provided the researcher with the basis for interpreting the themes presented in the findings.

Chapter 4 presents the findings from the participant interviews. This chapter highlights the voices and views of the research participants who used the self-assessment tool. These views are categorised into six key themes which emerged from analysis of the interview transcripts. These related to the participants' views of the purpose of the tool; the experiences they had in using the tool; the tool itself; the use of the tool's data; the outcomes for participants; and recommendations that were made for future use of the tool.

Chapter 5 reviews and synthesises the findings from the interviews, reflecting on how the voices of the research participants fit with the evidence from the review of relevant literature. The focus is on highlighting the key outcomes of the research in terms of learnings about the purpose, processes and outcomes of the tool, which leads to recommendations for its future development and use.

Chapter 6 concludes the thesis by summarising the research questions and highlighting the significance of main findings. Recommendations derived from the study are highlighted and further research directions suggested.

1.2 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the background and rationale for this research, which aims to critically examine the experience of using a self-assessment tool developed in 2009 for use in the YWCA Auckland Future Leaders youth mentoring programme. The objective is ascertain the tool's success in supporting the PYD programme objectives to assess individuals' growth and development through the period they participate in the programme.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Adolescence is perhaps the most challenging and complicated period of life to explain, study or experience (Berger & Thompson, 1995). This literature review will look into this period of life and the unique stages and complexities young people go through by looking at adolescent development physical changes, cognitive, brain and identity development, and environmental influences. The rationale for the review is to align this research study, in which the participants in the PYD programme are high school age (mostly 14–18 years old), with the existing relevant literature. The review then considers development theories/theorists and how they have influenced youth development approaches and understandings of the needs of young people at this stage of life.

The focus then switches to PYD approaches and models that seek to provide support for adolescent development and to enable young people to emerge confident and competent in their identity and resilient to the challenges they face and may face in future life. The review then looks at how PYD programmes are evaluated for success. Comparisons of existing PYD individual measurement assessment tools and ideas about best practice principles in PYD evaluation are made, particularly looking at how individual young persons' development while in PYD programmes is reported.

Adolescence is an astonishing period of growth, self-awareness and future focus (Sandtrock, 2008). All adolescents must adjust to changing body size and shape, new cognitive thought processes, evolving sexuality and developing emotional maturity, and becoming financially independent. This can lead to confusion and stress as they come to grips with these changes and there are undoubtedly times of awkwardness, confusion, depression and anger in almost every young person's life. At the same time, however these new developments are also a source of positive growth and excitement. Simply put, this transition period can be defined as moving from being dependent to independent (Berger & Thompson, 1995; Hopkins, 2010; Santrock, 2008).

2.1 Adolescent development

This section reviews the literature that focuses on the challenges adolescents face. These come in a range of forms, from physical and cognitive to emotional and ecological.

2.1.1 Physical changes

In physical terms, youth experience substantial physical changes during adolescence, most obviously during puberty. Puberty is part of adolescence and is an important starting marker that ends long before adolescence does. Puberty as defined by Berger and Thompson (1995) is 'the period of rapid physical growth and sexual maturation that ends childhood and brings the young person close to being an adult' (p. 523).

Puberty encompasses substantial physical changes. Over just a few years, adolescents experience visible and rapid increases in height, weight, muscle and body fat. This stage can be awkward and can occur at different ages. Adolescents go through spurts where they have sudden growth, which can be uneven and unpredictable. They can feel big-footed, long-legged and short-waisted, as the torso is the last part to grow. Prior to growth spurts, young adolescents can appear chubby but soon after this a height increase often becomes noticeable. Facial features can grow at different rates to head size and shape. Voices change, pubic and facial hair become apparent in boys, and girls' breasts form (Berger & Thompson 1995; Santrock, 2008). For both boys and girls, these many and rapid changes can be disconcerting and uncomfortable.

In addition to the visible physical changes, young people going through puberty experience dramatic hormone increases. Santrock (2008) notes that 'testosterone is a hormone associated in boys with development of genitals, an increase in height, and a change in voice. Estradiol is a hormone associated in girls with breast, uterine, and skeletal development' (p. 391). Rapid increases in hormone levels tend to trigger adolescents' emotions which can be aroused quickly, and often explain rapid shifts in the extremes of emotions youth experience from feeling happy to suddenly feeling unhappy or in despair (Berger & Thompson 1995; Santrock, 2008). Girls often experience these developments a year or two before boys, and a lot of the changes occur in girls prior to their first menstruation. In New Zealand the average age of menarche is 12, which means that a large percentage of girls have entered the pubertal process during primary school (Gluckman, Low & Franko, 2011, p. 21).

Puberty stages can occur at different ages, which can cause teenagers to develop concerns about their bodies as they compare themselves to their peers. This is not helped when others, such as family members, friends, or other members of society express expectations of what is 'normal' development at particular ages (Gluckman et al., 2011; Santrock, 2008). Hopkins (2010) notes that chronological age determines young people's class stage in school, legal age for gaining a driver's licence or drinking alcohol, yet the physiological age which relates to how people see young people due to their body development often sets an expectation of ability that does not match their chronological age, nor other important elements of development such as cognitive development.

Writers such as Berger and Thompson (1995), Santrock (2008), and Gluckman et al. (2011) have highlighted the challenges related to negative body image and how it impacts young people's self-esteem. They emphasise the importance of developing a healthy body image during adolescence. Body image is based on self-appraisal of one's own physical being, and can have a major impact on adolescents' overall sense of self-esteem. Young people's concern about body image is of great importance because if they think they look bad, they often feel bad. Feelings of depression are found to correlate strongly with negative body image (Berger & Thompson, 1995). They compare themselves to young people in their class and throughout their school, which can lead to social pressures and self-esteem issues in both sexes, although girls tend to be more affected by negative body image (Berger & Thompson, 1995; Pathan, 2010). Pathan (2010)

expands on this aspect for girls saying, 'adolescent girls are under the most stress between the ages 14 and 16 when they are beginning to make important contacts outside of their families' (p. 1).

When young people mature earlier or later than the norm they tend to perceive themselves differently. Early onset of puberty can lead to early perceived maturing which can lead youth to have a shift in self-perception in relation to their peers, to seek out older friends, and possibly engage in attention-seeking behaviours (Santrock, 2008). It has also been found that there is also greater risk for early developers of acting out behaviours, substance abuse, sexual activity, depression and anxiety (Gluckman et al., 2011). For early developing girls it can lead to eliciting attention from males leading to early dating and earlier sexual experiences (Santrock, 2008). Support for young people, empowering their self esteem and relating to them as individuals to their needs is important during this challenging stage.

2.1.2 Cognitive development

Along with biological changes wrought through puberty, adolescent youth also develop new cognitive and intellectual abilities, such as analytical skills, increased memory, and hypothetical, logical and abstract thought. While growing and developing these new abilities, there is a transition time where young people become quite vulnerable as they express thoughts and opinions that are not always fully thought through. During this stage young people can appear tough-minded, sarcastic, cynical and arrogant, yet they are more likely feeling troubled by their own introspections, hypersensitive to criticism, and self-focused. Recognising this unusual mix of intellectual boldness along with fragile self-esteem is important for adults supporting and guiding young people (Berger & Thompson, 1995).

Adolescence is an exciting and confusing time as youth start to become less likely to automatically accept what others (including parents and teachers) say, and more interested in their own ideas and thoughts. They start to align or disregard past knowledge on values, relationships, justice, religion and the meaning of life. They often develop a liking for debating theories on numerous subject matters. They also get caught up in how they are regarded by others and try to sort out conflicting feelings about schools, friends and their parents. Their self-awareness grows through this as they focus on their future and personal values (Santrock, 2008). Ensuring young people have protective factors around them during this stage and adults highlighting on their personal strengths allows young people to transition through this stage with support in developing personal skills (Roth & Brookes-Gunn, 2003; Wayne Francis Community Trust, 2011).

2.1.3 Brain development

While adolescents often begin to look like adults and trial or exhibit adult behaviours, it is recognised that their brain development is still far from complete. Gluckman et al. (2011) point out that it is important to understand brain development as it 'explains why adolescents are more vulnerable to poor decision making and risk taking behaviour and are more sensitive to reward inducing stimuli such as peer pressure, drugs and alcohol' (p. 24). In recent years brain

development research has proven that there are parts of the brain that do not fully develop until people are aged in their early twenties. The prefrontal cortex which is involved in higher-order cognitive functioning such as decision making is known to not develop until a person is in their twenties (Arain et al., 2013). This means that youth often do not have the capacity to control the strong emotions and passions that can arise through hormonal surges. The limbic system changes during puberty are often understood to drive adolescents to seek novelty and higher levels of stimulation to experience pleasure. However, the later development of the prefrontal cortex also means adolescents may lack the cognitive skills to effectively control their pleasure-seeking behaviour (Santrock, 2008). This accounts for the increase in risk-taking behaviour and the subsequent problems they encounter (Arain et al., 2013; Gluckman et al., 2011; Santrock, 2008).

A clear difference between adolescents and adults is that adolescents exhibit less psychosocial maturity than adults, yet they have developed high-level cognitive abilities and biological maturity (Gluckman et al., 2011). Gluckman et al. (2011) note that 'the interplay between how we respond to young people and the way their brains and behaviours mature is poorly understood' (p. 24). This is why there is a strong need for support of young people during this stage of life. Arain et al. (2013) state that the 'adolescent brain is structurally and functionally vulnerable to environmental stress and risky behaviour' (p. 458). Yet Casey, Getz and Galvan (2008) point out not all adolescents are affected in this way. Depending on upbringing, some adolescents will be more prone than others to engage in risky behaviours that could lead to negative outcomes. Spano (2003) observes that the brain development occurring during adolescence can be empowered by the teen and those around them. They can exercise and control their brain's new growth and sculpt it by learning to order thoughts, control impulses and understand abstract thoughts, which will lay neural foundations for the rest of their lives. Here we can see the benefit of investment in PYD programmes that offset young people's deficits and the risk factors they may have in their lives, as these programmes seek to build on the strengths they have within themselves and their environments, and help develop resilience by promoting asset rich environments (Deane, 2012; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003).

2.1.4 Identity

One of the great challenges and rewards of adolescence is discovering a sense of individual identity. A self-definition of values and morals along with skills, strengths and future aspirations allows young people to be consistent in who they are in the world and gain confidence from this. Discovering individual identity while managing peer acceptance and beliefs acquired from the past takes time and support (Berger & Thompson, 1995; Hopkins, 2010). Developing a clear, positive identity ensures young people have a coherent sense of self (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004).

A major theorist to influence the understanding of how adolescents develop their sense of identity is Erik Erikson. He developed the psychosocial theory of human development, which identifies eight stages through which the focus is on the person's relationship to the social environment

(Erikson, 1968). Erikson posits that how a person resolves each crisis stage is aligned to their characteristics and the support received from their social environment. The more successfully they negotiate the stages, the healthier development they will have (Erikson, 1968; Berger & Thompson, 1995; Santrock, 2008).

As adolescents wrestle with psychosocial challenges that Erikson (cited in Berger & Thompson, 1995) refers to as 'identity versus role confusion', they experiment with different roles. These include ways of being with people (personalities), manipulations, changing future career ideas, and being well-presented one day while messy the next. These are seen as deliberate experiments by adolescents to find out where they fit in the world and find out which identity is the 'real' them. Most are considered to abandon undesirable roles, yet others don't and end up in 'identity confusion' (Berger & Thompson, 1995) which can mean they either isolate themselves from peers and family or immerse themselves in the world of their peers and lose their individual identity in the crowd (Berger & Thompson 1995; Santrock, 2008).

When an adolescent establishes his or her own values, goals and interests by abandoning some set by parents and society, they form their own personal identity and this is referred by Erikson (cited in Berger & Thompson, 1995) as 'identity achievement'. There are young people who short-circuit this stage by following parental values and childhood identifications rather than exploring alternatives and forging their own personal identity; this is referred to as 'foreclosure'. They also accept parents' expectations of them, for example becoming a doctor, but later in adulthood they can discover that that is not them and rediscover themselves. Therefore identity achievement can play out later in life if it doesn't occur during adolescence – but often with much personal upheaval (Berger & Thompson, 1995). PYD programmes seek to help young people gain identity achievement early, by allowing young people to discover positive traits in themselves by focusing on their strengths and setting structures that provide safe, empowering spaces.

2.1.5 Environmental influences

The ecological world of young people can have strong influences on them, both positive and negative. The home and/or family environment is considered critical at this stage of life as conflict often occurs between parents and adolescents as the young person's push for independence clashes with the parent's traditional control (Berger & Thompson, 1995). Authoritative parents who set limits but are also nurturing and communicate well with the young person are considered to best foster adolescent achievement and self-esteem (Bagshaw, 2011). This type of parenting is seen to contribute to better psychosocial development in adolescence as parents can relax their control to allow space for adolescents' growing capacity and desire for independent decision making, while continuing to provide guidance, support and acceptance (Bagshaw, 2011; Berger & Thompson, 1995). Santrock (2008) notes that when a family is experiencing stressful family events such as divorce and this coincides with puberty, then the adolescent will tend to struggle adjusting to the normal changes of adolescence.

Peers are also recognised as important in providing environmental influences in adolescent development. Peers provide each other welcome guidance, information and support as they go through the same challenges, along with acting as a 'mirror' for each other, where they check their reflection (Berger & Thompson, 1995; Santrock, 2008). While searching for self-understanding and sense of identity, peers also 'help adolescents to define who they are by helping them define who they are not' (Berger & Thompson, 1995, p. 592).

As the above review demonstrates, a great deal occurs during adolescence that is challenging for young people and those around them. However, as stated by Santrock (2008), 'adolescence is not a time of rebellion, crisis, pathology, and deviance. A more accurate vision of adolescence is of a time of evaluation, decision-making, commitment, and carving out a place in the world' (p. 388). The literature emphasises the importance of positive support for adolescents through this stage, focusing on their strengths (Damon, 2004; Kurtines et al., 2008; Seymour, 2012).

2.2 Development theories

There is an important link between an individual's development through this transition period and the support systems available, as highlighted by Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas and Lerner (2005a):

Developmental systems theory stresses the inherent plasticity of human development that is the potential for systematic change throughout development. This potential exists as a consequence of mutually influential relationships between the developing person and his or her biological, psychological, ecological and historical niche. (p. 20)

To enable the effective provision of support systems for adolescents in their development, those involved in PYD programmes benefit from an understanding of developmental theory, because 'the roots of PYD perspective lie in developmental systems theories of human development' (Phelps et al., 2009, p. 571). This knowledge has been developed through human developmental theory, which involves systematic statements of principles that explain behaviour and development, and which give guidance and information when working with children and young people (Berger & Thompson, 1995). However, as stated by Santrock (2008), 'no single theory has been able to account for all aspects of development' (p. 41).

A number of theorists have contributed to the understanding of human development and with that adolescent development. Five key theoretical orientations to development are psychoanalytic, cognitive, behavioural and social cognitive, and ecological. Each contributes to the understanding of development and in some cases builds on previous theories (Santrock, 2008). The following sections identify the main theorists that have informed PYD approaches.

Psychoanalytic theories explain development as primarily unconscious and informed by emotion. A key theorist in this area was Sigmund Freud, who suggested that personality has three structures: the id, which entails instinct and unconscious; the ego, which cultivates the constraints and demands of a child's reality; and the superego which develops reasoning and decision

making, conscious right or wrong – and so is the moral arm of personality (Freud, 1917; Berger & Thompson, 1995; Santrock, 2008). Erik Erikson (cited in Bird & Drewery, 2004) built on Freud's psychoanalytic theory by developing the lifespan development psychosocial theory which aligns development to social environments (Bird & Drewery, 2004). As described earlier, Erickson's identity development stages have been a significant contribution to understanding adolescent development.

Cognitive theories focus on the changing progression of thinking as individuals get older and emphasise conscious thoughts through organisation and adaption (Bird & Drewery, 2004; Santrock 2008). Jean Piaget's cognitive theory says that we go through four stages in understanding the world: sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational (Piaget, 1954). Adolescents fall into the formal operational stage as they develop reasoning in more abstract, idealistic and logical ways (Berger & Thompson, 1995). Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural cognitive theory is grounded on how children construct their knowledge (similar to Piaget) (Vygotsky, 1962). Yet he placed more importance on social interaction and culture in cognitive development, as they 'scaffold' cognitive thought through interaction with other people and objects in culture such as books, teaching equipment and computers (Berger & Thompson, 1995; Bird & Drewery, 2004).

Theorist Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory importance is to cognitive development through links with environment and behaviour (Bandura, 2001). 'Bandura (cited in Santrock, 2008) proposes that people cognitively represent the behaviour of others and then sometimes adopt this behaviour themselves' (p. 46). The alignment to environment leads us to an important theory in PYD, Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory. This theory holds that development reflects the impact of several environmental systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1998). Five environmental systems are identified:

- Microsystem – settings in which people live, for example home, family peers, school and neighbourhood.
- Mesosystem – relations between microsystems or connections between contexts such as the parents' relationship with the school.
- Exosystem – links between social settings in which the individual does not have an active role such as parents' experience at work or media, communities and neighbourhoods.
- Macrosystem – the culture in which individuals live, political systems and social class.
- Chronosystem – the sociohistorical circumstances, patterning of environment events, and transitions over the life course (Bird & Drewery, 2004; Santrock, 2008).

Adolescents' development, self-esteem and personal identity are impacted by these ecological factors. Personal environment, upbringing, love and affection received from parents and siblings, the atmosphere at school level, and relationships with their peers all contribute greatly to the shaping of the young person (Pathan, 2010).

The literature on these developmental theories demonstrates the complexities occurring for young people as they move from childhood to adulthood, including that their ecological world's impact on their individual development. Bronfenbrenner theory (as cited in Santrock, 2008 & Bruce et al., 2009) highlighted the importance of socioecological perspectives on adolescents for youth-serving organisations, as they aim through positive strengths-based approaches to connect young people to their four worlds: their geographical community, cultural community, places of school or work, and peer and family relationships (Bruce et al., 2009; Lerner et al., 2005a; Martin, 2003).

2.3 Positive youth development (PYD)

Human development theories have informed the emergence of PYD principles which promote the development of social functioning including social, emotional, cognitive, behavioural and moral competencies (Catalano et al., 2004). The early focus on fostering youth development was through physical activity, delivered through approaches based on providing boundaries and discipline. These were practised through organisations such as the YMCA, Girls' Brigade, Scouts and Guides (Ara Taiohi, 2011; Barwick, 2006).

Youth work began to emerge in New Zealand as a distinct occupation in the 1970s (Ara Taiohi, 2011; Barwick, 2006; Martin, 2006). This change occurred as a result of globalisation, new technologies, and social changes (Martin, 2003, 2006; Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002). Literature from the United States describes social changes around this time due to poverty, divorce, out-of-wedlock births, family mobility, and single parenthood, which affected historical means of nurturing the development of children and youth (Catalano et al., 2004). These societal changes led to a gap in young people's days after school finished and unsupervised free time led to risk-taking behaviour (Lerner et al., 2005a). Tebes et al. (2007) note that research has shown various negative youth outcomes such as reduced academic achievement along with involvement in risky behaviour, criminal activity and substance use when there is unsupervised out-of-school time. A community response resulted in the provision of youth development programmes across the Western world.

Despite the understanding that adolescence is a challenging life stage and that societal changes have put pressure on this age group over the past half century, a deficit-based approach to youth work and youth development programmes prevailed up to the turn of the century. Martin (2003) describes the impact of this deficit lens by stating that 'young people have been labelled as "at risk" on the basis of the symptoms rather than the causes of their situation' (p. 20). Damon (2004) and Lerner et al. (2005a) point out that past approaches focused on problems that some young people encounter while growing up and a prediction of risky and destructive behaviour such as drinking, sexual activity leading to teen pregnancy, smoking and drug use. Researchers have highlighted the intervention and prevention focus in youth development programmes, focusing on reducing these risk-taking behaviours (Catalano et al., 2004; Damon, 2004; Larson, 2000; Lerner & Galambos, 1998; Shek & Wai, 2008). More recent literature has criticised the deficit-based approach. Preventing negative outcomes came to be recognised as not preparing youth to

contribute positively and healthily now and in the future, with the idea that ‘problem-free’ does not mean ‘prepared’ (Damon, 2004; Kurtines et al., 2008; Reininger et al., 2003).

Literature from the past 15 years illustrates the shift away from deficit models. The recent youth development literature uniformly supports the importance of strengths-based approaches. Strengths-based programmes focus on skill and competency development through highlighting and developing internal and external strengths in young people’s lives. PYD programmes are based on these, and strive to influence young people’s paths to positive outcomes by countering risk factors and enhancing protective factors (Catalano et al., 2004; Damon, 2004; Lerner & Galambos, 1998; Lerner et al., 2005a; Martin, 2003; Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002; Seymour, 2012; Wayne Francis Community Trust, 2011).

As described in the Wayne Francis Community Trust (2011) framework on PYD in New Zealand, a strengths-based approach identifies all people as having strengths that are potentially untapped or unrecognised. These strengths are considered to foster motivation for growth and build resilience. Such an approach recognises that both risk and protective factors are prevalent throughout a young person’s development and encourages young people to recognise their own strengths and assets.

Strengths-based approaches look to youth as resources to be developed rather than problems to be managed (Damon, 2004; Kurtines et al., 2008; Seymour, 2012). According to Damon (2004), ‘the field of positive youth development focuses on each and every child’s unique talents, strengths, interests, and future potential’ (p. 13). This marks a shift away from asking what we need to do to prevent things going wrong, to understanding what can go right in the development of young people (Lerner et al., 2005a; Seymour, 2012). Table 2.1 presents a comparison of traditional youth development approaches and strengths-based PYD approaches.

Table 2.1 Traditional youth services vs PYD

Traditional youth services	PYD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on problems • Reactive • Targeted youth • Youth as recipients • Programmes • Professional providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on positive outcomes • Proactive • All youth • Youth as active participants • Community response • Community members

Source: Wayne Francis Community Trust (2011, p. 19).

There are a number of definitions of PYD that are useful in terms of understanding its purpose and guiding programme design. Yet the literature also highlights that there is a lack of a consistent definition, which in turn has led to a lack of common language in the sector (Martin, 2006; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 1998, 2003; Shek, Siu, & Lee, 2007).

The overarching theme that emerges from the PYD literature is that all young people need support and guidance to develop their assets. Programmes seek to do more than fill idle time and keep youth off the streets. PYD programmes are designed to provide young people with enriching experiences that broaden their perspectives and enhance their socialisation and personal skills (Martin, 2006; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 1998, 2003). PYD is grounded in healthy relationships among family, school, peer group, and community, and is consistent with the ecological model of Bronfenbrenner (as cited in Jackson, 2014).

The main objective for PYD is to offset young people's deficits and the risk factors in their lives by building on strengths and developing resilience by providing an asset-rich environment (Dean, 2012; Roth & Brooks-Gunn 2003). Identifying young people's strengths also allows for them to be active agents in charting their own life course (Brendtro, Mitchell, & Jackson, 2014). PYD programmes have been shown to significantly decrease or prevent incidence of risky sexual practices, substance use and aggressive behaviour (Klein et al., 2006).

The literature suggests a focus on three main dimensions to improve young people's resilience: goals, activities, and atmosphere. Goals are aligned to the development of strengths and competencies, cultivating positive connections with others, and nurturing a positive identity and independence. Activities provided by PYD programmes allow for development in life, leadership, and social skills along with academic or career development. These activities can be varied in nature but focus on the underlying development of personal goals. The atmosphere dimension holds the most weight, distinguishing a successful PYD programme from other programmes for youth (Catalano et al., 2004; Dean, 2012; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 1998, 2003).

When a programme has a youth-centred focus with meaningful youth voice being heard, youth responsibilities and is run by caring, responsive adults who pay attention to individuals' unique characteristics and are interested and supportive of their background, this develops a strong sense of belonging (Dean, 2012; Martin, 2006). The structure of a programme is needing to have clear boundaries, be well-organised and provide an environment where young people feel safe, respected, and have an understanding of their involvement in the programme. Finally, the length of the programme is important. Researchers have argued that programmes lasting nine months or more produce better results (Catalano et al., 2004; Dean 2012; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 1998, 2003).

The literature describes a variety of positive outcomes from PYD programmes for young people such as feeling valued; developing close and lasting relationships; being part of a group and useful to others; being able to use support systems; having belief in their future with real opportunities; and being reflective, caring, ethical and healthy. When programmes are designed to build both strengths and assets while resisting risk factors, these outcomes are considered attainable (Lerner & Galambos, 1998; McLaren, 2002; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 1998; Seymour, 2012).

2.4 PYD models

As with definitions of PYD, there is no universally accepted best practice model for PYD programmes. Bruce et al. (2009), Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003) and Shek et al. (2007) have all noted that the youth development field has so many definitions and models that consistency across the sector is almost impossible. Five predominant models that are backed by strengths-based and PYD premises are evident in the literature, including '40 Development Assets'; 'Five Cs'; '15 Constructs of PYD'; 'Circle of Courage'; and Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (YDSA; 'Aotearoa' is the Māori name for New Zealand).

These models have been developed in different contexts internationally. Some have been used across different locations, for example 15 Constructs of PYD has been used in the development of PYD frameworks in Hong Kong and Australia (Seymour, 2012; Shek et al., 2007; Shek, Yu, & Ho, 2012). The Five Cs and 40 Development Assets models are US-based and are used in many contexts within the PYD sector as they relate to the development of assets in the young person. Others have been developed for more specific contexts, such as the Circle of Courage which is based on the Native American cultural context, yet seen as a model that can be translated into other community contexts. The YDSA, developed by New Zealand's Ministry of Youth Affairs in 2002, is not specifically a working model but provides a recommended structure for all youth development programmes in New Zealand based on six key principles (described below).

All five models adopt a strengths-based approach, but each have different emphases in terms of how PYD is sought. The 40 Development Assets model is based on the view that youth need to individually develop 'assets', 20 of which are considered 'internal' and 20 'external', and programmes are designed to help that asset development (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003; Theokas, Phelps, & Lerner, 2005). The Five Cs model identifies five characteristics – competence, confidence, character, connection, caring – which programmes based on it seek to help youth build (Lerner et al., 2005a; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). The 15 Constructs of PYD, meanwhile, include bonding, resilience, social competence, emotional competence, cognitive competence, behavioural competence, moral competence, self-determination, spirituality, self-efficacy, clear and positive identity, a belief in the future, recognition for positive behaviours, opportunities for pro-social involvement, and pro-social norms (Catalano et al., 2004).

PYD programmes based on building individual characteristics, assets or constructs will have activities built into them which provide opportunities for individuals to develop these. With regard to the Five Cs model, for example, Lerner et al. (2005a) state that programmes are most likely to result in the development of the Five Cs when they involve positive and sustained adult-youth relationships, youth skill-building activities, and opportunities for youth to participate and lead community-based activities.

The Circle of Courage model is focused less on the individual and more on the context in which development takes place. It emphasises the role of the community in providing opportunities for youth to develop their own strengths and focuses on four main goals: providing opportunity to

build generosity; have a sense of belonging; develop skills, mastery; and space to develop independence (Ara Taiohi, 2011; Brendtro, Mitchell, Freado, & du Toit, 2012; Bruce et al., 2009; Martin, 2003).

The YDSA (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002) is different again in that its focus is on what are considered principles of good practice in the provision of PYD programmes. It was developed following wide and thorough consultation and a review of the literature relating to developmental assets, strengths-based practice and the ecological approach to protective and risk factors. The literature review found that six key principles needed to be focused on in policy, by society, and by those working with young people. The six principles are the driving force of the strategy and state that youth development:

1. is shaped by the 'big picture'.
2. is about young people being connected.
3. is based on a consistent strengths-based approach.
4. happens through quality relationships.
5. is triggered when young people fully participate.
6. needs good information.

New Zealand youth development approaches have followed international, mostly western cultural trends, but literature shows specific cultural factors are important to consider. While the literature describes some aspects of PYD process being transferable across culture (Brendtro et al., 2012; Damon, 2004), writing from four indigenous youth articles related to Maori, Central Australian Aboriginal, American Indian / Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiians all highlighted the importance of cultural links in design and delivery to gain effective results for young people in PYD programmes (Kenyon & Hanson, 2012; Lopes, Flouris, & Lindeman, 2013; Sy, Greaney, Nigg, & Hirose-Wong, 2011; Ware & Walsh-Tapiata, 2010).

In a research project on effective methodologies for positive development for Maori youth, Ware & Walsh-Tapiata (2010) that Tikanga (values) Ahuatanga (characteristics) are important in developing a Maori PYD model. Tikanga informs culturally appropriate approaches to interaction between youth and their key social groupings, environment and resources. Ahuatanga were identified as being personal characteristics that are exercised at an individual level and are relative to cultural context. As with other indigenous cultures this highlighted the importance of community involvement from a cultural perspective.

Ware & Walsh-Tapiata (2010, p. 26) also emphasised the importance of relationships from a Maori youth development perspective and stated that people involved in Maori youth development need to be stable, in order that “positive whanau-like relationships based on—’whanaungatanga (the process of getting to know each other), mana (pride, respect, power) and manaakitanga (hospitality, kindness) in which Maori youth feel supported”. Ware & Walsh-Tapiata (2010) discussed the Tuakana-teina relationship which refers to respectful reciprocal relationship based on the complimentary sharing and learning between an elder and a young

person. The tuakana protects and transfers knowledge to the teina. The teina should also be given opportunities to act as the tuakana at times and guide others.

In a review of literature on youth development programmes in central Australian aboriginal communities, Lopes et al. (2013, p. 58) emphasised that it was “crucial that young people and their families are involved in the planning and development of youth programs to ensure that activities are locally driven and not externally imposed”. Kenyon and Hanson (2012) also emphasise this and discuss the importance of having a collective nature of thinking ‘we’ instead of ‘I’, looking to wider support networks and elders for keepers of American Indian/Alaska Native knowledge and tradition. Sy et al (2011) have concluded from their research of a native Hawaiian PYD programme that increased cultural identity is associated with reduction of risk taking behaviour. Culturally based PYD programmes are argued by these authors to increase resilience by individual identity and cultural pride leading to positive self-esteem.

Kenyon & Hanson (2012) emphasise that researchers and policy makers need to push the importance of employing the positive aspects of culture. Programmes need to acknowledge and find ways to weave popular, modern youth culture with traditional culture. More research on PYD among ethnic groups is recognised as needed. Due to lack of evaluated PYD cultural programmes, there are few that are deemed best practice (Kenyon & Hanson, 2012; Lopes et al., Sy et al., 2011; Ware & Walsh-Tapiata, 2010).

McLaren (2002, p.15) states “there is a presumption that the development process is reasonably similar across different ethnicities, cultures and countries”. The authors of culturally focused PYD argue that cultural processes are important and must be included in the design and delivery of PYD for ethnic groups. Literature for mainstream youth programmes also emphasises the importance of greater external contribution from family and community members (Chand et al., 2013; Kurtines et al., 2008; Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002; Wayne Francis Community Trust, 2011). In addition to the previously discussed importance of supportive adult relationships in PYD programmes, this would suggest that mainstream programmes would benefit from learning and implementing a wider ethos of cultural methods and practice.

2.5 Self-efficacy and resilience

The concepts of self-efficacy and resilience are prominent and consistently emphasised in the PYD literature. Developing these two traits is said to be necessary for positive outcomes for adolescents. Self-efficacy is described by Bandura (1994) as ‘people’s beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives’ (p. 1). These beliefs are affected by how people feel, think, behave, and motivate themselves. Other authors describe how that when personal mastery expectations are high, behaviour changes, and a high level of self-efficacy determines the initial decision to perform a behaviour (Muir, 2001; Sherer & Maddux, 1982).

Developing self-efficacy enables young people to feel confident and competent in their ability to succeed and cope in the face of adversity and bounce back from setbacks (Bandura, 1994). Young people with a low sense of self-efficacy are likely to have negative thoughts and believe the task is too great and that they will fail (Bandura, 1994; Yusuf, 2011). As discussed earlier, adolescents are preparing for the demands of adulthood and learning to gain independence and self-responsibility. This requires mastering new skills, dealing with pubertal changes and emotionally invested relationships, along with sexuality issues and decisions for future career. The ease of this transition depends on the strength of personal efficacy built through experiences young people have undertaken. Supporting the development of efficacy in young people requires positive appraisal and raising young people's belief in their capabilities through a realistic structured situation that leads to success (Bandura, 1994; Catalano et al., 2004).

Developing motivation is also emphasised as important. Extrinsic motivation reflects external control and self-regulation and intrinsic motivation behaviours are performed out of an interest to learn and feel competent and independent, whereby young people become more self-determined (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 3). Developing self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation enhances resiliency. Resilience is the capacity of children and young people to adapt successfully and overcome adversity and do well in spite of exposure to high stress or adverse conditions (Ahern, Kiehl, Sole, & Byers, 2006; Donnon & Hammond, 2007; Liebenberg, Ungar, & Van de Vijver, 2012). The transitional life stage of adolescence is a difficult time that can attract youth to high-risk activities, but having resilience enables them to cope with challenges rather than feel vulnerable to them. Resilient young people will be able to bounce back from challenging, adverse situations. Resilience is about identifying and developing positive factors in young people's lives that help them cope with decisions required in this stage of life (Catalano et al., 2004; Howard & Johnson, 2000).

Ungar (2012) points out that early studies of resilience were focused on individual traits or assets, yet this led to the disadvantaged being expected to employ personal agency to access support and opportunities in their environments in order to increase their level of mental and emotional ability to cope with any adversity they face. There has since been a shift to a focus on a group of ecological factors that develop resilience and positive human development more than just individual traits. As noted earlier, the developmentalist Vygotsky argued for the scaffolding of experience to support human development. This leads to Bronfenbrenner's (as cited in Santrock 2008) emphasis on the importance of the mesosystem of family, school and community support (Howard & Johnson, 2000; Ungar, 2012, 2013).

From Ungar's (2012, 2013) viewpoint, resilience equals the person, their strengths, and the 4 challenges they face with the ecology around them, along with the opportunities that are presented to them and the meaning of those opportunities provided by their family, school, community and their nation. When the young person links meaning to opportunity, they can seek support. A commonly held view is that the larger the number of protective factors and processes surrounding a young person, the more likely they are to mobilise resilient behaviours (Bagshaw,

2011; Howard & Johnson, 2000; Ungar 2012). The reverse is also true: the less protective factors and processes, the greater chance of exhibiting non-resilient behaviour (Ungar, 2012). This highlights the need for PYD programmes to build positive growth and support young people to navigate and withstand high levels of risk. Research on resiliency has revealed that factors such as structured activities and adult mentors make young people more resilient (Reinger et al., 2003).

A commonly expressed view is that once a young person has coped and bounced back from adversity, they will have the confidence they need to cope in future adverse situations. Self-reflection through understanding their level of self-efficacy and confidence in their relationships with caring adults enables them to enhance their identity and independence to make positive decisions for themselves (Bagshaw, 2011; Howard & Johnson, 2000; Ungar 2013). Self-assessment measurement tools support this process for individual young people.

2.6 Importance of evaluation and measurement of PYD

The importance of research and evaluation that enables the sector to learn what does and doesn't work is highlighted in the literature, as is the need to ensure the development of best practice in programme design and delivery. Best practice dictates the best use of resources to achieve the best outcomes for young people (Catalano et al., 2004; Klein et al., 2005; Mundy-McPherson et al., 2012; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003).

While it is widely agreed that outcome evaluation is important, despite an increase in PYD programmes the quality of evaluation evidence typically falls short (Kenyon & Hanson, 2012; Martin, 2006; Mundy-McPherson et al., 2012; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 1998, 2003). The main reasons for this is that organisations and funders often fail to allocate financial and staff resources to outcome evaluation (Gavet, 2011; Mundy-McPherson et al., 2012; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 1998, 2003). Evaluation can also be frowned on by organisations because it is seen as an end point for judging a programme's value or worth. Staff can see it as a measure of their performance, and not about improving outcomes for the young people they serve (Coatsworth & Conroy, 2007; Mundy-McPherson et al., 2012).

The New Zealand Ministry of Youth Development (2009), in a 'review of evidence' report on youth development structured programmes, observes that formal assessment processes enabling programmes to be responsive to individual needs and building on their strengths are not clear. While they might be developed and conducted, the quality of assessment activity and data is dependent on the ability of the information to be understood and interpreted, and on the findings being acted on by the practitioners running the programmes. This involves training and resources, which involve costs to providers and funders.

While evaluation is recognised as important, Mundy-McPherson et al. (2012) emphasise that evidence-based practice will not succeed unless it is embraced by those who are involved, such as the young people, youth workers, support staff and family. The Ministry of Youth Development (2009) argues that effective evaluation systems that include pre- and post-course data collection

of standardised measurements that align to set programme outcomes enable programme leaders to monitor their performance and make mid-course corrections if needed. The report also highlights that an educational shift within the youth sector is required to understand the value of a clear process for improving services and measuring impact.

A search of the literature for PYD measurement assessment tools returned a number that are very scientific and technical in their approach, and some even adopted from a deficit-based approach. Jackson (2014) states that 'until recently, most assessment focused on problems and ignored potentials' (p. 18). These measurement assessment tools often use quantitative data from surveys that are usually based on Likert-type scales with large volumes of participants. The analysis however of this type of research is technical and complex, and while potentially usable by policy analysts, it is unlikely to be confidently used by programme staff for their own benefit.

2.7 Comparing PYD measurement assessment tools

Eleven PYD measurement assessment tools were identified from a search of the literature. All were framed in a strengths based manner and are useful for gaining insights into assessing young people's development. Table 2.2 summarises the characteristics of these 11 tools.

Table 2.2 Characteristics of 11 PYD measurement assessment tools identified from the literature

Tool	General use for young people	Used in a specific PYD programme	Young people (YP) complete (no- name)	YP complete (with name)	Quantitative Questions only	Qualitative Questions only	Quantitative & qualitative questions	Other adults complete	Pre-post assessment	Strengths-based focus
1.Youth Resiliency: Assessing Development Strengths Questionnaire (YRADSQ) (Donnon & Hammond, 2007)	**		**		**					**
2.Adolescent Resilience Questionnaire (ARQ) (Gartland et al., 2011)	**		**		**					**
3.Child & Youth Resilience Measure-28 (CYRM-28) (Liebenberg et al., 2012)	**		**		**					**
4.Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (SEQ) (Muir, 2001)	**		**		**					**
5.Developmental Audit – Circle of Courage (Brendtro & Larson, 2006, Brendtro et al., 2014)		**	**			**		**		**
6.Five Cs longitudinal research (Learner et al., 2005b, Geldhof et al., 2013; Geldhof et al., 2014)	**	**	**		**			**	**	**
7.Rochester Evaluation of Asset Development for Youth (READY) (Klein et al., 2005)	**	**	**		**					**
8.Life Effectiveness Questionnaire (LEQ) (Neill, Marsh, & Richards, 2003)	**		**	**	**				**	**
9.Search Institute Developmental Assets Profile (DAP) (Scales, Benson, Leffert, & Blyth, 2013)		**	**	**	**				**	**
10.Effectiveness measurement evaluation: 'Rock Up' (Carmen, Waycott, & Smith, 2011)		**		**			**	**	**	**
11. Project K (Deane & Harre, 2014; Qiao & McNaught, 2007)		**		**	**				**	**

The table compares the 11 tools and a number of points such as whether they are used in general by schools and community services or specific PYD programmes, if the young peoples' name are recorded or not, and whether they are interested in the individual or cohorts of young people. Also considered is whether they have quantitative or qualitative questions, and if other adults in the young persons' lives are asked to complete the tool. Finally, analysis was made to ascertain if there is pre and post reporting.

Of the 11 measurement assessment tools, the first three in Table 2.2 are focused on resilience; the fourth is focused on self-efficacy. The Youth Resiliency: Assessing Development Strengths Questionnaire (YRADSQ); Adolescent Resilience Questionnaire (ARQ); Child and Youth Resilience Measure-28 (CYRM-28); and Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (SEQ) are all for general use by community and schools. They all use quantitative questionnaires with Likert-type scale questions aligning to self-efficacy or resiliency within young people. The ARQ and CYRM-28 also have a focus on the environmental aspects of resiliency. All are used by researchers to provide information to stakeholders advocating for strategies in developing resilience. These four measurement assessment tools are submitted to young people anonymously and therefore do not focus on individual development.

The Developmental Audit – Circle of Courage and the Five Cs assessment tool (used in the longitudinal 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development) have been applied within specific PYD programmes in the United States. The 4-H study followed PYD programmes over a 10-year period across 44 states. The Five Cs tool was administered and analysed by researchers and used quantitative questions with Likert-type scales. Young people were identified by a code rather than their names and were not given their results (Geldhof et al., 2013; Geldhof et al., 2014; Lerner et al. 2005b). Developmental Audit – Circle of Courage adopts a qualitative methodology in which young people are the primary data source. They are encouraged to engage in a reflective process to understand and overcome struggles and develop strength and resilience. There is a strong focus on strengths and solutions rather than assessment of deficits. Staff are trained to show respect and openness. They conduct one-on-one interviews with the young people and allow each young person to be the agent of change in their lives. Information is also collected from teachers, peers, family and other significant adults (Brendtro & Larson, 2006, Brendtro et al., 2014).

Two more generic measurement assessment tools used across a variety of PYD programmes are the Rochester Evaluation of Asset Development for Youth (READY) tool and Life Effectiveness Questionnaire (LEQ). The READY tool was developed to provide a means of assessing the impact of community programmes on PYD outcomes. A strength of the tool is that it can be easily administered by agencies and community organisations so they can report their data to funders. It comes with a tool kit and training modules for self-management, including how to enter data oneself and produce reports (Klein et al., 2005). The LEQ meanwhile was designed for personal development programmes to measure the development of participants. It allows the user to measure the effectiveness of the programme and utilise results for programme staff and

other stakeholders to improve programme quality. The LEQ can also be used for self-examination, goal setting, and feedback with individuals so as to track their development (Neill et al., 2003). Both these tools use quantitative methods, based on questions with Likert-type scales.

The final three measurement assessment tools in Table 2.2 are all used within a specific PYD framework and all measure pre- and post-individual assessment. The Search Institute Developmental Assets Profile (DAP), 'Rock Up' and Project K measurement assessment tools are the most aligned to assessing individual PYD impacts on young programme participants. The Search Institute's DAP uses the 40 Development Assets tool. Its quantitative survey can be used to gain information on a cohort of young people or individual young people and is most often used as a pre- and post- programme tool. DAP data can be entered and analysed, interpreted and applied by the organisation or through the Search Institute. The DAP tool has been utilised in communities around the world over many years (Scales et al., 2013).

The effectiveness measurement evaluation 'Rock Up' involves pre-, mid- and post-assessment of young people's experiences in a six-month PYD programme. Quantitative and qualitative data is collected through questionnaires. Written and verbal feedback is also collected from all participants, and from their teachers and parents/caregivers. Carmen et al. (2011) report issues regarding the data collection with this tool, with the quantitative feedback reporting lower improvements than the qualitative, especially in relation to school feedback. The Project K measurement assessment tool also incorporates pre- and post-assessment along with one-year post-programme self-reporting assessment. The data are used to determine that the programme's resources support effectiveness across programmes and for reporting purposes to stakeholders and funders (Deane & Harre, 2014; Qiao & McNaught, 2007).

Six of the 11 measurement assessment tools identified (YRADSQ, ARQ, CYRM-28, SEQ, Five Cs and READY tools) emphasise the importance of pilot testing the questionnaires (Donnon & Hammond, 2007; Gartland et al., 2011; Klein, 2005; Learner et al., 2005b; Liebenberg et al., 2012; Muir, 2001). Of note was that none of the 11 tools allow the young people involved to view the results of the assessment.

2.8 PYD evaluation individual measurement assessment tools best practice

The PYD literature emphasises the need for clarity and consensus in the use of standardised outcome measures. Although tools vary in the specific outcomes they target, the absence of shared language and framework means there can be no certain evaluation of the effectiveness of the programmes or policies aimed at promoting PYD (Catalano et al., 2004; Deane & Harre, 2014; Jackson, 2014; Learner et al., 2005a; Small & Memmo, 2004).

The sector needs to define the difference between success of programme quality and success of youth developmental outcomes (Jackson, 2014; Yohalem & Wilson-Ahlstrom, 2010). Yohalem and Wilson-Ahlstrom (2010) note that 'while consensus is building within the field about what

constitutes effective practice, research that links specific programme features to youth outcomes is rare' (p. 19).

Three specific groups are interested in evaluation research of PYD programme quality: researchers, policy makers, and practitioners. Their interest, however, has different motivations. Researchers are focused on programme assessment measures, not the participants; policy makers are looking to ensure resources are allocated effectively for maximum impact; and practitioners are looking at ways to capture the effectiveness of a programme in order to assess, reflect and improve it (Yohalem & Wilson-Ahlstrom, 2010).

To ensure PYD practitioners can assess and utilise the outcomes of evaluations, researchers need to translate their research into applications for use in PYD programmes. Tools that are valid, reliable, and feasible to use in day-to-day PYD programme work must be developed (Geldhof et al., 2014).

Measurement instruments need to be valid and reliable and require constructs that are specific to agreed PYD frameworks (Geldhof et al., 2013; Jackson, 2014; Klein et al., 2005). Those involved in PYD evaluation and research, from whichever field of work, require information about the purpose, structure, content and practical utility of the available tools (Geldhof et al., 2013; Yohalem & Wilson-Ahlstrom, 2010). Neill et al. (2003) argue that a tool's layout should be clear and straightforward to allow people without experience in research, such as programme staff, to administer the tool with confidence. The importance of who administers the tool is stressed in the literature, and there should be consistency and trust between the young person and the adult administering the tool (Brendtro et al., 2012; Carmen et al., 2011; Neill et al., 2003).

In regard to tool composition, Jones et al. (2011) argue that there should be 3–6 items per factor to specify or define a factor. Six or more items per factor are considered to increase the risk of unimportant items having adverse influence, and fewer than three items makes the factor difficult to define. The time required to complete the instrument which should not exceed 10 min to avoid disruptions to the engagement of participants in completing the tool (Jones et al., 2011; Neill et al., 2003). 'I' statements are considered important as a basis for evaluation questions to ensure that the young person was referring to themselves and not agreeing with general statements; for example, 'I have self-discipline' as opposed to 'Self-discipline is important' (Jones et al., 2011). Also emphasised is the need for consistent use of the Likert scale, with strongly disagree through to strongly agree on a 5–7 point scale rather than a simple yes or no; this allows for change over the duration of the assessment period to be measured (Jones et al., 2011; Neill et al., 2003; Reininger et al., 2003).

Researchers have also argued that consideration needs to be given to the age of participants completing measurement assessment tools, to ensure they understand the questions and they are relevant. Jones et al. (2011) and Klein et al. (2005) note that the LEQ and READY tools are suitable for young people aged 12 and 13 respectively. Younger adolescents are less likely to

have developed formal operational thought, and this limitation in cognitive ability may affect their ability to report on their thought processes (Klein et al., 2005).

The literature stresses the importance of both quantitative and qualitative data collection (Catalano et al., 2004; Mundy-McPherson et al., 2012; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003; Sy, Greaney, Nigg, & Hirose-Wong 2011). Quantitative and statistical data enable independent assessment of what the programme accomplished and are easier to compare, especially over different periods of assessment (Catalano et al., 2004). Quantitative self-assessment data collection alone, however, can suffer from self-report bias, with the young person providing socially desirable answers, and can be diminished due to the level of insight and honesty in what they report (Klein et al., 2005; Neill et al., 2003; Reininger et al., 2003). Qualitative inquiry supports the view that the young person is the expert of their own lives (Brendtro et al., 2012). Providing a space for young people to expand further on their quantitative answers is argued to assist in interpreting results with less bias (Pathan, 2010).

The importance of pilot testing during instrument development was also emphasized in the literature. Pilot testing ensures the questions are understood and clear to all the participants. It is argued that pilot testing will give an indication of the stability of the tool and length of time required to complete it. Changes can then be made to the instrument after feedback (Neill et al., 2003; Reininger et al., 2003).

Klein et al. (2005) discuss the importance providing PYD programmes with a user manual/tool kit which allows PYD programmes to self-manage the use of the tool. This would include the ability to collect and enter their own data, and run reports. The reports would involve calculation of overall scores for the identified constructs, along with individual reports on adolescents' self-reported levels.

2.9 Conclusion

This literature review has highlighted the importance of understanding what occurs in young people as they progress through adolescence. It has identified the challenges young people face and the supports they need to ensure they grow into resilient adults who have developed self-efficacy. Although there is a growing body of knowledge on best practice for providing support through PYD programmes, evaluating such programmes has been recognised as challenging. It is important that there is confidence that the supports and resources utilised are in fact supporting development within the young person. Those involved in evaluation – either in design, administration, data analysis or translating the analysis into usable information – must understand the purpose and the data must be easy to use and measure so it can be utilised effectively by youth practitioners. There is no single self-measuring assessment tool that has been identified as best practice for measuring young people's development, but the literature did highlight a range of important principles related to developing such tools.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an outline and explanation of the methodological underpinnings of this research. In the first section the decision to use the qualitative approach based on the interpretivist paradigm to address the research questions is explained. The next section provides a rationale for the methodology. The 'insider researcher' perspective of the author is then considered and discussed, followed by a section outlining the methods used to collect and analyse the data. Finally, the ethical concerns and possible limitations of this research are discussed.

3.1 Selection of methodology

The aim of this research was to conduct 'a critical examination of a positive youth development programme's individual self-assessment tool'. To achieve this, it was vital to examine the experiences of programme staff and participants in using the self-assessment tool, in order to ascertain its use and usefulness within YWCA Auckland's PYD programme. A qualitative research methodology was therefore considered to be most appropriate for this study. Qualitative research based on the interpretivist paradigm (described below) has enabled the complexity of social phenomena – in this case the experiences of users of the self-assessment tool under study – to be explored and an interpretive understanding to be developed.

3.2 Rationale for the methodology

Adopting a qualitative approach enabled the research to be developed in a way that allowed for the best possible sharing of information by participants. As Kumar (2011) states, 'Qualitative methods are characterised by flexibility and freedom in terms of structure and order given to researcher' (p. 159). Qualitative research allows for the researcher to understand, discover, explore, explain and clarify situations of the interviewees' feelings, perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and experiences (Kumar, 2011). This flexible and emergent approach enabled a research design that could achieve multiple aims with a diverse range of research participants. For example, the research questions could be tailored and conveyed to meet the differences in the participants' experience in using of the tool, their levels of understanding of its aims, and their different ages,

Interpretivism is an important foundation for the qualitative approach used in this research. Interpretivism is 'underpinned by the belief the social reality is not objective but highly subjective because it is shaped by our perceptions' (Collis & Hussey, 2003, p.57). In processing and analysing the information shared by participants in this research, interpretive understanding was applied to a complex range of perspectives, experiences and concerns shared in the participant interviews to bring a holistic understanding of ways the tool has been used and experienced within the context of the YWCA programme.

This approach fits with the philosophical foundations of PYD approaches and the learnings gained through my own experience as a youth development professional. Through that experience I have developed a strong belief in ensuring the voice of those involved or impacted in the process that affects them is heard. One key element of successful PYD programmes is youth participation.

Youth participation is one of the six principles of the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002, p. 22), which 'acknowledges the importance of providing opportunities for young people to increase their control of what happens to them and around them, through advice, participation and engagement'. Ensuring the voice of the participant is heard and given emphasis was a key factor in this research, which is therefore not only aligned with a sound qualitative research approach but also PYD best practice. Given the importance of the programme staff's role in the programme and the administration and use of the tool, understanding the staff perspective has also been considered of high importance when answering the research questions.

3.3 Methods

The main method used to gain primary data in this research was semi-structured interviews. These enabled research participants to be engaged on a one-on-one basis and to speak freely about their experiences with the assessment tool and the programme context, thereby enabling an exploration of the complexity of the social phenomena involved. Semi-structured interviews are among the most common strategies for collecting qualitative data, especially with research such as this that is informed by an interpretive approach. Unlike highly structured survey interviews and questionnaires which tend to be used in positivist research, less structured face-to-face interviews seek to foster learning about individual experiences and perspectives on a given set of issues (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

With semi-structured interviews, the researcher can adapt the questions as necessary, clarify points, and ensure responses are properly understood. The researcher can also pick up on non-verbal cues which can lead to rich data being obtained (Sekaran, 2003). When conducting face-to-face semi-structured interviews the process of listening to the interviewee's story and responses yields much more detailed information than highly structured interviews do (Boyce & Neale, 2006). This type of method is also appropriate in complex situations (Kumar, 2011), such as in this research where participants ranging from older adult professionals to secondary school students were interviewed. It was possible within this method to adapt interviews to be more appropriate for staff or for younger and older youth participants to ensure rich data and capturing of the individual voices of those who have used and experienced the tool.

Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to compare and contrast information gained between interviews. This occurs through asking the same questions in each interview while being flexible enough to allow other important information to arise and ensuring that respondents can explore and describe their individual experience (Dawson, 2009). This encourages rich descriptions of the phenomena under study from the interviewees while leaving the interpretation of combined data analysis to the researcher (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Through a qualitative interpretive approach new learnings can emerge from the data gained.

3.4 Researcher bias/Insider researcher position

This research had added complexity because of my experience with developing the assessment tool under evaluation and prior professional relationship with YWCA Auckland. I was part of a group contracted in 2009 to conduct external research on their Future Leaders Youth Mentoring programme. The contract involved developing the self-assessment measurement tool which is the subject of this research. My role was limited to the development of the assessment tool; since its adoption by the YWCA programme I have not been engaged in the use, processing, nor seen any data that has been collected relating to it.

It was recognized that researching the use and perceived effectiveness of a tool I was involved in developing may lead to potential bias in the collection of data and its analysis. The interpretive paradigm requires the researcher to engage in critical reflection. As I was in an insider researcher position, I kept a reflective journal and used this in consulting with my academic supervisor and as part of the analysis process to record and check my own interpretation of events and issues that arose in the participant interviews. This ensured my preconceptions and potential bias were kept in check and through open discussions with my supervisor I was able to utilise my insider researcher position to strengthen my analysis (Sikes & Potts, 2008).

3.5 Participants

A primary aim of this research was to understand the use of the assessment tool by the participants and ask them to reflect on their experience with it. Data collection occurred through semi-structured interviews with programme staff, youth participants who had recently had their first experience of using the tool, and older youth participants who were asked to use the tool every six months over the past four years. Semi-structured interviews ensured that the interviewees were treated as the primary experts on the material in question.

The purpose of the semi-structured interviews was to understand from the programme staff how they informed the youth users about the tool and its purpose and what their experience was of conducting the assessment every six months for four years. For the youth participants, the interviews focused on their experiences in completing the assessment tool and what their understanding was of its purpose and use.

Participants were those directly involved, either presently or in the past, in the YWCA Auckland Future Leaders programme. They were:

YWCA staff participants. Purposive sampling was used. The prospective participants invited were YWCA staff who have had direct experience in administering and working with the assessment tool, either currently, or in the past year. The three staff selected had mixed levels of experience on the programme; one was new to the role (six months) and had only administered the tool to two groups in the month before the interview; one had left the organisation six months prior to the interview but had worked on the programme for three years previously; and one was the previous programme manager

who implemented the tool four years ago and who had also left the organisation six months prior to the interview.

Youth participants. Invitations to participate were sent to two groups of youth. The first were in the first or second year of the Future Leaders programme; three of this group agreed to participate in the study. One was coming to the end of her first year on the programme, and the other two were coming to the end of their second year. They were all under 16 years old and parental consent was obtained along with a signed assent form from the participants.

The second group of youth participants invited were youth programme participants who had been in the programme and been completing the tool for the past three or four years. From this group four agreed to participate in the study all of whom were over 16 years old and were about to graduate from the programme.

Consequently a total of 10 participants were interviewed. They were invited to participate in the research through a contact at YWCA Auckland who extended an individual invitation to the programme staff and young people. They were sent the appropriate information sheet and consent/assent forms which had to be signed before the interviews took place. All staff interviews were online video calls via Skype, but the youth participant interviews were face to face and held at a location determined by the young person – either on school premises (out of class time) or at an agreed public venue.

Prior to the start of each interview the participants were told that there were no right or wrong answers and their views and experiences were what was important. All participants were given the option of receiving a copy of the transcript to view and ensure their voice was heard correctly and give them a chance to correct or add anything prior to data analysis. Those that chose to receive their transcripts were emailed them and requested to send back any amendments they would like to have made. None of the participants emailed back any amendments.

3.6 Data collection

A draft list of indicative open-ended questions was developed for each of the participants groups (see Appendix C) based on the three key research questions of the study. These were:

1. How has the tool been understood by the programme staff, delivered and used?
2. How has the use of the tool affected the actual experience of the youth participants in the programmes?
3. In what way has the data collected from the tool been utilised to meet the programme objectives?

The interview questions were pre-tested with a colleague who is very experienced in working with youth, which was an important part of the process. Pilot/pre-testing 'entails a critical examination of the understanding of each question and its meaning as understood by a respondent' (Kumar, 2011, p. 158). The purpose was to identify any issues the respondents might

have in understanding the questions in regard to meaning and appropriateness and to check if their interpretation was different to what I was trying to convey. It also helped to gauge how long the questions would take to answer and whether this would fit the time indicated to interviewees. It was important to conduct the pilot because as Sampson (2004) states, 'Pilots are invaluable as introductions to unknown worlds' (p. 399). The process resulted in some amendments to the wording of a few questions and the development of prompt questions/points.

The nature of the research and its participants required me to call upon a number of aspects of my youth development experience and practice. In interviewing it is important to develop a positive relationship and rapport to ensure the interviewee feels trust and respect. This enables a safe, comfortable environment for the interviewee to share personal attitudes and experiences as they actually occurred (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). As Kumar (2011) states, '(T)he quality of data depends upon the quality of interaction and of the interviewers' (p. 250). The interviews began with me explaining more about who I was and why I was interested in this research. Explaining that I was a youth worker was helpful and allowed a connection to be made and broke the ice. I also provided snacks and drinks for them to help themselves to or to take away after. In each case a relaxed and respectful relationship was quickly formed which meant each participant appeared comfortable and quite open as the interview proceeded. Each interview was around 45–60 minutes in duration. They were audio-recorded and I took some written notes as well.

At the completion of the interviews I documented my thoughts and observations by audio recording and then in writing. These initial thoughts provided starting points for my analysis. Each interview was transcribed by a contracted transcriber who had signed a confidentiality agreement.

3.7 Data analysis

Analysis of the interview data took place at first from my written notes, then through listening to the recordings to pick up on tone, pauses, verbal inflections, and to extrapolate themes. From there I developed the first draft of codes for themes that were emerging from key questions responses. In some cases the responses to the questions were similar and formed a clear theme in other cases they were very different due to experience with the tool, which formed a variety of themes. The transcripts were coded systematically, whereby I assigned codes to words, statements and paragraphs which led to the emergence of themes. This initially occurred by coding in groups of staff, under 16s and over 16s. In the first draft of themes I had thirteen themes coded for staff and 14 themes for student participants with sub themes emerging for over 16s that were different to under 16s. Once all 10 interviews were coded, I then pulled together quotes under each of the themes in each sub group, reviewed the three groups; staff, under 16s and over 16s to look for common themes with the three original research questions in my thought process. Consistent themes did emerge and transverse through the groups. I re coded these themes and merged the data together leading to six key themes with sub themes and reported the findings in such a way. This process was in line with Sekaran's (2003) approach, which emphasises the integrating of notes with transcriptions. The data were analysed using thematic

analysis, allowing for themes to emerge from the data rather than sorting the data into prescribed themes. This was a lengthy and detailed process which lead to the key six themes. Chapter 4 presents the data from the interviews according to the six themes that emerged during analysis.

3.8 Limitations of the study

A limitation of qualitative methodology is that it is difficult to make generalisations and conclusions based on the results from a small sample size (Boyce & Neale, 2006). However, the rich depth of data and analysis from the 10 participants gives validity to this research.

3.9 Conclusion

The methodology adopted for this research is qualitative and based on the interpretivist paradigm which aligns with PYD principles and practices. Such an approach encouraged the active engagement of the research participants and enabled their views on their experience of using the individual self-assessment tool to be heard. Through the semi-structured interviews the voices of the three groups were respected and listened to carefully, leading to rich data being collected from all involved. The data were analysed and coded using thematic analysis, the findings of which are the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

In this chapter the findings of this study, in the form of the voices and views of the research participants who administered or completed the self-assessment tool, are presented. Interviews were undertaken over one week in school term four of 2014. As described in the methodology chapter, 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted with three participant groupings: programme staff; programme participants under 16 years; and programme participants over 16 years.

Open-ended questions were asked of the participants that were developed based on the three research questions of the study:

1. How has the tool been understood by the programme staff, delivered and used?
2. How has the use of the tool affected the actual experience of the youth participants in the programmes?
3. In what way has the data collected from the tool been utilised to meet the programme objectives

Through the process of the interviewing, re-listening to the recordings, and reading the transcriptions, six key themes emerged. These related to:

1. The participants' views of the purpose of the tool.
2. The experiences they had in using the tool.
3. The tool itself.
4. The use of the tool's data.
5. The outcomes for participants.
6. The recommendations that were made for future use of the tool.

The following sections present the views of the participants in relation to those themes.

In general, the overall comments from the youth participant interviews showed that they were positive about their experience on the Future Leaders programme and the programme staff that support them. One participant stated, for example, 'I am a big fan of the programme' (Over 16 2). Respect and trust of the programme staff was also evident, with one participant saying, 'I like trusted them and I'd tell them anything' (Under 16 2). There were a number of comments relating to the benefit of the programme workshops, such as:

We had this workshop with this lady, ... and she was saying how people who set goals are so much more successful ... Yeah, and I started trying it and I just write them down and it's just motivating just writing it down. (Under 16 3)

These and other comments showed that the participants had gratitude for the opportunity and the impact the programme has had on them. This following comment highlights these themes:

More people should get to experience this crazy amazing opportunity with YWCA ... I've done stuff I would never do. I want more people to do it, more young girls to think – yeah, I can do this. YWCA has changed, me so much. I wouldn't have met my mentor – she's amazing, brave. I just love her ... Back then I was definitely a lot less confident I had real self-esteem issues. I wasn't good at talking in groups or to people who I wasn't really comfortable with. So now it's definitely a big improvement. That's probably the greatest thing that's happened, is that I've gotten a lot better at interpersonal communication and meeting new people. (Over 16 2)

4.1 Purpose of the tool

All participants were asked what they understood the purpose of the tool to be. The three staff's responses varied depending on their role with the programme and/or the level of time they had worked on the programme. The most senior and experienced staff member (hereafter 'programme manager' or Staff 3) who was involved in the implementation of the tool from the beginning appeared to have a clear understanding of the purpose of the tool as a measure of how the programme influenced the girls' development. She said:

It was a measurement tool to measure the development of the girls through the ... programme ... It's really hard to know whether the interventions that you're having with young people are being effective so that was a really good measure for us in terms of being able to measure their increasing confidence, leadership, motivation and goal-setting. (Staff 3)

She indicated that the tool provided measurement of the programme outcomes that had not been possible before its inclusion.

The second staff member, who had three years' experience with the programme (hereafter 'experienced staff member' or Staff 2), also articulated a clear understanding of the tool's purpose from both participant and programme perspectives. She stated that the tool's purpose is:

To measure how the girls felt about their own progress and the way that they were developing throughout the course of the programme and, yeah, a way to basically evaluate whether or not they were, and they saw themselves as developing in the different areas that we covered in the programme. (Staff 2)

She noted the usefulness of tracking the students' development in those areas over time, stating that 'we wanted to see the confidence levels, the resilience levels, all of those desired outcomes improve across the four year period' (Staff 2).

The staff participant who had recently joined the organisation (hereafter 'new staff member' or Staff 1) conveyed far less certainty of the purpose of the tool. She said that she had not been inducted into its purpose and her view was that it was just to monitor the students' feelings:

I understood it's just to see how they're feeling at the time. And so they'll write it according to how they're feeling at the time. (Staff 1)

The under 16 participants' views showed similarities. They all gave answers that conveyed an understanding that the tool's purpose was for the programme coordinators to know if it was achieving what it set out to achieve, as shown in the comment below:

I think the purpose is so that our co-ordinators can know if the programme is helping us or if it's just kind of a thing, whether we're participating to our fullest ability or whether

we're kind of just going along for the ride and not really taking part out of what we're learning. (Under 16 2)

Another under 16 participant stated:

It's for, like, the co-ordinators to know how we're feeling, like how we are feeling throughout the programme. (Under 16 1)

The third under 16 participant conveyed an understanding that it was also there to monitor the effectiveness of the programme activities:

I think it's to see how the students in the YWCA are working and how the programmes, workshops and things are helping us because it has things about goals and things, we do a lot of work on that so I think that's to see if it's actually working for them. (Under 16 3)

Two under 16 participants also discussed how they saw the tool as a way to reflect on where they personally were in the programme:

It's just to help us figure out what we've been doing. (Under 16 2)

It gives us a chance to think about how we're doing as well. (Under 16 3)

The older participants who have been on the programme for four years had a more reflective view of its purpose. They had been completing the tool for four years, and in all cases considered how this may have provided some tracking of their individual progress and development for the programme and themselves personally. For example:

To show our progression, I suppose, from Year 10 and how much we've changed and how much the programme has helped us to do that ... I think it was showing how YWCA affected us over the years and if they'd helped us, so how we'd progressed, I suppose. (Over 16 1)

Another over 16 participant noted that she was able to monitor herself based on her responses over time:

I think it's to look at me and how I look at myself ... And so that they can look at my previous results, I can think of what I've previously said, and so that we can have a good basis for looking at the change and the development. (Over 16 2)

Comments echoed by the third over 16 participant:

The purpose I think is so they can see how far you have changed over the years on the programme. I think from Year 10 to myself now, so when I look at those, I'm like I've changed a lot. then like one day, they'll show us a Year 10 one and my Year 13 one and it's like, oh, I've changed, I've got more confident, I know how to set goals properly, I know how to reach my goals. (Over 16 3)

The fourth over 16 participant focused mainly on her own ability to monitor her progress, rather than mentioning the role of the programme coordinators. She expressed the tool as providing the following self-evaluation opportunity:

To examine yourself and see where you stand when things are actually given to you ... Just to like reflect on who you are, yeah, by the different questions that they give you. (Over 16 4)

4.2 Experience of using the tool

Staff participants were asked how they explained and administered the tool to students and student participants were asked to remember how it was explained to them; that is, why they were completing it. Again there were differing understandings and experiences of the use of the tool from staff depending on their length of involvement with it.

The programme manager appeared clear about the way the tool was to be explained and the experienced staff member also seemed clear in her understanding of the process for administering the tool. Firstly, the programme manager talked about how staff who were to administer the tool were prepared for its use, so students would understand why they were being asked to do it:

We talked about it a lot in team meetings, talking about how we frame it up for them so that it was sort of more user friendly and so that they understood why. I always asked them to give them the details of why we were doing this first and what the information was going to be used for. (Staff 3)

She also noted that the tool was explained to the students as a means to help them track their progress while in the programme:

We sort of sold it to the girls as a way for them to track their own development and that it was something that we were keeping on their files, and it was something that once we started tracking it that we could help them develop the areas that there were a little bit weaker in and that was something that we could discuss with their mentor that became a really good tool for discussion around future development for them. (Staff 3)

This approach was reinforced by the experienced staff member, who also talked about how this would give staff some guidance in helping the students' development:

The way that, I guess, we would explain it to them is a way for us to monitor how they felt that they were developing throughout the programme. We would explain that this is a tool that we're hoping will help us gauge how you are seeing your own development over the period of time that you're here with us. (Staff 2)

The processes of new staff induction concerning the use of the tool were not so apparent, and the new staff member did not display the same clarity. She had not been informed about or inducted into using the self-assessment tool. She described that she had coincidentally found it while searching on the computer system, and had asked what it was.

I don't know anything about this. The (very new programme manager) said 'Oh, it's what we need to give out to the girls and they fill it in'. So then I just copied it, and for one of my school meetings handed it out to all the girls to fill out. (Staff 1)

This new staff member had only administered the tool to two groups (year 10 and year 12) in one of her two schools. In describing how she administered the tool to her students, she said:

I didn't really explain anything. I had the form. I said – This is a form that we actually have to fill out as part of our job, and if you have any questions on it, or if you don't feel like you want to answer it, then let me know. And if you're confused on a question and that, just let me know. So I gave out all the forms, and then they just started reading it, circling it, reading it. (Staff 1)

The younger participants' recollection of how the tool was introduced to them was being instructed to 'just do it':

I didn't really think it was, or like, I don't remember, I just remember we had to do it. (Under 16 3)

I don't think we were really told why we were doing it. I think they just kind of told us do this. (Under 16 2)

However, the second under 16 participant also expressed that there had been some explanation of the tool's use by the coordinator:

We're kind of using it to figure out whether our programme is actually helping you with your development as a leader or if it's just something you're part of and you don't really know why you're here. That's kind of what they told us, yeah. (Under 16 2)

The older students conveyed memories of receiving more detailed explanation about the tool as a monitoring device for the programme and of the participants' progress, as the comments below illustrate:

I think it was just mainly said it was an annual thing we were to complete ... they'd use it to look at how the programme was working – if it was. (Over 16 2)

I think we got told it was so they can see how much we've changed over the course of the years and like how we're being different and seeing if the programme actually works, like, you've got more confident or you did this workshop and now you know how to set goals or something like that. So basically just check and track us kind of thing. (Over 16 3)

Yeah, that was a few years ago, I think it was explained to us just to fill it out, yeah, just fill it out and just see where you stand kind of thing, the lady who gave them to us, she was really just chilled but she did say that it's very important to fill it out and to fill it out honestly, yeah, that's what I remember hopefully. (Over 16 4)

The staff were asked how they felt explaining the tool to participants. The new staff member expressed some lack of confidence in how she did this, but felt that the students had accepted her request with no problems:

I was unsure, to be honest. I wasn't too sure ... it wasn't explained to me ... I probably didn't do a very good job, because I just gave out the forms and said --- This is a form that we need to fill out, and if you have any questions. But I guess the form must've explained it well for them, because nobody asked me questions. You know, like even today, we've got evaluations forms for our programme and I had heaps of questions – Oh, what does this mean? But not a single girl asked me a question about the self-efficacy. (Staff 1)

The experienced staff member recalled that she often needed to help students understand the questions:

In many aspects it was quite self-explanatory but there was a lot of time that we would have to literally walk through the questions with the girls because they wouldn't necessarily understand what the individual questions meant, 'cos I guess like anything it is open to interpretation, how one person reads a question can be different to how another person reads a question. So there really was a need to literally go through each question with them so that they actually fully understood the purpose of the questions because there was that room for them to interpret it in their own way. (Staff 2)

Staff participants expressed differing views on how much explanation should be given. Whereas the experienced staff member had 'walked' students through questions, the new staff member was concerned not to influence answers:

In a lot of ways, I think that's a better way – not to give too much explanation – then just to give it to them and they fill it out. 'Cos sometimes I think when you explain – this is me – then you're kind of giving your view. But I gave them the forms, I watched two particular girls that sometimes struggle with reading or comprehension – but I could see them – they were just filling it out just like all the other girls. (Staff 1)

Staff noted that students appeared to be happy to fill out the tool questionnaire. For example, the programme manager said, 'We never got negative feedback from them'. The experienced staff member did comment, however, that students sometimes appeared to simply fill out the answers to the tool without really understanding the questions or the tool's purpose. For example:

To be honest, a lot of them, I think sometimes it would go over their head a little bit in terms of just – oh, this is another little form for us to fill out, ok, yeah, cool. I mean, it was always the same questions and it was always the same form but sometimes I did wonder whether they were just doing the yes-man so just – yeah, yeah, yeah, got it, got it, got it – or whether or not they actually really grasped the purpose of it. (Staff 2)

She further reflected that they tended to appear to miss the importance of the tool for them:

Sometimes they can be quite desensitized to something like that and not necessarily see the importance of it because they do a lot of evaluation, filling out questionnaires or doing a bit of this and doing a bit of that so ... separating that out was quite hard. So that was quite hard, to really get them to see the importance of it and I guess, when you're 14 to 17 your priorities are not necessarily where your head is and you're not always in that space. (Staff 2)

However, the same staff participant also reflected that the more students completed the tool, the more they came to appreciate its role and importance:

I think definitely towards the end of the programme they just get used to it and they just know that it's just something that we were doing twice a year. Not a lot of questions around what does this get used for? (Staff 2)

The programme manager reflected that declines in self-evaluation scores from the tool over time might indicate that students gain more understanding as time went on:

A bit hard for the Year 10s to grasp initially, the initial results from Year 10 would always score themselves really highly and it was really consistent across the four years of using the tool, because they rated themselves so highly at the beginning, probably didn't get a really good understanding of what the tool was for. But each time we kept delivering it and talking them through it again, we noticed that their score came down and then they would go back up by Year 13. (Staff 3)

The student participants' descriptions of their experience with the tool in the beginning aligned with what staff described but were more positive than the staff participants might have expected from their responses. The older student participants recalled that they had in the beginning just filled it out without much thought, as evidenced in the three different responses below:

At age 14 – I don't know – I was probably, to be honest, being a bit silly. Just in the first couple of years it really was a chore. It was just this thing that was put in front of you and you had to sit there and fill it out. (Over 16 2)

I felt like in Year 10, I probably would've just skimmed past it. I wouldn't have given much attention to it. (Over 16 4)

I was like, ok, what is this? Why am I filling this out, what is the purpose of it? Well, I'll just fill it out and what do they want this for. (Over 16 3)

One of the under 16 participants revealed a similar lack of interest, but noted that her attitude had changed after a few times of completing the tool:

I quite like doing them, I can really think about it and if it's really true for me, so, yeah ... I think the first time I was just kind of like, I'll just fill it out quickly, but then after our first couple of workshops, the second and third times I kind of started paying more attention to it and then realising that, I don't know, it can actually help me 'cos they always try and encourage us to set goals and then I write it down and think about it. (Under 16 3)

The older student participants noted that over time they had more appreciation for what the tool could achieve for them:

It felt good to assess myself when I was really thinking about the question. There were some questions where I would just skim over and there were some that would really catch my eye and I'd have to really think about them. (Over 16 4)

I didn't really think about it that much when I was doing it. Well, like to start with, this is bullshit I don't really see the point sort of thing, Now I think it would be interesting if when we graduated we were able to see all our old forms. I think that would be cool so we could see ourselves how much we've changed too, not just the programme. (Over 16 1)

There were comments from both staff and students on how one's mood on the day could affect the way they completed the form. The experienced staff member reflected:

It would come down to how they felt on the day when they were filling out the form. If they were a bit down and ... a bit shitty that day, they would tend to answer those questions a lot more negatively and be a lot more critical of themselves, whereas if they were having a more upbeat day and feeling a bit more positive, I found that that would actually sway and colour answering the questions. (Staff 2)

The new staff member noted that one of her students had actually told her that her feelings would affect the way she filled it out:

[She said,] 'It all depends on how I feel. It all depends on the time of the day. I might feel different tomorrow.' (Staff 1)

Similarly, student participants said:

It depends on the mood you're in or the last course we did ... So it depends a lot on how you're feeling and what mood you're in. (Under 16 2)

I was just not feeling good on the day and so most things would be not like me, a bit like me, but yeah, I don't know. It just depends on my mood, mood swings and everything. (Over 16 4)

The experienced staff member pointed out that the tool's results could be very affected by mood and that this could have been lessened with improved communication. She also highlighted the issue of student participants not seeing instant results:

For me towards the end it was, like, well how is this information going to be relevant for these girls if there's that margin or that room for them to change their answers based on how they were feeling on that particular day, rather than over a period of time – and maybe that was something we could have possibly communicated maybe a little bit better with them but, I guess, trying to keep them interested in something like that, you can sometimes talk until you're blue in the face about the importance of something but unless they're seeing an instant result from it sometimes it's a bit ... (Staff 2)

There were also a number of comments that noted the environment in which the participants completed the tool influenced their experience in completing it. One staff member raised this as a concern for her:

The environment that you're doing it in, and some of those things ... even just things like having some of the girls sit next to each other when they're completing the form, whether they're allowed to talk to each other or not, or whether they're discussing the questions with each other as they're writing their answers, all of these things can really drastically change what they're going to put on that piece of paper. Even if they're sitting next to their best mate and having a chat about it, what their best friend might be feeling or saying might cross over into what that girl's going to put down on her piece of paper. I think there was a lot of environmental things was really affecting the outcome. (Staff 2)

She went on to suggest that you could get them to 'sit by themselves and complete it' (Staff 2).

One under 16 participant also noted that the environment and atmosphere could influence her experience in completing the tool:

I think it is a bit more personal than the other one because sometimes you have days where you feel a bit crap, like you don't want to be yourself anymore or whatever and you don't really want the people around you to know. But there are certain ones that maybe you don't want people to know about and maybe doing it in a group isn't the best way to do it. I kind of feel like maybe we should be allowed to sit on our own and do it. (Under 16 2)

Older student participants also noted their reticence in sharing their answers:

There is a bit of a consciousness about these people who I don't know and they don't know about me or what I'm like ... I hope this person doesn't see this. It's just something I'm just a bit conscious of. (Over 16 2)

Oh, I really don't want anyone to see what I'm going to pick. (Over 16 3)

On the other hand, one over 16 participant expressed that she was happy to be completing the tool in the group environment:

Normally it's me and heaps of people my age in a room, sitting and chatting while we do it. So it's just a pretty casual environment – it is really comfortable. And I think that's something that they do intentionally do. (Over 16 2)

She went on to say that they could ask for explanations on some questions in this environment.

4.3 Views of the tool itself

Participants were asked what they thought of the tool in terms of the length of the questionnaire, the nature of the questions, and how understandable and easy to answer the questions were.

Comments were made by both staff and student participants in relation to the length and number of questions. Staff commented that they felt that there might be too many questions:

Answering the questions and keeping them engaged right to the end, like, it was a two-sided piece of paper with a fair amount of questions, like 40-odd questions, so I think by the time they'd got half way through the questions, they were just kind of like, aaaaah, and they're not necessarily putting a hell of a lot of thought into any more, it's more about, ok, let's do this, I've just got to get this done. (Staff 2)

I think there were a lot of questions on the sheet and I think that's what put the girls off at times ... it takes quite a while to go through it. If you're talking about each question as you're going and unpacking it for them so that they understand the context of it. (Staff 3)

One under 16 participant also commented that the questionnaire was too long:

It's so long, they should do like – the questions that they're focusing on instead of just dragging on. (Under 16 1)

The students' understanding of the questions was also discussed by staff participants. The new staff member noted that in observing the students simply read and fill out the questions without conversation she 'felt then they understood the questions, and it was personal to them ... Because they all filled it out, and then they all handed it in'. However, the experienced staff member commented that she felt the participants didn't understand all the questions:

There wasn't enough context around some of the questions and I think engaging them in the questions. (Staff 2)

However, no student participant mentioned not understanding questions. One student participant's comment about the questions focused more on their honesty in their responses. For her, the concern that the coordinator would see her responses would lead her to sometimes lie in her answers:

Sometimes when I have to write my name on it and because our co-ordinators take it in, I just sometimes wonder why and lie on it. Cos then, like, they'll probably think that – oh yeah, she doesn't like this so she won't do it and then like other people might like it. (Under 16 1)

Participants were asked their views on how often they were required to complete the tool and whether they thought this was appropriate regularity. The new staff member who hadn't been inducted into the tool's use, mistakenly believed it was administered once a year and thought twice a year would be more beneficial:

I do think it'll be quite good to compare if we did it at the beginning of the year, then the end of the year.

I think you'd also get an honest view of where girls are at – where they're at their highest at – throughout the year – than just doing it once a year and that's it and you think that's their view. Because I think their view could really change. It all depends on the time of the year and also what they're going through. (Staff 1)

The under 16 participants expressed positive views of the regularity – every six months – and conveyed the importance of a regular self-assessment.

'Cos you do it every six months so you kind of think about it ... Time to think about and it also gives you time to change, like, if I went – I am friends with myself – and I went – Not like me – on one scale and then it gives you six months to get up to the seven. So I think doing it every six months is actually a really good thing. (Under 16 2)

I think every six months is a good time to do it. I guess, at the beginning of the year you can see, after the holidays you kind of haven't done anything and you probably, well I'd be in this mindset, probably thinking about everything that I want to achieve that year and then the next six months after that I can see how close I am to achieving that or how that half year's been and how I can improve it for the next half. Yeah, and at the end evaluate success. (Under 16 3)

The older student participants were also supportive of the regularity of the administration of the tool:

We can tell how much you've improved over the years, half a year, what worked and what didn't work. (Over 16 3)

Twice a year is pretty good. Too often would become automatic and you probably wouldn't be as honest and once a year you wouldn't remember. (Over 16 4)

One reflected further on how she thought filling out the tool at regular intervals over a period of time helped her longer-term tracking of her development:

You don't want to do it too often because then you are not going to notice as much of a change but if you do it kind of every six months, that's a good gap of time where you could have changed, I suppose, in six months. if it was just at the beginning and just at the end that wouldn't work 'cos you wouldn't see progression, you'd just see how they were at the start, how they were at the finish. But mine might go up and down, as you have ups and downs in your life. (Over 16 1)

There were differing comments related to how staff felt about the tool. The experienced staff member conveyed understanding of the purpose and process of the tool and this impacted their buy-in:

I struggled a little bit with the tool in terms of its value ... I actually raised with the Programme Manager at the time. I think possibly as well, myself and possibly some of the other staff felt like what is this tool doing for us, and it was something that we wanted to have looked at and we wanted to see if there was a better tool out there. (Staff 2)

I think the tool in itself, of getting the girls to do a self-assessment, I think there's definitely value in that. I saw the general, the big picture of we need something to try and measure how these girls feel they're developing. I felt that we could've probably developed the tool a little bit better in some aspects in the way that a lot of those questions are really broad ... it was really coming down to, just how the girls felt on the day. (Staff 2)

The importance of the tool's data in securing funding appeared to have been a driving force for its use, which in some cases impacted staff buy-in. The programme manager highlighted the importance of using it in order to secure funding:

It was just so good to have something that could measure, when you're being driven by results all the time and funding and you know what it's like here – the not for profit sector is getting so competitive for funding so it's so critical to have good evidence of impact which was so valuable for what we were able to put forward to funders and so from that point of view it was fabulous. (Staff 3)

She also noted that this affected buy-in from some staff because it directly related to them keeping their jobs:

There was one staff member who just was, 'I'm just going to do it because you're telling me to do it'. The others understood the reason why and the importance of the data. I think, especially when, we had such big funding contracts and accountability with ASB Trust that we needed to provide that data and they understood that we needed to provide the data for them to keep their jobs, so that we could continue to run Future Leaders and therefore they kept their job ... it's so important to collect data anyway but I think one of them just thought it was a bit of a chore. (Staff 3)

The programme manager did discuss the validity of data from the self-assessment, and questioned whether young people maturing solely changed their views on themselves:

You wonder too whether it was just a natural progression thing, ages and stages again, you know, as they grow and mature and they're a bit more self-aware that these things can change as well, especially when they start identifying their own strengths and weaknesses. (Staff 3)

Overall however the programme manager appeared appreciative of the tool's wider benefit, and discussed its potential use as a development tool:

From a programmer's perspective, to have that data on hand and to have that routine of the girls self-reflecting and then giving us a tool and a conversation point or a starting point so that the staff could have those conversations with the girls. It wasn't just a measuring tool but it was a tool that we could use to start those conversations about further development. (Staff 3)

I love evaluation and it's part of the whole loop of delivery, isn't it. Delivery, evaluate, reflect, develop – a whole circle ... our Board, all our stakeholders loved the results that we were able to gather, we had evidence and at the end of it we had four years of evidence, so you can't argue with the evidence. (Staff 3)

The new staff member saw the benefit of the tool even though she hadn't been inducted into its purpose and use.

I think it's alright, I think it's good questions and it gets you thinking, in a lot of ways it gets you thinking how you really feel about things in life. (Staff 1)

She commented that after the meeting where she gave out the tool to year 10 students, the subsequent meeting was the most emotional she'd had. She described how they shared very personal things and challenges that were occurring in their lives.

It was a very emotional session, that session ... And I remember it because all I did was that (form) ... 'cos normally I do an icebreaker but because I had that self-efficacy form, I did the form and then I did my session. And that's when they all opened up. And every single girl was crying. Oh, we didn't even know that ... I felt man, that's awesome that (1) they were opening up; (2) they were trusting me with that information; and (3) they were able to share to the whole group. 'Cos they're not all friends. So it was good that they were able to open up, with everybody. (Staff 1)

4.4 Use of the tool's data

When discussing their understanding of how the data are used after students complete the tool, there were some inconsistencies in the responses from staff. The programme manager and experienced staff member appeared to have clear views on the intended use of the tool's data:

Each student got fed back their form, to my knowledge, they got fed back their little graph at the end of each year so they could see their own development. (Staff 3)

We started implementing ways to actually collate the information so that it was, I guess, easier to just see over a period of time, so we had one of our admin girls actually putting and collating all that information into a graph and into a spreadsheet so that we could pull that information out and just go, oh, look, well, if you compare that year to that year and just see it as a nice snapshot ... [with] the intention of then giving that information back to them. (Staff 2)

This would serve as a means to track the development of the students through their time on the programme, which was aligned to the objectives of the programme:

You can definitely see the different parts of the subgroups of the data. You can see the dip at different times and it might be that they've had a fight with their group of friends and then their self esteem or confidence would drop but then the next time we do it it

would be really high again and we usually talk them through that, you know, you can unpack it a little and find out what had happened. (Staff 3)

We'd try and collate that data so that we could basically do, in a really nice snapshot, have a look at Years 10–11 and Years 12–13 and see the progression and so the idea was that we wanted to see the confidence levels, the resilience levels, all of those desired outcomes improve across the four year period. (Staff 2)

In contrast, the new staff member had not been informed of the use of the data although she did suggest what could occur, which interestingly aligns with part of the intended use. In response to the question 'Can you explain what the data from the tool is used for?' her response was:

No. Sorry. But I do think it'll be quite good to compare if we did it at the beginning of the year, then the end of the year and just compare – just for myself as well – in my work. (Staff 1)

The handling of the tool's data appeared to meet some challenges in implementation, however. The programme manager reflected that 'having to come back and enter all the data ... [which] was quite onerous, quite admin-heavy' (Staff 3). The experienced staff member noted that this had been compounded when administrative support was lost:

We lost our administrator support last year, so that then fell back on the co-ordinators who just didn't have the means, I guess, to necessarily sit down and put all that information into that kind of snapshot. (Staff 2)

Administration issues in dealing with entering and collating the data appeared to negatively impact on its use and buy-in by some staff as they did not end up using the data in the intended way. The experienced staff member was confident, however, that when the data were recorded it could be used when necessary, especially if the students requested it:

They knew that they could ask us for that information at any time, I always told my girls, look, if at any time if you want to compare this time last year or the start of last year to what you're doing now, just let us know and we've got that information there for you. (Staff 2)

However, when asked if students had ever asked for their data and if they had been given back to the students at the end of the programme, her response was no to both questions. The same staff participant noted that the data were accessible, but her impression was that use of it tended to be inconsistent across programme coordinators:

We had access to that data, we knew where to find those results and where they were and we printed them all, when we were in full steam with it we were able to print that information off and have it accessible and take it with us to school meetings if we wanted to. Whether or not that actually happened with all of the co-ordinators, I'm not sure, but that was definitely the idea, yeah. So I definitely was able to use a lot of mine. (Staff 2)

The student participants were asked what they have been informed about the use of the results from the tool. They consistently replied that they didn't know what they were used for and hadn't seen any of the results, as evidenced in the comments below:

We never get them. (Under 16 1)

I haven't, I don't think anyone else has. Probably just the co-ordinators. I don't think any of the girls do. (Under 16 2)

I haven't been told anything like why they do it or what happens after. (Under 16 3)

I haven't heard anything about them. (Over 16 1)

Don't know. We haven't been given any of our previous ones to look at. we don't get a hard copy. (Over 16 2)

I wouldn't know. (Over 16 4)

We haven't been informed about much. I don't remember them telling us you've improved in this and this and this. Maybe we get told at the end of year 13 you've changed this much like at the end, oh, you've changed here's your first one and here's your last one . I don't think we ever kind of got told. (Over 16 3)

Student participants further expressed their thoughts on whether the data were used and for what purpose. One under 16 participant didn't have faith in the results being read by the staff. In describing how it was explained to her she said:

They said that you have to fill out the survey. You just have to ... Ok then. (Under 16 1)

When asked if she or anyone asked for explanation, she replied:

No, 'cos, with something like that I think that they just give it to us and then they just take it and don't like read it or anything. (Under 16 1).

A lack of understanding of the use of the tool's data was expressed by all students but some also expressed faith in the process and trust in the staff's reason for them completing the tool. Under 16 2 said she was 'happy to do it' and liked being able to give feedback on what she was doing. She thought that completing the tool would be 'useful for the people that are running it' and expressed a trust in the process.

Under 16 3 also had faith in the process and recalled that a staff member had indicated that she would be reading the answers, taking it that this indicated some monitoring of their wellbeing:

I think one of the girls asked, like, who's going to read it and then our co-ordinator at the time, she just said 'I'll be reading it' and, yeah just to make sure we're not really depressed or something. (Under 16 3)

Asked how she thought this might occur, she said:

I can just see the first question here and it says, I am friends with myself and you say that kinda gives me the idea that you don't like who you are as a person. So then, you're obviously not happy with who you are if you don't like yourself. (Under 16 3)

She also commented on how important she thought this use of the tool was:

Yeah, that's why I think they need to make it more serious because if they are like, yep I am ... but if they don't (be honest, feel safe to be honest) then, you don't know anything about that person still. (Under 16 3)

She further believed that if the tool highlighted something unusual, the co-ordinators would talk to their mentor and follow it up. When asked if that happened to her knowledge, she replied:

Yeah. I think that if (they) actually saw something she'd definitely follow it up. (Under 16 3)

One of the older student participants also did not recall any explanation of the tool's use but expected that it would be used in helping them to reflect on their accomplishments at the end of the programme:

No, not what it was being used for ... I thought it might just be for us to reflect on it in the fourth year of our programme. That's what I would've expected, and to compare what you were like at the beginning up until now and where you're at the end. (Over 16 4)

Student participants discussed what would it mean to them if they could see the results. Their responses suggest that the students were more reflective and insightful than possibly the staff realised:

I'd like to see that 'cos people are always changing and I want to see how I've changed and if that change is positive, if it's been positive or negative ... I want to see how much I've changed. Honestly, like – oh, I didn't change much or I did change a lot. Like I just want to see how much I'd improved or how much I'd progressed over the four years. (Over 16 3)

It used to be this low but it's like look at the progress I've made. I feel like getting that would be a really hard copy of me growing as a person in those four years. 'Cos I definitely have. I did actually think we were going to be getting it back. (Over 16 2)

I'd be interested ay, yeah I'd be interested to see how I felt at each stage ... It would be cool to look at how I've developed or how I've decreased in some areas. (Over 16 4)

I suppose it would sort of show me if it was the YWCA that had such an impact on my life or whether it was just growing up 'cos it's always sort of hard to think about, 'cos you've had it for four years, or have we just grown up or has it been because the programme has affected you, that's what me and my friends discussed. Has it done what it's supposed to or do we just think it has but really we're just growing up. I think the forms would probably show that, I'd say. (Over 16 1)

The programme manager felt there was more potential to use the data in the programme if only the resources were available to do so:

We could have done so much more with it if we'd had the recall thing. I would've liked to have printed off little reports on them at the end of each year and given it to them, which would've been really cool. (Staff 3)

Staff participants noted that the data were used primarily in reporting on the programme to funding bodies and presented in aggregated form as evidence of the programme's impact:

We used it a lot for the accountability for our funders and because it provided evidence that we were making really good progress and that the girls were developing in a really positive way, we were able not just to use it for accountability but for funding applications ... The board were really rapt with the tool and the data that we were getting as well. All round it was just showing the evidence of the programme making a real impact. Actually after collecting data for the four years, you had a really good picture of each student. (Staff 3)

We understood the need for it, when you're relying on funding from the private sector, or trying to get government funding, you need to be able to prove that your programme's going to have the desired outcomes you want ... trying to secure money just to keep the programme going you need something that's going to help. (Staff 2)

The value of the tool in ensuring the continuation of funding for the programme was expressed by the programme manager, along with its relation to the staff's job security:

We needed to provide the data (to funders) for them to keep their jobs. (Staff 3)

An older student participant recalled that they had at some stage been told that the assessment tool would be used to secure funding for the programme:

I think they told us at one point that it was going to be used for like to get people to put money in ... I got that from somewhere can't remember where but yeah I think it was only just so the funders can tell how much we've changed. (Over 16 3)

The programme manager felt there was the intention for the results of the student self-assessment tool data to be used and conveyed to the mentors to support their role in the programme but this wasn't consistently followed through:

They were able to use that tool to talk along the lines with the girls and their mentors ... It was never done formally, although that was always our intention to share that with them formally. I think it was done more sort of one on one through interactions that the Programme staff had with the mentor around ways that they could develop their mentoring further and different activities and resources that they could give them to support that. It was a shame because it was our intention to actually share that with the mentors and the families and the school but again we were admin poor at the time so it never really happened. (Staff 3)

The same staff member discussed that the mentors would have benefitted from the information available from the tool.

A lot of the time the mentors were asking, am I making a difference, is the programme making a difference but we had a set of data that we could show them that actually proved that. (Staff 3)

The experienced staff member, however, was less clear on this matter:

I don't think any of the mentors as such, I guess, from a sense that it was the girls' information and if they wanted to share that then that was something, but we never discussed that. I don't remember having a conversation around who should we be sharing this information with, other than the participants themselves. (Staff 2)

The student participants discussed who they would share their results with and interestingly their mentors were not necessarily the first person they mentioned. An under 16 participant said she would probably show her results to her mum. She went on to discuss how doing so could prompt a conversation about stuff that they wouldn't normally talk about:

'Cos some of the things like they're not just really normal questions like my Mum would ask and like if she saw it she'd be, oh, yeah, how was that and stuff, yeah ... (Under 16 3)

Asked if she thought she'd show her mentor, she said, 'She wouldn't be the first person that would come to mind'. She explained:

I guess 'cos my Mum is someone who I always see all the time and I'm really close with her and I don't think I'm super close with my mentor, like I probably wouldn't give that to my friends and my mentor's like my friends so ... (Under 16 3)

Other participants felt their results were private to themselves:

Probably no-one ... Good for me to read through them and put them side-by-side. But it's not anything that I'd feel pressured or necessary to show anyone else. (Over 16 2)

When asked if she'd show her mentor, she raised an important issue related to how a mentor's seeing the results may sway their view of the student:

I think it's something I'd like to discuss with her, but maybe not show her directly. I think it's about mainly I'd want to be communicating my ideas with her, and not giving her information and telling her to get her own ideas. (Over 16 2)

A few student participants said that their relationship with their mentor in the first year was a little distant and guarded. One of the over 16's reflected on her first-year relationship with her mentor and said:

Probably the first year and a half of the programme I was very limited in what I would tell her. I was very deliberate and making sure I was only saying certain things. But at this point, I'm definitely very comfortable with her. We can have a conversation about anything now. (Over 16 2)

An under 16 participant echoed this, stating that she would show her family and friends. When asked if she'd show her mentor, she responded:

Yeah I'd show her but I don't know if it would help the relationship 'cos it's still kind of awkward ... it's only been the first year. (Under 16 1)

Another participant pointed out the importance of confidentiality in showing others their results:

I think it's a confidentiality thing 'cos these kind of things are kind of personal. I'd say it was a co-ordinator-only thing. (Under 16 2)

She felt that it should be the student's choice who they show:

I think it depends if the girl wants to share it with her mentor. I think if she got the opportunity to take it to her mentor and it was up to her if the mentor saw it or if they discussed it or whatever, that would probably be good, rather than just the co-ordinators giving it to the mentor no matter what. Then the mentor can help with the ones that are lower or take down the ones who are a bit higher.

She also highlighted that it could be useful for the mentors to see the results so they could provide further support where needed:

It would be helpful for them to see if their girl is doing well in their goals or their education or whatever, their relationships with other people, so it might be helpful for the mentors to see it, and maybe they do show the mentors, I don't know. (Under 16 2)

Two over 16 participants were very positive about their mentor relationship:

Yeah, oh yeah I wouldn't mind [her seeing them]. She's real supportive and wants me to become my best so she'd always be there to listen so yeah my Mentor I don't know why I didn't think of her. (Over 16 4)

Oh, yeah, I'd show my mentor. That would be really cool if my mentor saw how much I have improved and she would be like, you've improved lots and she'd be like, 'I can teach you this area' ... so you can always talk to your mentor about it You don't know the skills or you haven't learnt them yet or you didn't truly understand, your mentors are there for reasons. (Over 16 3)

One participant said she would have behaved differently had she known she was going to get the results back:

If I'd known that we were going to get them back – I definitely would've embellished. I can say that my 14-year-old self would've. (Over 16 2)

We then discussed the confidential nature of the results from the tool. She commented:

I think as long as they're not given out and then there's an environment for discussing – I feel like that's the main thing, because now I'm comfortable with these people and comfortable with myself, I'm not too stressed – but at the time, discussing the results would not be something that I'd be wanting to do. (Over 16 2)

In a discussion about being given their results back as a group and whether they would feel self-conscious getting them in that environment, another participant said:

I think that would be ok but there will always be people in the room who would like judge it and then they might look at you differently after they read it or something. (Under 16 3)

Asked if she thought they should be given to them privately, she said yes.

4.5 Outcomes for participants

Throughout the interviews the youth participants shared their reflections on the tool's benefit to them. For example:

I'm not sure how often we got it but I remember the second and third times I kind of started paying more attention to it and then realising that, I don't know, it can actually help me. (Under 16 3)

The older student participants in particular reflected on their appreciation of the benefits of the tool for themselves personally, which increased during their time on the programme.

Now I can actually see why we are doing it and I sort of think more now while I'm doing it rather than just ticking boxes. (Over 16 1)

She discussed that halfway through the programme (after two years) she started looking at the questions differently:

They kind of had more meaning, I suppose, like I understood them more. (Over 16 1)

She also discussed her development and reflection on that development:

I would've been a lot of 2s and 3s but now there are a lot of 5s, 6s and 7s. (Over 16 1)

One student participant described how she would remember how she'd ranked herself on previous assessments and reflected on that progression:

I remember at the beginning a lot of them were 3 because I was like, oh, yeah, in the middle and then I might realise I wasn't in the middle, I was probably a 2. I realised over a while that I've changed a lot ... I remember thinking 4 for this last time, now I'm a 5 or I remember picking 2 now I'm a 4. (Over 16 3)

This participant also commented on how in her early years on the programme she wasn't so conscious of the questions but as time went on she saw the benefit of the tool measuring their development:

It is just creating a space for mentees and scholars to sit down and think about it. My early first year or two – it's not a huge conscious thing but definitely coming into the second half I know that other people can also be seeing the difference. So it's really good at measuring development. (Over 16 3)

The students openly described their proven progress over time as displayed by their responses to the questions in the tool:

It's a good thing as it's a regular measurement. And in Year 10, Year 11 when my confidence was really low, it was like – Oh, it's a reminder that I'm not practising self-care as much as I should be. But at the moment, it's really good at providing me a regular measurement of how I'm improving, because I think in the past year, year and a half, I've gone up a lot. It's probably been my greatest uphill climb at the moment. (Over 16 2)

Some of the goal questions 'cos everyone is kind of setting goals but actually I don't work towards it and I suppose when I read those questions, I was like, oh, no I actually don't know how, and then that's when I went to the goal setting workshop 'cos I felt, oh, I need to learn how to do that. This form really shows that because you can see it and you look back – Oh, look how much she's progressed. (Over 16 1)

One student noted that her results didn't automatically progress with age but were impacted by certain stages in her life:

In Year 11 ... you kind of got into the big options and everything and like heaps of our friends split because we went into different classes and so that kind of took a big toll on me ... that's probably one of the times where I would've kind of really thought quite low of myself and graded myself quite low on the questions. (Over 16 4)

Students' reflected on how they used the tool to measure their growth and where they could focus further growth:

Part of it is due to that tool. And it is because I can look at questions and it's mainly self-esteem and communicating. And where I used to be putting ones and twos, I'm now putting fives and sixes, and a couple even seven. I like that it's quite specific and it's on a scale. (Over 16 2)

I do try to be as honest on these as possible – to be straight-up. Trying to answer them as naturally and automatically. I am trying to be very honest because I know – I am aware that I've changed a lot as a person in that time. I'm not the same person I was at 14. And it's something that I'm really trying to be able to convey that on paper. While it did point out the low, it also showed me that there was room for a high. (Over 16 2)

I like filling it out 'cos I actually have time to think about my life and there are questions, get me thinking quite a lot. I think it's good to track your change, yeah, and I think it's good to see how well you did at the beginning of the year and compare to the end of the year. (Over 16 4)

One older student reflected that as she moved into a new stage in her life she would look at the questions and reflect on them related to where she was – at the start of a new stage – which would be different from reflecting on how she was at the end of that stage:

Probably going into the adult life, I expect the best from me. I really want to see my reflection. If I did one right now I'm pretty sure I wouldn't know what it would be like. I thought it would be different from my first one but now I'm thinking about it it may be similar and not because I haven't improved but because I am striving for more, more out of myself. (Over 16 4)

She went on to discuss her teen years as being important as her decisions around subjects would impact her future career:

What I decide now is going to have a ripple effect on my future. I've matured and understand the questions a bit more and know the words a bit more. (Over 16 4)

4.6 Participant recommendations

All participants were asked if the self-assessment tool could be improved and for their recommendations on how the tool could further develop young people in the programme. A

number of themes emerged in the recommendations relating to the tool's length, the language used for the questions, questions about annual goals, and adding qualitative questions to allow students to express how they were feeling in their own voice. Other recommendations related to how the tool is processed and understood by all involved, the way the tool is administered and explained to the students, and who sees the results of the tool.

The first theme of recommendations discussed here is related to the design of the tool and the need to ensure it engages participants. As noted in section 4.3 above, a few participants recommended shortening the length of the tool and having fewer questions. Two staff raised this, stating:

I wonder if there's a way that you could reduce the number of questions. (Staff 3)

Keeping it short and to the point and not allowing for that room for there to be tangents or confusion. (Staff 2)

An over 16 participant also raised the issue length and suggested a benefit of making it shorter:

Maybe cutting it down smaller, when you see the second page my mind would be gone. It gives a lot more concentration to the questions and they'd be answered with a lot more with the respect they are supposed to be. (Over 16 4)

The experienced staff member noted that in addition to making the form shorter, I would be a good idea to 'ensure it was a little bit more specific with some of those questions and really just targeting some of those specific outcomes around education, leadership, resiliency' (Staff 2).

The programme manager recommended that the questions be given more clarity and be written in a way that the students understood:

A few questions in there that the girls found quite curly, maybe just around the language and getting around that which I think the programme staff sort of reframed for them anyway. (Staff 3)

An over 16 participant suggested that there be questions related to the yearly themes of the programme:

Future Leaders, every year they have a new theme right and maybe the questions can somehow relate to the theme so that showing development somehow through the programme. (Over 16 4)

She also recommended that qualitative questions be added to the form so the students could express their thoughts more completely:

Maybe just writing a quick question on 'what specific question has helped you the most throughout the year?' And giving an example of why or how, how it's developed. How you've been able to develop it through the year. (Over 16 4).

The next set of recommendations related to the theme of how the tool is processed and its ease of comprehension. A student and a staff member suggested making it an online tool. The student commented:

They can do it on a tablet or have an app, put it online ... like these days Year 9 and 10 they all have tablets. (Over 16 3)

However, another student participant pointed out the benefits of having a hard copy format:

I do prefer having it on paper because I often circle the gaps between them ... Or I might write a little note – it'll be like – I can't provide an example at the moment, but sometimes I write a couple of word notes next to it. (Over 16 2)

The programme manager however felt that having an online version would assist in the administration of the tool:

It would've been cool to have an online version ... probably would've reduced the admin time of it as well. If we'd done it on Survey Monkey or something, maybe. (Staff 3)

The experienced staff member described how there needed to be improvement in the processing of the results, saying:

Definitely needs to be considered how to make that a little bit more effective in terms of how do you process that information, how do you make it accessible and easy, not only for the co-ordinators but for the participants that want that information. (Staff 2)

Responses indicated a motivation to using the tool more to support the programme achieving its goals of developing young women. The new staff member put it simply: 'I do think we need to use it more' (Staff 1).

A third theme emerged primarily from the student participants around the way the tool was administered and explained to the students. One student pointed out that less is more in this area:

I feel like just being given it and saying answer this – is probably to me, how I would give my most honest responses. Not them saying, we're going to use it for ... or in four years' time you're going to really appreciate it. If they just give it to me and say fill this out. That just to me personally just being minimal and straight-up. (Over 16 2)

However, most of the other recommendations related to more explanation being given, with student participants stating:

Just tell us, like, why we have to fill it out and who's going to be looking at it and how it's going to be assessed or something. (Under 16 1)

Well, for a start, they could tell us what they do with the information. That'd be brilliant ... maybe they just chuck them in the bin, maybe it's just ... I don't know, I'd like to know what they do with them. What is the purpose of this, why am I doing this right now. (Under 16 2)

For it to really be explained that it's a serious thing and so actually put some thought into it, don't rush it 'cos I probably rushed my first few. Just really think about your answers I suppose. Tell them to do that, yeah. (Over 16 1)

Clearer on overall picture. (Over 16 4)

So, oh, another form. So, yeah, if they really explain it to you then people take it more seriously. (Under 16 3)

The last student quoted above pointed out that a lack of explanation could relate to a lack of knowledge on the part of staff:

I don't think how they give it to us is a negative. I think they try and make it positive but maybe they don't know how to explain it and that's why they don't explain it to us. (Under 16 3)

The experienced staff member gave a recommendation around how the tool could be explained better to the students:

[We could say] we need to know this information because we want you to become more, e.g. we want you to become more resilient and we want to know if this programme's helping you to do that, so just relating individual questions to individual outcomes. (Staff 2)

The final theme that emerged from the recommendations was who should see the results of the tool and what the results should be used for. Both staff and student participants offered recommendations in this area. Under 16 students stated they would like to see their results to assist them in their development.

If there was a survey about confidence then I would want to get the results back 'cos then if it says that you're not confident or not that confident then you'll be like, oh, yeah, I want to be confident and then it'll motivate you to become confident. (Under 16 2)

Just to see, like, when it goes through a system and then see what they think about what you're thinking ... Yeah, and see how it plays out. (Under 16 1)

One of the Under 16s felt that getting them back would enable her to reflect on how she had gone over the year.

I think at the end of each year they should give us all the ones that we've done and see, so we can see, if we think the change that has happened to ourselves is positive or negative. (Under 16 3)

The over 16 students echoed that getting them back would assist in their development, with one commenting:

Maybe if they could see their results because then you could see how much you've improved or progressed and then that would encourage you. (Over 16 1)

Student participants suggested how the data could be used to enable the student to reflect on their growth. They also commented about the manner in which the data should be given back. First a student participant suggested that sharing the results in group format could assist in individual reflection and generate discussion of why they chose a certain ranking for each question. She offered this suggestion:

Maybe pair up with a buddy and share it with them that's kinda how you get into a conversation so if I rank myself a 2 and I rank myself a 7 and that will bring a conversation as to why they ranked themselves, that kinda getting more into depth as to how they are developing. (Over 16 4)

One under 16 student recommended that the results be taken into account for staff decisions around what workshops are offered and who may need extra support in certain areas:

Workshops and trying to build relationships between the girls and figuring out which people need more support or if some of the girls are already quite high up on the scale they don't need quite as much support in their self-confidence or whatever. (Under 16 2)

An over 16 student discussed how the results could be used to support both participants' growth and the programme. She also recommended the use of graphs to easily show the results:

The tool could be used for like – I don't know. You could like show the funders or you could be like showing the mentors and the mentees. I think they could use the tool like in two ways. They could use it for the funding as well, and showing some of us the results. They see like a massive improvement or ... Have a big chart, graph, or a chart or something, you've improved here ... (Over 16 3)

Two staff reflected on the process and offered strong recommendations for improving the use of the tool to improve outcomes for all those involved. In the following quote, the experienced staff member suggests that the information should be shared with the mentors and participants' families so they can provide further support:

Participants and the people supporting that participant so I think that information needs to go to the families, it needs to go to the mentors so that the mentors are more aware of what areas this mentee feel she's doing really well in or highlighting areas that maybe the mentor could help develop that girl a little bit more. So I think the more people who support that individual who have access to that information, the better, really. So, the co-ordinator, the family and the mentor should definitely all have an idea of what that individual thinks of themselves and their own development. (Staff 2)

The programme manager echoed this, adding the importance of knowing why and how you are using the tool for the different groups involved in the programme:

Being really clever around how you use it and how you're using it for different groups of people and getting really clear about that. So for the girls, for them, it's a self-reflection tool, for their mentors it's a future development tool, for the programmer it's looking at the impact tool, so, I guess, on reflection for me if we'd been a bit more clearer around how we were using it for each different subgroup it might have made it a bit more effective for us. (Staff 3)

4.7 Conclusion

The findings of this study represent the views of 10 interview participants, including three staff, three under 16 year olds and four over 16 year olds, all of whom had had experience using the individual self-assessment tool. This chapter has presented the data as it was collected and analysed from individual semi-structured interviews and coded into the themes that emerged from the responses. The key themes were in essence in relation to the participants' views of the purpose of the tool; the experiences they had in using the tool; what they thought of the tool itself; how the tool's data were used; the outcomes for participants; and recommendations that were made for future use of the tool. The next chapter presents a discussion of how these findings relate to the relevant literature, an analysis of the overall effectiveness of the tool, and recommendations for its future form and use.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research reported in this thesis involved a critical examination of a PYD programme's individual self-assessment tool. The motivation for doing this research was to answer the overarching question of 'How do we know if young people in youth development programmes have developed?' The research was undertaken with participants involved in a PYD programme at YWCA Auckland including programme staff and two groups of youth participants: under 16 and over 16. The study was designed as a qualitative interpretive inquiry using semi-structured interviews. The aim was to determine the success of the self-assessment tool in supporting the programme objectives for PYD by examining and analysing users' experience of it.

This chapter discusses the findings of this study in relation to the literature reviewed and in relation to how the tool supports YWCA Auckland's PYD programme objectives. It then explores users' experiences of the tool in relation to the themes of purpose, process, and outcome. The chapter will outline key findings and outcomes from this research and recommendations for the future use of the tool are made.

The findings from the interviews showed that while the tool had not been used entirely as expected when it was developed, it had provided benefits to the organisation and to the programme participants. For the organisation, the data collected has been used for funding reporting and funding applications as proof of set objectives being met with resources provided.. The young programme participants have used the tool to assist in a self-reflection process to assess where they were at in relation to the questions presented. As they progressed through the programme they used it as a measurement tool for their own development. This occurred without a structured process such as seeing a printed copy of the results or discussion with their co-ordinator or mentor.

The tool could have wider and more robust outcomes with all stakeholders if used more consistently in line with its core objectives; that is, as a tool to measure the development of young people and in turn the effectiveness of the programme. To achieve those objectives and enhance the experience of use, the tool needs to be used with a clear understanding of the purpose, process of use, and intended outcomes.

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 describes adolescence as a challenging time and highlighted the complexities occurring for young people as they move from childhood to adulthood. The ecological world's impact on the individual's biological, biosocial, cognitive and psychosocial development during this period of rapid of growth, self-awareness and future focus can lead to confusion and stress as they come to grips with these changes, and there are undoubtedly times of awkwardness, confusion, depression and anger in almost every young person's life (Berger & Thompson, 1995; Hopkins, 2010; Santrock, 2008). There is an important link between the individual's development through this transitional period of life and the support systems available to them. The student participants in this research expressed the challenges and changes they

have experienced while going through adolescence and during their time in the programme from age 14 to age 18.

The literature argues that to enable the effective provision of support systems for adolescents in their development, those involved in providing PYD programmes require an understanding of developmental theory (Lerner et al., 2005a; Phelps et al., 2009). This gives basic knowledge to youth practitioners of the changes and challenges young people in their programmes are going through. Understanding this information and how much of a transformative time this is for young people allows programmes and programme staff to focus effectively on their development needs.

One of the key recommendations emphasised in the PYD literature is the use of strengths-based approaches which focus on skill and competency development through highlighting and developing internal and external strengths in young people's lives. These approaches strive to influence young people's paths to positive outcomes by countering risk factors and enhancing protective factors (Catalano et al., 2004; Damon, 2004; Seymour, 2012; Wayne Francis Community Trust, 2011). The literature highlights the importance of focusing on each and every young person's unique talents, strengths, future possibilities and interests (Damon, 2004). A consistent theme emerging from the literature is that all young people need support and guidance to develop their assets and achieve the best results. Having young people being part of the process in identifying their strengths and connection to a PYD programme's objectives allows them to be active agents in charting their own life course (Brendtro et al., 2014).

The YWCA Auckland programme that is the focus of this study is grounded in a PYD approach. Its programme objectives align with PYD principles because it supports young people for four years from the age of 14 to 18 (years 10–13 in high school). YWCA Auckland has a strong commitment to the development of young women via its Future Leaders programme, and seeks to provide effective support through a programme of workshops, camps, and events. Individual volunteer mentor and youth programme staff support cohorts of around 10 students through these activities and liaise with their secondary schools and families (Ballinger et al., 2009).

Through its interventions, objectives and programme interactions, YWCA Auckland's PYD programme aligns with a key aim highlighted in literature; that is, to develop social functioning including social, emotional, cognitive, behavioural and moral competencies (Catalano et al., 2004). The development of social functioning has been informed by human developmental theory, which involves systematic statements of principles that explain behaviour and development, and which give guidance and information when working with children and young people (Berger & Thompson, 1995). Yet PYD programmes such as the Future Leaders still need to know if their interventions are effective. YWCA Auckland's recognition in 2009 that their annual surveys did not achieve the above aim led to their commissioning of the development and implementation of the self-assessment tool evaluated in this study.

The literature emphasises the importance of evaluation for knowing whether the interventions being deployed are achieving the intended objectives (Mundy-McPherson et al., 2012). However the sector needs to define the difference between success of programme quality and success of youth developmental outcomes (Jackson, 2014; Yohalem & Wilson-Ahlstrom, 2010). It is rare for programmes to link programme best practice features to youth outcomes (Yohalem & Wilson-Ahlstrom, 2010). The YWCA Auckland intention for the self-assessment tool was to achieve such a link, which is shown in their commitment to using the tool over the past four years, however to date it has primarily been used for data collection and programme reporting. The tool has produced data that provide evidence for the organisation of how effective their interventions are in meeting the programme goals, yet the findings of this research show that the tool could have been used more effectively to assess and assist the development of young people and in supporting the achievement of the programme objectives.

YWCA Auckland's experience is not uncommon when considered in relation to what is reported in literature. Individual evaluation assessment is recognised as a slowly growing field, with more tools being developed based on resiliency, self-efficacy and PYD frameworks. These tools allow us to learn how a young person is faring throughout their time on a programme, and provide scope to view where they are developing, and where they need further support in areas of that development. Pre-, mid- and post-programme self-assessment allows PYD programmes to empower young people to self-reflect, identify and understand their areas of strength and where they need support, and to monitor changes in life events and act upon them (Ministry of Youth Development, 2009). These tools are designed to provide data to those who work with the young person to discuss success, challenges, and ways to address those challenges. It also allows the organisation and programme staff to see where their interventions are working and provide direct impact reports to funders and stakeholders.

An extensive literature search for strengths-based self-assessment tools found that only a handful had completed pre- and post- assessment and none reported presenting the results to the young people following the first or mid-assessment to be used as a reflection and development tool. YWCA Auckland clearly has a committed approach to evaluation, evidenced by its development and use of the longitudinal self-assessment tool over the past four years. This scenario is advanced within the PYD field and one that is only beginning to establish best practice strategies.

5.1 Purpose

The Future Leaders self-assessment tool's purpose is to monitor growth and development throughout the programmes, identify areas where participants require additional support, and utilise information from results to inform participants and their support systems (with permission from participants) such as mentors, family and school liaison (Ballinger et al., 2009).

The participants in this study described varying levels of understanding of the purpose of the tool, and it was evident that staff understanding varied depending on length of time in the programme. The staff involved in the process from the earlier years had a confident understanding of its

purpose, whereas the new staff member seemed less clear on this. While the more experienced programme staff were clear that the tool was able to measure young people's development and to indicate whether interventions covered by the different areas of the programme were being effective, they appeared less clear that it was also designed as a development tool. A key purpose of the tool in its design was to utilise information to identify where young people needed further support. Yet this was found to not be a primary focus of the staff and may have been a result of the tool primarily being used for reporting to funders.

The student participants were not very clear on the tool's purpose. The under 16-year-old students felt it was purely for the programme co-ordinators to know if they were achieving what the programme was set out to achieve. One student felt it was to see if they were participating to their fullest ability or whether they were going along for the ride; that is, an assessment of their commitment to the programme. The older participants who had been on the programme for four years had a more reflective view of the purpose of the tool however. They felt it was to monitor their progress and for them to reflect on how they have developed and progressed while on the programme; an understanding of its purpose that was closer to what it was designed for.

The findings therefore revealed that the intended purpose of the tool was not understood by all. Despite this, the processes that were activated did have a positive impact on young people's outcomes and for the programme at large.

The literature identifies three specific groups that are interested in PYD evaluation: research researchers, policy makers, and practitioners. A self-assessment tool needs to be dynamic to ensure it meets the needs of all stakeholders, who all have very different needs. Researchers are focused on programme assessment measures, but not necessarily the participants. Policy makers are looking to ensure resources are allocated effectively for maximum impact. Practitioners, on the other hand, are looking at ways to capture the effectiveness, so to assess, reflect and improve their programmes (Yohalem & Wilson-Ahlstrom, 2010). All those involved require information about the purpose, structure, content and practical utility of available tools (Geldhof et al., 2013; Yohalem & Wilson-Ahlstrom, 2010). This is why a research evaluation tool in itself is not enough; it needs to be presented in such a way that the purpose of the tool is very clear to ensure that responses are valid and show an accurate snapshot of the young person's developmental status. The understanding and commitment of the people administering the tool is therefore of real importance.

For the young people the tool has one purpose, which is to assess their own development. For the organisation it has two purposes: to assess the development of the young people and to assess the quality of their programme. For the funders, its purpose is to assess the use of resources in relation to the quality and effectiveness of the programme and the organisation.

5.2 Process

The original tool was issued with instructions on the process of the tool's use. These stated that the tool should be used throughout the time the young women were on the programme and issued every six months. The programme staff were to administer the tool at programme meetings held at school, in a group setting, so the young women would feel relaxed and comfortable. They would be encouraged to ask questions so they understood the tool, and staff were expected to explain to the young women that the tool was not a test and no answer would be considered right or wrong. They were to be informed that YWCA Auckland would use the information to chart their development over the forthcoming years (Ballinger et al., 2009).

5.2.1 Tool design

Initially the tool was designed after a literature search identified PYD programme assessment tool best practice, which led to the use of Likert-type scales and questions in the form of 'I' statements aligned to themes of self-efficacy, resilience, goal setting, education achievement and leadership. These themes were constructed to link with the programme's four objectives. From the literature review for this research, best practice was identified as using Likert-type scales with between 5 and 7 options so as to allow for change over the duration of assessment period, and recommended the use of 'I' statements to ensure the young person was referring to themselves and not agreeing to general statements (Neill et al., 2003; Reininger et al., 2003).

The findings of this study revealed that both staff and participants felt the tool was too long with 32 questions and being one and a half pages long. Youth participants stated that it was hard to stay engaged with the questions through to the end. These views are supported in the literature, which recommends that construct themes should ideally have 3–6 questions as more than 6 leads to unimportant questions having an adverse influence, while fewer than 3 makes the construct difficult to define. Reducing the number of questions reduces time to complete, and a shorter time to complete should engage young people through to completion (Jones et al., 2011; Neill et al., 2003; Reininger et al., 2003). Neill et al. (2003) add that the tool's layout should be clear and straightforward to allow people without research experience, such as programme staff, to administer the tool with confidence.

The original document given to YWCA Auckland stated the importance of pilot testing the tool:

It is critical to pilot test the content, language, and applicability of the assessment tool with a group from each year group prior to implementing the assessment tool and that necessary adjustments are made. The results of the test will only ascertain if the assessment tools questions can be understood (Ballinger et al., 2009. p. 11).

During the research it was discovered that the tool had not been pilot tested. The importance of pilot testing is emphasised in the literature. Pilot testing during instrument development ensures the questions will be understood and clear to all the participants. It gives an indication of the stability of the tool and length of time required to complete it. Changes can then be made to the instrument (Neill et al., 2003; Reininger et al., 2003). If the tool under study had been pilot tested in the beginning, there would have been an opportunity for greater participation, understanding,

and buy-in from the staff from the outset of its delivery. Potential issues such as the length of the tool could have been identified prior to wider implementation

The findings revealed that programme staff felt a lack of buy-in to the purpose and more importantly the use and benefits of the tool. Staff commented that in their experience that the tool's results weren't reliable, as young people initially did not understand all the questions and their mood on the day tended to affect how they rated themselves, thus affecting the overall results. Without clear understanding of the purpose, process and outcomes of an self-assessment tool, staff can feel disconnected from the process and administering it becomes 'just a part of the job'. In this case staff felt that it was not benefiting their job in supporting young people. The literature emphasises that PYD programme staff need to understand the purpose of a tool aligned to PYD principles and ideally have a good understanding of adolescent developmental stages (Phelps et al., 2009). The results of the tool need to be translated into useable practical information for the programme staff and young people (Geldhof et al., 2013). There appeared to be an opportunity for greater communication and training for the programme staff in the purpose, process and outcomes of the tool to increase their understanding and commitment to its use.

The findings revealed that the more experienced staff were concerned that the young people hadn't understood all the questions in the tool and that they needed to 'walk through' the questions with them because they wouldn't otherwise understand what the questions meant. This led to a feeling the tool wasn't relatable to the young people. However, a new staff member did not have this experience; when she administered the tool nobody asked questions and the students happily completed the tool, which she felt meant that the questions in the tool were self-explanatory. No student participant raised any concerns about having a lack of understanding of the questions in the tool. This discrepancy is significant and pilot testing would have helped to clarify exactly how easy the questions were to comprehend for students. Adolescents are developing their cognitive skills of analysis, increased memory, hypothetical, logical and abstract thought (Berger & Thompson 1995) and a clear difference between adolescents and adults is that they exhibit less psychosocial maturity than adults yet they have developed high-level cognitive abilities and biological maturity (Gluckman, 2011). This indicates that assessing how appropriate questions are for youth requires youth development practitioners to have a complex range of understanding in terms of appropriate levels of language for youth. They also need to be able to gauge how well youth interpret the language of a self-assessment tool.

In terms of responses to the tool's questions, the findings revealed that year 10 students (14 years) would initially rate themselves high on the first use of the tool as a result of them finding the concepts and process difficult to grasp. However, youth self-assessment tools reviewed in the literature highlighted that from the age of 12 or 13 young people had a cognitive development to understand 'I' statement questions related to their development (Klein et al., 2005; Neill et al., 2003). Further testing of this tool would help to ascertain whether the questions were a challenge for the younger participants or whether a clearer explanation of why they were asked to complete it would suffice.

Even though the year 10 students may not have had a clear understanding of what the tool was for, the findings revealed that the more the students completed the tool, the more they appreciated its role and importance. The views of the youth participants showed the importance of how the tool was explained to them. Even though it appeared to be more a case of staff saying 'fill this form in', and in some cases 'we need it as part of our job', the youth still expressed clear feelings of trust in the staff and the programme. None of the student participants felt they needed to ask or challenge what it was used for.

The young people in this study may not have had the emotional maturity to complete the tool with utmost dedication but they were capable of thought and reflection on where they were at, at the time of assessment. This was highlighted by the new staff member recalling the honest and emotional conversation she had with her year 10 students after they first completed the tool. Programme staff need to feel confident that youth participants will understand their explanations of the tool's purpose and process, which if done effectively will help them engage with it more fully from the outset.

The young people in this study displayed uncertainty as to why they were completing the tool yet after a few experiences with it they began to use it themselves as a self-reflection tool to monitor their own status and growth. The student participants reported that in the beginning they had feelings like 'oh this again' and just filled it out without much thought. However, after a while they started to think of what they had marked the last time, what had happened in their life since, and how they were feeling in that area now. Some used it as a means to set a focus in a certain area and others as a self-acknowledgement of growth. The younger participants shared how they had begun to use the tool in this way and the older participants all expressed clearly that they had been using it as a self-reflection tool for the past few years. This commitment to development is in line with the 'identity achievement' stage described in the literature in relation to Erikson's work (as cited in Berger & Thompson, 1995). Utilising the tool to assess where they were at in certain parts of their lives and then focusing on those areas promoted discovery of their individual identity and understanding of what was important to them in their development. Catalano et al. (2004) state that developing a positive identity ensures young people have a coherent sense of self. This leads to the development of self-efficacy and resilience (Bandura, 1994; Liebenberg et al., 2012), which is essentially the objective of this programme and tool.

In the staff interviews there was an expression of concern related to the young women's results being impacted by how they felt on the day of completion. They felt that this affected the validity of the results and did not yield a true reflection of their development. The results could show dips in progress, which may just be represented by a moment in time and not necessarily reflect a long-term trend. The student participants themselves said that they would complete the tool depending on how they felt on the day. Some days they just didn't feel good about themselves or were impacted by life events which affected how they were feeling; they recognised that it was common to have ups and downs. In a programme of this length (4 years) young people are

transitioning through a wide range of the development stages and it is expected that they will have ups and downs (Berger & Thompson, 1995; Santrock, 2008). Instead of a challenge to tracking progress, this should be seen as an opportunity to track and support the ups and downs young people go through in a longitudinal programme.

Experiences both positive and negative inform behavioural development. With the opportunity to reflect on the negative experiences and a chance to gain support when these occur, young people in PYD programmes learn how to cope with the ups and downs of life, which in turn helps build their resilience (Bandura, 1994). With greater knowledge and understanding of the stages of development adolescents go through, PYD staff should use the tool as a means to identify how young people are feeling instead of being concerned that they are rating themselves low at times and affecting the data results. This is the ideal time to provide vital support and then track whether that support has been beneficial for the young person at the next assessment period. This is also an opportunity for young people to reflect on how they overcame their lows as they look back and see their growth in identified areas. Again, this builds resilience (Bagshaw, 2011; Howard & Johnson, 2000; Ungar, 2013).

5.2.2 Environment

The environment in which the tool is administered emerged as a consideration from the findings, with both staff and student participants raising the concern that in a group setting students could potentially be influenced by what they think other people might think of their answers. Student participants reported not feeling comfortable with other students seeing their answers and in some cases changed them if they had been seen. They felt the tool was personal and that they should be able to complete it sitting away from others. One participant did point out, however, that she enjoyed the casual group environment as it made the environment comfortable for her. This is an important consideration and one that aligns with the original intention of the administering the tool at a school group meeting. The literature does not indicate best practice in this area, yet it does raise the importance of who administers the tool, highlighting that there should be consistency and trust between the young person and the adult administering the tool (Brendtro et al., 2012; Carmen et al., 2011; Neill et al., 2003).

5.2.3 Frequency of administration

The tool was intended to be administered every six months and it appears this mostly occurred for the first three years. However, it was reported that there had been a drop-off in use of the tool in the past year due to staff changes and no policy or training on the purpose and use of the tool. This was clearly indicated by the new staff member who had not been informed of the tool, but came across it on the computer and had enquired what it was for; she also believed that it was administered only once a year. The youth participants' views on how often they were required to complete the tool were positive for both age groups. They stated that completing it every six months allowed them time to think about where they were and time to change. They also felt that completing it more often would lead them to being less honest in their responses. On the other

hand, only doing it once a year would make it harder to remember their answers from last time. One participant pointed out that if it was only administered at the beginning and end of the programme, students would only be evaluated from two points and there would no understanding of their progression or ups and downs during the programme. This is a very important point, as it aligns with the purpose of the tool as a programme evaluation tool or a developmental tool.

5.2.4 Entering of data

The process of data entry was raised as a concern by staff. Data was initially entered by an administration person but due to funding constraints YWCA Auckland, lost administration support, which put responsibility back on the programme staff, who didn't feel they had the time or means to enter the data themselves. Once the data was entered graphs were produced where trends could be seen across the duration of the data collection, and across students individually in relation to programme themes. The importance of results being translated into usable data is emphasised in the literature (Geldhof et al., 2014). Klein et al. (2005) have also discussed the importance of PYD programmes being able to self-manage a tool, including collecting, entering data and producing reports.

5.2.5 Use of data

How the data collected from the self-assessment tool was used by staff was unclear. Staff members' understanding of how the data was used varied depending on their experience in the programme. It ranged from the new staff member not knowing at all what happened to the forms once completed, through to the programme manager knowing clearly how it was used, although she thought the data had been used more than it had. She did highlight that the results had been used for funding contract reporting, reporting to the board, and in funding applications as evidence of the programme's effectiveness.

It appeared from the staff interviews that there had been an intention to show the results to the young women and their mentors, and to use them as a way to support the young people through their journey on the programme. If resources had allowed, staff argued, they could have done so much more with the data. One staff member said she had offered her students the chance to see their results any time, but none taken her up on it. She also shared that she did use the results informally with her students but wasn't sure how other staff used the data.

The student participants did not know what the data was used for and had never seen a copy of their results. None recalled being offered a chance to see them. One student understood that the results were used to secure funding for the programme. All student participants stated that it would mean a lot to them to see the results and view how they tracked from one assessment to another.

The findings revealed that there wasn't a clear process for the use of the data, which created uncertainty for both staff and student participants as to what they were using the tool for. The

overriding feeling from staff was that the tool's data was only for the funding reports and that they needed to do it to 'keep their jobs'. The literature recognises that this can be an issue with evaluations, and describes this as a risk when staff are not connected to the purpose, process and outcome of any form of evaluation. They can feel that it is a measure of their performance rather than being about improving outcomes for the young people they work with (Coatsworth & Conroy, 2007; Gavet 2011; Mundy-McPherson et al., 2012; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 1998).

It would appear that the lack of understanding on the part of staff as to what the data should be used for has transferred to the young people in the programme. Students were not clear at all about what the data was used for, but a few participants speculated that they may get their assessments back at the end of the programme to show their growth and change over the years.

It is important to highlight the views of one student participant, who felt that when staff were reading the results and found indicators from low scores of signs of depression or that support was needed, they would action that support. This is a significant interpretation of what happens to the results and one that shows the potential power of the tool. When tools like this are seen only as outcome evaluations after the fact, opportunities to support and intervene may easily be missed. This aligns with the literature on the importance of PYD programmes supporting young people in the challenging stages of their life. This is one of the key reasons for having programme staff and a mentor to provide support in areas of the youth participant's needs (Catalano et al., 2004; Lerner et al., 2005a; Phelps et al., 2009). In saying this, the literature on self-assessment tools does not indicate that other programmes use similar tools in this manner. None of the tools found in the literature described showing the young people the results during the programme, or using the results for individual support or development. Current measurement assessment tools identified in the literature were used more for tracking and analysing evidence of growth in individuals and groupings of young people within PYD programmes, not as a live development tool with the young people involved. Using the tool under study as according to its intended purpose could be instrumental in achieving programme objectives faster.

5.2.6 Who should see the results?

The findings revealed no clarity concerning who saw the data collected from the tool and no policy or procedure in this area. What was clear from the findings was that the data were only used and shared with funders, the board, and funding applications. Because of this lack of clarity, participants were asked who they thought should see the results from the data. The student participants were very clear that they wanted to see the results. Most said they would show them to family members or friends. One even suggested that the data be turned into graphs and given back in that form, which is totally in line with the original purpose of the tool and what was produced for the first few years with administration support.

From the interviews it became apparent that during the development of the tool there had also been an intention for the results to be used and conveyed to the mentors to support their role in

the programme. This had not eventuated and one experienced staff member was not aware of this intention or of it being discussed at any point. As noted above, the new staff had no knowledge of what happened to the forms after completion.

Students were mixed in their responses to being asked if they would show their mentors their data. A number of them weren't sure, feeling that the mentor relationship in the early stages was not one in which personal things were shared; one student said, 'We're still in the awkward stage.' Some of the student participants expressed that staff sharing the results with mentors was a confidentiality issue as it was personal and they weren't sure of the impact on their relationship with their mentor. A few of the older student participants said they would absolutely share with their mentor as they could then discuss challenges and successes and their mentor could provide support and help where needed. These were interesting responses and my interpretation was that close relationships with mentors took a long time to form, but once formed they were very strong.

The previous programme manager reported that mentors were asking for information to see if their supports were being effective. The sharing of the results from the tool with mentors could have enabled more meaningful conversations between mentors and students. The PYD literature emphasises that all young people need support and guidance to develop their assets. Adult support people are protective factors, and the greater number of protective factors enabling young people, the more likely they are to mobilise resilient behaviours (Bagshaw, 2011; Howard & Johnson, 2000; Martin, 2006; Ungar 2012). Within the literature Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (as cited in Santrock, 2008) was highlighted as supporting PYD, as it is grounded in healthy relationships among family, school, peer groups, and community (Jackson, 2014). The self-assessment tool provides an opportunity for young people to express themselves and then discuss with caring adults their views. This would enable them to enhance their identity and independence, and their ability to make positive decisions for themselves.

5.3 Outcomes

In relation to outcomes, the original tool literature states, 'YWCA Future Leaders will be able to track the development needs of each participant and following their graduation, celebrate the changes achieved in the four objectives of the programme' (Ballinger et al., 2009, p. 11). The literature describes PYD programme aims as supporting the development of young people through identifying strengths, developing resilience and identity, leading to self-efficacy and independence (Catalano et al., 2004; Damon, 2004; Lerner et al., 2005a; Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2009; Wayne Francis Community Trust, 2011). The overarching question informing this research is 'How do we know if young people have developed'? The literature describes that more focus and commitment are required in the field of PYD to measure outcomes from PYD programmes and to establish if programmes are being effective in developing young people (Ministry of Youth Development, 2009; Mundy-McPherson et al., 2012).

YWCA Auckland's commitment to the self-assessment tool and programme evaluation has provided information for the organisation to report effectiveness to funders and the board, and the data has been used as evidence of success in funding applications. The self-assessment tool's primary purpose was to assess and assist young people's development. The secondary purpose was to provide programme evaluation and evidence of effectiveness aligned to programme objectives and use of resources. It also allows the organisation to utilise analysis to review processes and resource allocation.

The findings revealed that YWCA Auckland had not fully established a process for the tool to be used primarily as an individual development tool as the young people did not receive their results; nor could they be discussed with the programme staff. The results were not shared and discussed with mentors or other support systems. However, a positive outcome discovered in this research related to the use of the self-assessment tool as just that by the young people themselves. The young people used the tool to reflect on where they were at compared to the last time they completed it. It allowed them to reflect on their responses and growth during the programme, giving them the opportunity to consider where they had improved and where they needed to focus more and potentially seek support to achieve this. They acknowledged that they went through ups and downs and that the tool provided an opportunity to think about what had occurred that influenced the way they rated themselves at a given time. The tool became a live development tool for the young people themselves; not just a retrospective assessment.

Cognitive development theorists hold that development occurs through construction of knowledge and social interactions, and that learning good strategies to process information is an important part of development (Berger & Thompson, 1995; Santrock, 2008). Self-assessment tools work towards this by providing the opportunity for young people to begin to connect the importance of their own thoughts and feelings to the people and environment around them. The YWCA Auckland tool therefore allows young people to develop reflective practice, which in turn develops self-efficacy, resilience, strengths and identity development. The literature asserts that when this occurs young people feel confident and competent in their ability to succeed and cope in the face of adversity and 'bounce back' from setbacks (Bandura, 1994).

Developing self-efficacy and resilience are key desired outcomes during adolescence. The enhancing of both self-efficacy and resilience was a key objective of YWCA Auckland self-assessment tool (Ballinger et al., 2009). Developing self-efficacy enables young people to feel confident and competent in their ability to succeed and cope in the face of adversity and bounce back from setbacks, leading to higher levels of resilience (Bandura, 1994). The young people in this research showed evidence that this had occurred for them.

The findings also showed that the student participants were very grateful for the opportunity they had been given to participate in the Future Leaders programme. They expressed the value to them of the events, workshops and activities, their work with mentors, and especially the programme staff in providing opportunities to experience new things and support. The literature

identifies three main dimensions of PYD programmes: goals, activities, and atmosphere (Catalano et al., 2004; Deane, 2012; Roth & Brooks-Gunn 2003). YWCA Auckland appear to have provided these dimensions very well within the Future Leaders programme.

5.4 Summary of discussion

The four-year commitment of the YWCA Auckland Future Leaders programme to the self-assessment tool and evaluation practices has allowed for the collection of data as evidence of effectiveness of the programme that has been reported to board members and funders. Through the regular administration of the tool, it has also provided opportunities for young people to self-reflect and use the tool as a live development tool rather than a retrospective assessment. From the findings it is clear that processes were not put in place for all involved to understand the purpose, process and outcomes of the self-assessment tool. With these in place the tool could provide greater benefits as a development tool to the young people and support those involved in the programme to meet the programme's objectives. To this end, a series of recommendation are set out below for the future development and use of the self-assessment tool.

5.5 Recommendations

It is recommended that a policy and procedures document be written that will include the following recommendations and will in future ensure consistency across the programme delivery and through times of staff changes. The policy and procedures document will also need to explain clearly the purpose of the tool so that programme staff can see that its use is not just a tool to monitor programme achievement, but also as an individual development and self-reflection tool. Additional recommendations include:

- Monitor staff administration processes and understanding of the tool through staff supervision and appraisals.
- Write a script for staff to read/explain to young people each time they administer the tool to ensure consistency and a level of confidence in how they are administering the tool. Provide training on the purpose, process and outcome of the tool in staff induction processes.
- Reduce the number of questions in the tool, ensuring there are only 3–6 questions per subtheme and that it fits onto one page. In addition to this, within the existing themes add in questions that relate the programme's yearly theme to the year group and/or workshops/events offered in that year. Programme staff can then analyse if each year's theme is having an impact by comparing young people's responses from the start of the year with those from the end of the year.
- Add space within the tool for a few qualitative (open) questions allowing young people to expand on the reasons for their responses.

- Pilot test these changes with a group from each age group. Interview them individually after completion as to the length, their understanding of questions, and knowledge of the purpose of the tool.
- Keep administering the tool in groups at school meetings so they can ask questions, but then move students to sit by themselves to complete it.
- Develop a spreadsheet so that staff can easily enter a cohort set of student data following a school meeting within 30–60 minutes. The spreadsheet should be set up so it produces layering graphs for each individual from each assessment and can be printed off easily. The spreadsheet should also link to identified theme subheadings and produce overall scores across all students in each year levels.
- Individual results should be printed off and taken in a sealed envelope to the following month's group school meeting where they should be distributed to the young people.
- The tool needs to be treated as a personal document for the young people themselves. The organisation is to have use of collated group data to utilise for programme assessment and reporting. Permission should be sought from individual young people to use any named personal data.
- Establish a process to encourage student participants to share their results with their mentors and other important people in their lives such as family and friends or adults within their school.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The motivation for this research was a desire to answer the following question: How do we know if young people in a PYD programme have developed? This research critically examined the experience of using a PYD individual self-assessment tool designed specifically for YWCA Auckland's youth mentoring programme Future Leaders. In order to optimise the tool's ability to support the YWCA Future Leaders programme objectives, this study has identified recommendations to enhance the process and outcomes of using the tool.

The study was designed to answer the following research questions:

- 1 How has the tool been understood by the programme staff, delivered and used?
- 2 How has the use of the tool affected the actual experience of the youth participants in the programmes?
- 3 In what way has the data collected from the tool been utilised to meet the programme objectives?

The outcomes of this research have identified key facts and important learnings which can be utilised by PYD programmes who have a commitment to knowing how and when their programme has assisted in the development of their young people and in tracking their development so to know where to emphasise and provide supports through out the programme duration.

This aim of this research has been to critically examine the experience of using a PYD individual self-assessment tool designed specifically for YWCA Auckland. In order to optimise the tool's ability to support the YWCA Future Leaders programme objectives, this study has identified recommendations to enhance the process and outcomes of using the tool.

This research was conducted using a qualitative methodological approach based on interpretivism. Semi-structured interviews were conducted as the main form of data collection, and the questions were designed to investigate the experiences of both staff and student participants involved in the use of the self-assessment tool. The research was grounded in a PYD approach and was committed to allowing the voices of the participants who have experienced the self-assessment tool to be heard and influence the outcomes of this research. The methodology was fitting as it allowed me to use my skills as a programme developer, programme manager and youth worker to hear the voices of those that experienced the tool.

With the knowledge gained from the literature review, interviews, and my own professional experience, I interpreted the participants' views to draw out key themes from the research. These were then compared with the findings of the relevant literature to develop recommendations for the future development and use of the tool. Through the research, it has become clear that the tool's design, administration and the use of its data have great potential as both a development and impact tool for young people. When used as it was intended to be, the tool is able to measure

the development that has taken place for youth who participate in PYD programmes such as the YWCA Future Leaders programme.

As an insider researcher and from my experience of developing the tool and in utilising variations of it over the past five years, I found the research process invaluable for gaining clarification of the importance of PYD programme management and evaluation/measurement best practice. This will inform and enhance my future practice within the youth development sector. I was pleased to learn that YWCA Auckland have committed to the use of the tool over the past four years and have used the data collected as evidence of effectiveness for the organisation's board and funders. Staff understanding of the purpose, process and outcomes of evaluation/measurement practices is vital to the optimum use of a development tool and requires greater training and policy development so all staff can utilise the tool fully informed of its purpose. The discovery in the course of this research of how the young people were using the tool as a live development tool without having been given a clear explanation of the purpose and use of the tool's data was very illuminating. This verified the literature's emphasis on the importance of providing opportunities for adolescents to develop their own identity and self-efficacy. PYD programmes need to use young people's known strengths to build resilience and provide support to develop areas identified as needing improvement.

6.1 Key outcomes from the research

The research found that the tool was beneficial in supporting the programme outcomes as it was able to measure effectiveness through data collection every six months. The data collected supplied evidence of overall progress by tracking cohorts of student participants in the programme. The data were then used by the organisation to show the board of trustees and programme funders evidence of effectiveness and achievement of the programme objectives. YWCA Auckland also used this information for future funding applications.

Through the voices of both under 16 and over 16 student participants this research revealed that they have used the tool as a live self-development tool, even though it hadn't necessarily been framed for them in this way. Even without a clear understanding of the purpose of the tool and not knowing what the results would be used for, and having never seen any of their results, they still had the cognitive and emotional ability to use the PYD framework of the tool to self-reflect and to assess themselves as to where they were in their lives compared to previous assessment periods. They described how they would reflect on the previous answers they had given and utilise workshops and other opportunities provided within the programme to develop in those areas.

The literature describes the growing need for evaluation in the field of PYD for establishing that interventions are effective and that programme objectives are achieved. There needs to be a shift from focusing on measuring programme best practice to focusing on actual youth participant outcomes. YWCA Auckland has a committed approach to evaluation which is evidenced by the external evaluation in 2009 and their decision to commission the development of the longitudinal

self-assessment tool aligned to the programme objectives. This is advanced within the PYD field, which is only beginning to establish best practice strategies. The literature search for self-assessment tools designed using a strengths-based framework revealed only a handful of programmes had carried out both pre- and post-assessment and none reported that they handed the results back to young people following the first assessment to use as a reflection and development tool. The purpose of the YWCA Auckland Future Leaders tool was to monitor and provide support to young people, and to inform them and their personal supports (such as mentors, families and school liaisons) of areas of success and areas requiring improvement. Although this was not occurring at the time of data collection, the commitment by the organisation to collect data and use it for reporting meant the young people had access to a self-assessment tool that they used for self-reflection and development.

Through the research it became clear that those administering the tool did not have uniform clarity and understanding of its purpose, process of use, and intended outcomes. From its inception there were many conversations with staff on the use of the tool and about the data being collated and analysed and then used for reporting. Even though pilot testing had been recommended, this was not carried out and no policy or procedure documents were written. The driving motivation for continued collection was for reporting reasons, which left some staff unsure how it was benefiting their work and the young people's development. As time went on and staff changed, the process became diluted, with no new staff induction of the purpose, process and outcome of the tool. After the loss of administration support due to funding cuts the data were not being entered and therefore the intended analysis was not being conducted nor reviewed. What this shows is that clear and uniform understanding of the purpose, process and outcome of the tool by staff is vital. As stated in the literature, programme staff need to be involved in any evaluation or assessment processes and all involved require information in a manner that expresses the purpose, structure, content and practical utility of the tool being used. Without this knowledge, they cannot be expected to effectively explain the purpose and use of data to the young people, nor advocate for its benefits.

Adolescence is a challenging and dynamic time in any person's life. Knowledge from human development theory about the stages of adolescent development has informed PYD practices. PYD programme staff working with young people need to have a sound understanding of the adolescent stages of development. This knowledge informs their understanding of the capabilities young people have and the challenges they face in their changing biological, cognitive and social positions, which aligns with the aims of PYD approaches. It allows us to understand what is occurring in young people's lives and provide support that is relevant to their development stage and personal situations. Greater knowledge in this area by programme staff and utilising the tool as a form of understanding individuals' stages of development while on the programme could enhance the quality of support they provide.

6.2 Summary of recommendations

The recommendations stated in the discussion chapter emphasise the importance of writing a policy and procedures document to ensure consistency across programme delivery. This will include providing a script for staff to use in administering the tool that will provide support for them and consistency in delivery to all programme participants, at all stages. Procedures should also be put in place to monitor staff processes related to administering the tool and use of the data. For the tool itself, reducing the length and number of questions and adding questions related to yearly themes within the programme should provide for ease of use, and adding some qualitative questions will enable young people to expand on reasons to responses. The importance of pilot testing is stated, to ensure the changes are appropriate. By developing an accessible spreadsheet for staff to enter data and produce results, the data collected will be easily processed and used by staff. This will also enable students to receive and engage with their results, and enable them to share those results with their mentors and other important support people in their lives. Ultimately, this should provide extended development opportunities for the programme participants.

6.3 Future research

This research has helped me to gain a greater appreciation and extended knowledge of my own field of practice. It has also highlighted opportunities for future research in the area of youth development. Following this research project, there is firstly scope for future researchers to evaluate the self-assessment tool when it has been revised according to the recommendations, with full purpose, process and outcome benefits clear to programme staff, young people and those who support them. There is also opportunity for testing the direct outcomes for young people and the effectiveness of programme in achieving the intended objectives. Although cultural considerations did not arise through the discussions with participants and findings of this research, it is clear that these are important factors in ensuring good positive youth development practice. More research on PYD among indigenous groups, with a wider ethos of cultural methods and practice, is needed. As well, it would be interesting to measure positive impacts on non indigenous people in such models. Further, there is opportunity for broader research into the correlation of the knowledge that youth workers have of adolescent development stages with the supports they provide to young people within PYD frameworks. These will, I believe, deepen the understanding of PYD approaches, practices and processes for the future benefit and development of young people.

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Assessment of Future Leaders' Development

Background

Future Leaders currently conduct a survey at the end of the year to gather feedback from participants, families and mentors involved. YWCA around 1/3 of these survey returned. It has been identified by YWCA management that there is no current measure to monitor the young women participants' growth and development through the programme.

Purpose

The purpose of the participant assessment tool is for Future Leaders staff to monitor areas of growth and identify where the young women needs additional support. With permission from the young women, the staff can then use this information to inform the young women as well as their family, their mentor and possibly the school liaison person as to areas of success and areas of improvement required.

All questions are linked to the four objectives of the programme.

Process

This assessment tool should be used throughout the young women's time on Future Leaders. Beginning after the first selection process and then every 6mths with the final time being around graduation.

Staff to take the assessment tool to the school meeting and have the young women complete it in a group setting. This presents the opportunity for a 'back and forth' discussion between all of the young women and staff, and is a chance to ask and answer questions. It is important to make sure they realise it is not a test no answer is wrong. By doing it in a group ensures they feel relaxed and not as interrogated as they know all participants are completing the assessment. It is also important to inform them that you will be able to use the information to show their development over the years.

Outcome

YWCA Future Leaders will be able to track development needs of each participant and following their graduation celebrate the changes achieved in the four objectives of the programme.

Pilot testing

It is critical to pilot test the content, language, and result applicability of the assessment tool with a group from each year group prior to implementing the assessment tool and that necessary adjustments are made.

The results of the test will only ascertain if the assessment tools questions can be understood and that development in the scale is achieved throughout the year groups.

Future Leaders Participant Development Assessment

Name _____ Age _____ Year in at school _____

School _____ Date _____

Resiliency		False					True	
		Not like me	Bit like me		Mostly like me		A lot Like me	
1	I am friends with myself	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	I can handle many things at a time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	I have self-discipline	1		3	4	5	6	7
4	My belief in myself gets me through hard times.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	I can look at a situation in a number of ways	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	Sometimes I make myself do things whether I want to or not	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Self Efficacy		False					True	
		Not like me	Bit like me		Mostly like me		A lot Like me	
7	My life has meaning to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	I can usually find several solutions to a problem	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Educational Achievements		False					True	
		Not like me	Bit like me		Mostly like me		A lot Like me	
13	I have set personal educational goals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	I can overcome challenges that slow my educational achievements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

15	I can seek advice when needed to achieve in my education	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	I have developed study skills to support my learning and achieving in education	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Goal Setting		False					True A lot Like me	
		Not like me		Bit like me		Mostly like me		
17	I know the importance of having goals and planning to achieve them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18	I know how to set a goal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19	I know how to set goals for different parts of my life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20	I know how to set a goal and work towards it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21	I know how to achieve my goals and am committed to them my goals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22	I know how to re evaluate my goals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Leadership		False					True A lot Like me	
		Not like me		Bit like me		Mostly like me		
23	I know my own strength areas (what I am good at)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24	I live self care and responsibility at home with my family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25	I model self care and responsibility with my friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26	I have the ability to voice my views to a range of adults	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27	I have the ability to work with a team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28	I have the ability to create and communicate a vision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29	I have the ability to motivate others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30	I have the ability to share responsibility and distribute tasks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31	I can manage change	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32	I value my ongoing personal improvement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Future Leaders Participant Development Assessment

Name _____ Age _____ Year in at school _____

School _____ Date _____

		False					True	
		Not like me	Bit like me		Mostly like me		A lot Like me	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	I am friends with myself	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	I can handle many things at a time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	My life has meaning to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	I have set personal educational goals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	I can overcome challenges that slow my educational achievements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	I know the importance of having goals and planning to achieve them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	I know how to set a goal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	I know my own strength areas (what I am good at)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	I live self care and responsibility at home with my family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	I model self care and responsibility with my friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	I have self-discipline	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	My belief in myself gets me through hard times.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	I can usually find several solutions to a problem	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	I can seek advice when needed to achieve in my education	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17	I know how to set goals for different parts of my life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18	I know how to set a goal and work towards it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

		False Not like me		Bit like me		Mostly like me		True A lot Like me
19	I have the ability to voice my views to a range of adults	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20	I have the ability to work with a team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21	I have the ability to create and communicate a vision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22	I can look at a situation in a number of ways	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23	Sometimes I make myself do things whether I want to or not	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24	I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25	If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26	I have developed study skills to support my learning and achieving in education	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27	I know how to achieve my goals and am committed to them my goals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28	I know how to re evaluate my goals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29	I have the ability to motivate others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30	I have the ability to share responsibility and distribute tasks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31	I can manage change	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32	I value my ongoing personal improvement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Resiliency

Question numbers

1, 2, 12, 13, 22 & 23

Self Efficacy

Question numbers

3, 4, 14, 15, 24, & 25

Educational Achievements

Question numbers

5, 6, 16 & 26

Goal Setting

Question numbers

7, 8, 17, 18, 27 & 28

Leadership

Question numbers

9, 10, 11, 19, 20, 21, 29, 30, 31 & 32

This Future Leaders Participant Development Assessment has been developed by Shona Ballinger with support from Nic Mason (AUT)

APPENDIX B: AUTECH approval letter



A U T E C
S E C R E T A R I A T

A.1.

8 September 2014

Carol Neill
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Carol

Re Ethics Application: **14/260 A critical examination of an individual self-assessment tool used in a positive youth development programme.**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTECH).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 8 September 2017.

As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTECH:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 8 September 2017;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 8 September 2017 or on completion of the project.

It is a condition of approval that AUTECH is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence.

AUTECH approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTECH grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this. If your research is undertaken within a jurisdiction outside New Zealand, you will need to make the arrangements necessary to meet the legal and ethical requirements that apply there.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

All the very best with your research,

Kate O'Connor
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee
Cc: Shona Ballinger shonaballinger@gmail.com

APPENDIX C: Indicative Questions

Indicative Interview Questions

Prior to all interviews:

Introduce myself; include a few minutes of small talk to ease into conversation; ensure they are comfortable; inform them of the process; ask if they have any questions; ask if they are happy to proceed; if yes ask them to sign the consent form; inform them you are about to start the recording; begin interview.

Programme Staff

Can you tell me what you understand the use of the self-assessment tool to be?

Can you tell me how you described the self-assessment tool to the young people when you were administering the tool at the school meetings? And how did the young women respond?

What responses were there from the young women?

Prompt questions: Can you explain the responses / questions they asked? i.e what it was for, what it would be used for? Other questions?

Can you tell me how you replied to these responses?

Prompt questions: Did you feel knowledgeable to answer these questions and how were your responses received by the young women?

Can you tell me how you felt as staff explaining the self-assessment tool to the young women?

Prompt questions: Were you confident in your knowledge? Were you sure/unsure of the reasons for the self-assessment?

Explain what you understand the data is used for from the self-assessment tool.

Tell me your thoughts about the self-assessment tool?

Can you tell me if you think the self-assessment could be improved? In what way?

Prompt questions: Delivery of the tool, use of data? etc
Any other comments?

Participants over 16

Can you tell me what you understand the purpose of the self-assessment tool?

Tell me how it was explained to you as to why you were completing the self-assessment tool in the beginning?

Prompt questions? Were you informed of it's purpose and what the data from the self-assessment tool would be used for?

Can you explain to me how you felt completing the self-assessment tool?

Tell me how it was explained to you as to why you were completing the tool every six months?

And tell me how did you feel about completing the self-assessment tool every six months?

Tell me what you have been informed about the results each time after you completed the self-assessment tool?

Prompt questions: Have you seen the results? Have you asked for the results? If you have asked for them tell me what the response was from staff? If you saw the results tell me what did they mean to you? If you haven't seen the results tell me what would it mean to you to see them?

Tell me your thoughts and any recommendations on how the self-assessment tool could be administered to young people in the future?

Tell me your thoughts and any recommendations on how the tool could be used to meet the development objectives of young people in the programme?

Any other comments?

Participants under 16

Can you tell me what you understand the purpose of the self-assessment tool to be?

Tell me how it was explained to you as to why you were completing the self-assessment tool in the beginning?

Prompt questions? Were you informed of it's purpose and what the data from the self-assessment tool would be used for?

Can you explain to me how you felt completing the self-assessment tool?

Tell me what you have been informed about the results after you completed the self-assessment tool?

Prompt questions: Have you seen the results? Have you asked for the results? If you have asked for them tell me what the response was from staff? If you saw the results tell me what did they mean to you? If you haven't seen the results tell me what would it mean to you to see them?

Tell me your thoughts and any recommendations on how the self-assessment tool could be administered to young people in the future?

Tell me your thoughts and any recommendations on how the tool could be used to meet the development objectives of young people in the programme?

Any other comments?

