

Does Gaisce–The President’s Award
Act as a Catalyst in the Enhancement
of the Psychological Attributes of Hope,
Self-Efficacy, Self-Esteem, Happiness and Psychological
Well-Being in its Participants?

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Abstract

This research is the first to examine whether Gaisce—The President’s Award acts as a catalyst for the enhancement of the positive psychological attributes of hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness and psychological well-being in its participants. The study compared mixed-gender Gaisce participants to a mixed-gender control group of community-based young people. This research adopted a positive psychology strengths-based approach, in contrast to the traditional psychological deficits-based model.

In addition, the study investigated whether Gaisce—The President’s Award programme meets the inclusion criteria to be termed a Positive Youth Development Programme.

A mixed methods approach was employed, using standardised questionnaires and semi-structured focus groups and interviews, in order to obtain a comprehensive and inclusive understanding of the Gaisce programme’s capacity to enhance positive psychological attributes and personal strengths in its participants. This research consisted of five components: (a) Study 1 – analysis of factor structure and reliability of the five scales utilised in this research, using EFA and CFA on Bronze Award participants and control participants at Time 1 (N=647); (b) Study 2 – Bronze Award quantitative analysis (n=183); (c) Study 3 – Bronze Award qualitative analysis (n=64); (d) Study 4 – Gold Award quantitative analysis (n=62); and (e) Study 5 – Gold Award qualitative analysis (n=11).

The findings from both the quantitative and qualitative components confirmed and corroborated each other. Four key findings emerged. The quantitative results confirmed that participation in the Gaisce programme significantly enhanced levels of hope (pathways) thinking and self-efficacy for both Bronze and Gold Gaisce participants. The findings also confirmed that participation significantly improved levels of hope (pathways), self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness and psychological well-being for Bronze participants who had scored in the lowest quartile of the group in pre-testing against their control counterparts. The Bronze and Gold qualitative results verified that participation in the Award enhanced participants’ personal strengths and psychological attributes.

This research presents a comprehensive overview of Gaisce and its Bronze and Gold participants. The research findings have important policy and practice implications for government departments and other organisations involved in the delivery of services for young Irish people.

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Chapter 1 Thesis Overview

1.01 Background and Rationale

Gaisce is a Gaelic term meaning a ‘deed of valour’ or a ‘great achievement’. The literature of Gaisce–The President’s Award programme states that it is Ireland’s most esteemed and valued award programme for young Irish people. The Award is an invitation from the President of Ireland to young people across the island of Ireland, aged between 15 and 25 years, to participate in a national youth challenge award programme. The non-competitive programme is offered at three levels, Bronze, Silver and Gold, and participants are asked to set and attain challenging personal goals in four components, namely community involvement, personal skill, physical recreation and an adventure journey.

The stated mission of Gaisce–The President’s Award is to contribute to the development of young Irish people, but particularly those most in need of opportunity and inspiration. The Gaisce programme provides young people with an opportunity for achievement and personal growth, through which it is envisaged that they will build their psychological strengths and personal attributes. Gaisce–The President’s Award programme appears to endorse the positive psychology premise that by nurturing and building human strengths and attributes, young people and their communities can prosper and thrive.

A review of the empirical literature has highlighted a dearth of research nationally and internationally into the psychological effects of participation in award programmes for young people. The current research is the first empirical study of Gaisce–The President’s Award programme. This study endeavours to investigate whether participation in Gaisce–The President’s Award acts as a catalyst in the enhancement of the positive attributes of hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness and psychological well-being in its participants.

The term ‘Positive Youth Development programme’ refers to the intentional efforts of communities, government agencies, organisations, schools and others to provide positive opportunities and experiences for young people, under the supervision of caring adults within a supportive community. These programmes are based on the belief that with adequate nurturing and encouragement, all young people have the capability to become competent adults.

In the process of investigating the research question, the study also considers whether Gaisce–The President’s Award programme meets the necessary criteria to be termed appositive Youth Development programme.

The study also examines the factor structure of the five questionnaires used in the research, the Children’s Hope Scale, the General Self-Efficacy Scale, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Subjective Happiness Scale and the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being, answering the question, are these questionnaires reliable and valid for use with an adolescent Irish secondary-school sample?

The Bronze quantitative research study involves three components.

The first study measures pre- and post-participation levels of hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness and psychological well-being in Gaisce Bronze participants against control participants.

In the second study, a subset of matched participants from the Bronze participants and the Bronze control participants are then compared. This subset is matched in five variables: gender, age, county of residence, location of residence and parental occupation.

The third study identified Bronze participants scoring in the lowest quartile and compared them with participants in the lowest quartile of the control group to ascertain if the Gaisce programme does indeed, as its mission statement suggests, help those young people most in need of opportunity and inspiration.

The Gold quantitative research measures pre- and post-participation levels of hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness and psychological well-being in Gaisce Gold participants against control participants.

Finally, the qualitative component of the research involves focus groups and interviews with both Bronze and Gold Gaisce participants, thus providing cross-validation and a deeper and more complete understanding of the phenomena involved in participation in such an award programme.

1.02 Overview

Chapter Two – Adolescence and Early Adulthood

Chapter Two provides a historical overview of how the adolescent period was seen by society in the past as a period of trouble and strife. The chapter explores the shift in opinion since the 1900s to the present day, in which the adolescent and young adult years, from 12 to 25, are now viewed as distinct developmental periods with unique potential. The two developmental periods are considered. The increase in mental health difficulties within this age group is examined, and protective factors for mental health and well-being are discussed.

Chapter Three– Positive Psychology

Chapter Three reviews the field of positive psychology, its emergence and its role in promoting a shift from a deficit model of psychology to a strengths-based model. The three fundamental aspects of positive psychology – positive relationships, positive institutions and positive attributes – are examined.

Chapter Four– Positive Youth Development

Chapter Four reflects on the historical context for the emergence of the Positive Youth Development movement. The concept of Positive Youth Development is explored. The chapter provides an overview of the empirical studies of Positive Youth Development programmes, and examines them under agreed operational and outcomes frameworks.

Chapter Five – Gaisce–The President’s Award

Chapter Five reviews the origins and development of Gaisce–The President’s Award. The chapter examines the Duke of Edinburgh Award and the present International Award Association. The chapter also studies the philosophy and operational structure of the Gaisce Award programme.

Chapter Six –Research Questions

Chapter Six outlines the specific research questions to be addressed by this study.

Chapter Seven – Methodology

Chapter Seven provides a detailed description of the research approach implemented in the current study. The chapter provides the rationale for the choice of a mixed methods design,

which incorporates both quantitative and qualitative components. Information regarding participant characteristics, measures used, procedures for recruitment, data collection and data analysis, are outlined in this chapter.

Chapter Eight – Quantitative Results

Chapter Eight presents the quantitative results based on the research questions posed in Chapter Six. This chapter is organised into a number of sections, (a) the quantitative results for Bronze Gaisce participants, (b) the quantitative results for the matched Bronze Gaisce participants, (c) the quantitative results for Bronze Gaisce participants who scored in the lowest quartile, and (d) the quantitative results for Gold Gaisce participants.

Chapter Nine – Qualitative Results

Chapter Nine presents qualitative results from the thematic analysis of the focus groups and interviews with Bronze and Gold Gaisce participants. This chapter examines the participants' personal experiences of participation in the Bronze and Gold Gaisce Awards.

Chapter Ten – Discussion

Chapter Ten discusses the findings of the present research within the context of previous literature. The main conclusions are presented. The strengths and limitations of the study are outlined, and the implications for policy and practice and future research are examined.

Chapter 2 Adolescence and Early Adulthood

2.01 Introduction

This chapter gives a historical overview of, and seeks to define, the adolescent and early adult developmental period.

Dictionaries define adolescence as a transitional stage of physical and psychological human development, occurring during the period from puberty to full adulthood. This straightforward definition does not fully capture the importance or the complexity of this unique developmental period, which provides the young person with independence, opportunities, and also pitfalls, which must be negotiated and traversed in order to reach adulthood. The adolescent years were viewed by Boyd and Bee (2005) as one of the most dynamic, healthy and exciting periods of life. However, they said, as adolescents began to gain greater independence from parents and sought to obtain peer acceptance, they were more likely to engage in behaviours that carried greater risk; therefore access to what are called protective factors was of paramount importance during these years.

Protective factors are also explored in this chapter. The United States Department of Health and Human Services (2011) defined protective factors as the conditions or attributes in individuals, families and communities that mitigate risk and increase health and well-being. They have also been identified by Benson, Scales, Hawkins, Oesterle and Hill and the Search Institute (2004) as internal and external factors that help to prevent and reduce vulnerability for the development of psychological difficulties.

2.02 A historical context to the adolescent period

The scientific study of adolescence as a unique developmental stage began with the publication in 1904 of a two-volume text *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime and Religion* (1904a; 1904b) by the pioneering American psychologist and educator Granville Stanley Hall. Hall's interests focussed on childhood development and evolutionary theory. Hall founded the *American Journal of Psychology* and in 1892 was appointed as the first president of the American Psychological Association.

In his textbook on adolescence, Hall described the evolutionary benefits of development from the womb to adolescence. Hall believed that changes in human development mirrored the changes that occurred during the evolutionary process. The adolescent period of development, he believed, was equivalent to the evolutionary period when the human species changed from being animal (“beast”) to being civilized.

While some educators and psychologists viewed adolescents and the adolescent period in a positive light, the general view among most practitioners during the 20th century was that the adolescent period was one of “storm and stress”, a phrase coined by Hall. Benson (2003) noted that during the 20th century, adolescents were generally regarded as being “broken or in danger of becoming broken”. Psychoanalysts Redl and Wineman (1951) saw young people as potential problems; adolescents were depicted as “problems to be managed”. As recently as 1969, Anna Freud saw the adolescent years as a distinct period of developmental disturbance.

This viewpoint sat very comfortably in the general scope of psychology during the 20th century, which emphasised the defective view of human development, as opposed to studying psychological strengths. This negative perspective led to adolescents being labelled for decades as “troublesome” and reinforced a mindset in society that saw the adolescent years as “problem” years. Even up to 1999, Positive Youth Development was characterised as the *absence* of problem behaviours. Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, and Hawkins (1999) noted that “currently, problem behaviours are tracked more often than positive ones and, while an increasing number of Positive Youth Development interventions are choosing to measure both, this is still far from being the standard in the field”.

From the beginning of the 21st century, partly in reaction to this pathological framework for working with young people, a shift to a new dynamic perspective on adolescence began to materialise. The concept of viewing young people as resources to be nurtured was activated by the combined interest of developmental systems theorists and an increasing awareness of the second decade of life as a unique developmental period.

2.03 Adolescence – a unique period

During most of the 20th century, scientists were in general agreement that after a period of profound change and growth during the infant years, the structure of the brain became relatively unchangeable. During the last quarter of a century, the evidence from magnetic

resonance imaging has changed our understanding of the structural design and functionality of the brain. This medical technique has revealed that the adolescent brain undergoes a second period of transformation and continues to mature and develop throughout the second decade and into the third decade of life. The U.S. National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) in Drury and Giedd (2009) referred to the capability of the nerve cells in the brain to be changed through learning and experience as “brain plasticity”. According to Drury and Giedd (2009), the adolescent brain is only 80% formed; the remaining 20% continues to grow and develop into the mid-twenties. Blackmore and Choudhury (2006) have classified adolescence as a second critical period or sensitive period in neural development, highlighting the large implications this holds for the influence of environmental and contextual variables on identity formation at this time. In particular, they highlight that this influence specifically extends to the intervention and education programmes offered to adolescents.

Adolescence and young adulthood are periods of immense psychological growth in which enormous steps are taken and achieved toward maturity. During the early development years, brain activity is primarily dependent on parents and the immediate environment; during the adolescent development period, the brain is influenced by a wider variety of people and a much wider environment. This phase is vital for young people as it facilitates their adaption to independence; however, it also increases the possibility for a young person to make risky or ill-considered choices.

Giedd and Drury (2009) stated that the adolescent “plastic” period provided a unique opportunity for brain pathways to combine with genetic heritage to consolidate and stimulate brain development. He further explained that adolescents who were motivated to seize opportunities to learn and experience (e.g., music, sports, academics, skills, adventures, etc.) would enhance both their brain activity and their potential. He believed that humans were not bound strictly by their genetic blueprints; adolescents and young adults had a unique opportunity to mould and change their brain development and therefore their life trajectory.

What is important to recognise is that adolescents and young adults, through the activities they choose to engage in, whether negative or positive, are providing themselves with the scaffolding for their adult life. The importance of personally selected and relevant goals within chosen activities that promote positive development cannot be overstated.

2.04 Adolescent developmental period

Adolescence is the stage in a person's life between childhood and adulthood. It is a development phase that extends from child, with near-complete dependency on their parents, to a position of near-complete self-reliance. Adolescence starts with the onset of puberty and the physical changes that commence sexual maturation. This period of development begins in girls typically between the ages of 8-12 years and boys between the ages of 10-14 years.

Developmental theorists have been fascinated by this distinct developmental period. Freud (1905) focused on the adolescent Genital phase, which he described as the final stage of psychosexual development, during which there is a search for identity formation and a separation from parents.

Erikson (1963) postulated eight stages of psychosocial development, with the adolescent years representing Stage Five, that of Identity versus Identity Confusion. It is during this period that adolescents search for what is distinctive and unique about themselves, that is, they discover their own individuality and identity. Societal pressures are particularly stressful during this period, and adolescents increasingly grow to rely on their friends and peers as a source of knowledge, companionship and approval.

Adolescence is what Piaget (1973) termed the formal operational stage of human development. During this period, between the ages of 12 and 16, the adolescent develops the capability for hypothetical and deductive reasoning, and the ability to think about abstract concepts. The ability to systematically solve a problem in a logical and methodical way also emerges.

Kohlberg (1958) suggested a three-level model of moral development: pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional. He saw adolescence as Level Three of this model, the post-conventional morality stage, during which adolescents begin to develop their own ethical principles that typically include such basic human rights as life, liberty, and justice. They also develop the sense that their own perspective may take precedence over society's view, and that rules need not be obeyed without question.

2.05 Young adulthood developmental period

This research will focus only on development up to the mid-twenties, as 25 years is the age limit for participation in the Gaisce–The President’s Award programme, the programme being examined in this research.

The early adulthood period has not received the same intense interest from psychologists as the adolescent period. Early adulthood is generally perceived as a less erratic period to adolescence as it marks the transition into a more stable period of development, that of intimate relationships, stronger friendships and career security.

Young adulthood spans two decades from the ages of 20 to 40 years. It is accepted that the foundations that are laid in adolescence contribute to the unfolding development of life as an adult. According to Feldman, Allen and Celikel (2003) while physical development and maturation are generally thought of as complete at young adulthood, some organs, including the brain, continue to grow. Psychological separation from, and the establishment of an adult relationship with, parents will be completed during this developmental period.

Cognitive development in young adulthood is marked by a greater ability to problem solve as one’s life experiences increase and become more complex. Fischer and Rose (1994) stated that in addition to the brain growth in adolescence, some neuropsychologists have suggested that another peak in brain development occurs during the early twenties. Longer term goals, such as career and family, replace the short term goals associated with the adolescent period.

Erickson (1963) terms this stage of development, spanning post-adolescence into the early 30s, as the stage of “intimacy versus isolation”. At this time the forming of intimate relationships begins to take precedence, with the objective, for most, of finding a lifelong partner. Erikson (1963) believed that those who those who experienced relationship difficulties during this stage often became increasingly isolated. Some theorists speculated that problems in young adulthood begin in adolescence if the adolescent fails to develop a strong sense of self and of self-identity.

It should be noted that Arnett (1997) has argued that the developmental period from the ages 18 to 25 should be categorised by the nominal label ‘emerging adulthood’. This is due to his opposition to the popular classifications of ‘young’ or ‘early’ adulthood, as he believes these terms do not accurately reflect the unique period of exploration and change in an individual’s

development at this time, specifically for those who live in industrialised societies. Arnett (2000) argues that due to wide-scale cultural changes across western society over the past half century, this period can no longer be viewed as simply a transitional period into adulthood, but a unique developmental milieu characterised by self-growth and identity formations. As Arnett's (2000) discussion of emerging adulthood is not in opposition to theories of young adulthood per se, but rather is a focus on terminology and classification, the label of 'early' and 'young' adulthood was retained for this research. However, it should be noted the majority of the grounded theory on which this research is based, is consistent with Arnett's (1997) writings.

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2008) compared the physical, cognitive and socio-economic difference between the middle adolescence stage (approximately ages 14-18 years) and the late adolescent and early adulthood stage (19-25 years), summarised in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Developmental Differences between Middle and Late Adolescence & Early Adulthood

| Developmental Differences between Middle and Late Adolescence & Early Adulthood | | |
|--|---|---|
| <i>Stages of Development</i> | <i>Middle stage of Adolescence 14-18 years</i> | <i>Late stage of Adolescence and early adulthood 19-25 years</i> |
| Physical Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puberty is complete. • However, physical growth continues for boys but will cease for girls. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical development completed. • Men continue to gain weight, height, muscle etc. |
| Cognitive Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abstract thought capacity continues • Increased capacity for setting goals • Philosophical thinking contemplating the meaning and purpose of life, • Capacity for increased moral reasoning. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to delay gratification • Ability to look and plan for the future. • Continued moral reasoning • Plan and carry out ideas from beginning to end • Self reflection |
| Socio-Economic Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued striving for independence • Friends and their importance increases • Increased sexual interest and awareness • Love • Wanting to "fit in" being normal • Changes to self-esteem and self-concept | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of identity is stronger • Enhanced emotional stability • Independence with self sufficiency • Friends remain important • Longer term relationships with intimacy • Enhanced altruistic thought |

Positive psychology views adolescence and young adulthood as a period of change and development and great potential, and acknowledges that many young people successfully manage the transition to adulthood with the assistance of supportive peers and adults. Others go through a turbulent period, but most eventually emerge stronger and more resilient as a result of their experiences. But there are some for whom the adolescent and young adult years prove extremely difficult, and during which their psychological vulnerabilities are exposed. During this period, mental health difficulties are most likely to begin, and without intervention, can often continue into adulthood.

2.06 Mental health difficulties and behaviours in adolescence and young adulthood

As the World Health Organisation advised in their research report (p3) in 2003, “Mental health is a most important, maybe *the* most important, public health issue, which ... society must [seek] to promote, to protect and to invest in.” According to Kessler et al. (2005), the U.S. National Co-morbidity Survey (2003) indicated that 75 % of all mental health disorders had commenced before the age of 24 years. To put it another way, three-quarters of all mental health disorders emerge during the adolescent and early adult period. Following a review of international statistics, Patel, Flisher, Hetrick, and McGorry (2007) concluded, overall, the probability that any individual child will suffer from at least one mental health disorder, in any given country in any given year, is one in every four to five children.

UNICEF (2011) highlighted that the occurrence of mental health disorders for adolescents has increased over the past 20 to 30 years. They reported that for young people aged between 15 and 19 years, depression is the most frequently cited mental health difficulty.

The US Department of Health and Human Sciences in the Surgeon-General’s Report of 1999 estimated that between 75% and 80% of those adolescents and children identified as requiring help for psychological distress did not get appropriate help.

The statistics in Ireland are very similar to that of the U.S., with the Clonmel Project (Martin and Carr, 2006) noting that the mental health problems of many Irish adolescents go unrecognised and untreated. Anxiety disorders were found to be most prevalent in adolescents, accounting for 43% overall of psychological problems reported. Further, a recent Irish report “Male Youths and Suicide Project” (2013) highlighted that the number of Irish male youth suicides were the third highest in Europe.

Many of the mental health difficulties that begin in adolescence do not stop in adolescence. The U.S. National Co-morbidity Survey (2003) showed that nearly half of Americans adults (46.4%) reported meeting diagnostic criteria for a mental health disorder at some point in their life. The Wittchen and Jacobi (2005) study, “Size and Burden of Mental Disorders in Europe” found that 27% of adult Europeans were or had been affected by at least one mental health disorder. The most frequent disorders diagnosed in adulthood were anxiety disorders and depression. The study, “Psychological Distress, Mental Health Problems and Use of Health Services in Ireland” by Doherty, Moran and O’Doherty (2008), found that between 15% and 20% of the total adult population of Ireland attended their doctor for mental health difficulties annually.

Social loneliness has been described by Ilardi (2009) as a modern plague for young people, peaking in adolescence. Research by Ostrov and Offer (1978) with American, Australian and Irish adolescents showed that between a fifth and a quarter of all males and females aged between 12 and 20 agreed with the statement that they were so very lonely. Depression and anxiety are the most common psychological presentations diagnosed in young people. Research indicates that adolescents are less likely to feel depressed or anxious if they have a peer group that provides them with emotional support. The absence of supportive others or friends increases young people’s likelihood of developing anxiety and depression.

In 2011, UNICEF Ireland found, in its Changing the Future series, disturbing statistics for the incidence of drugs and alcohol abuse and risky sexual behaviour among young Irish people. The UNICEF report (2011b; 2011c) concluded that young people must be afforded every opportunity in terms of open discussion, understanding, support, information and advice, to assist them to make better choices and decisions about matters that affect their current and future well-being.

Similar conclusions on the state of youth mental health in Ireland was made in a methodologically rigorous analysis of data from a nationally representative Irish sample by Dooley and Fitzgerald (2012), who found that one-fifth of their respondents indicated that they had engaged in some form of self-harm, and one-third of their sample had stated that they had experienced some level of mental health distress. Furthermore, over two-fifths of those surveyed reported that they had thought that their life was not worth living at some point.

2.07 Protective factors for mental health

It is widely held in the field of positive psychology that the development of personal strengths and assets is a major protective factor towards reducing mental health difficulties and risk behaviours in young people. As Fombonne (1995) stated, the identification of those protective mechanisms which assist in building and promoting positive mental health for all young people, but particularly those identified as being at risk, is one of the most significant concerns on the research agenda for psychologists, educators and government planners.

Psychological strengths were defined by Greenberg (2006) as protective factors, or buffers, which contributed to an individual's positive well-being. Luthar (2006) described them as factors that modified risks in a positive direction. Alperstein and Raman (2003) described risk factors as factors that had the potential to trigger a psychological disorder or aggravate an already existing disorder. The way to minimise risk factors, they said, was to increase and develop protective factors. Increasing the number of protective factors for young people would provide them with a greater level of protection from risk factors. Studies of young people consistently show that the more protective factors they have, the less likely they are to engage in high-risk behaviours and the more likely they are to thrive (Benson and the Search Institute, 2004).

Masten and Coatsworth (1995) proposed that protective factors can reside either in the individual or in the environment. Internal protective factors are those located within the individual, such as high levels of hope, self-efficacy, happiness, self-esteem, and the ability to form positive supportive relationships with others. The provision of internal protective factors, Henderson and Milstein (1996) suggested, allows individuals to avail of external protective factors such as social support from peers and others, and organisational support.

Lerner (2004) proposed that youth development programmes were an important resource in promoting and developing protective factors in young people, as the skills, relationships and experiences acquired in these programmes during this developmental period helped to prepare and buffer the young person to enable them to deal with life's stressors and challenges.

Benson, Scales, Leffert and Roehlkepartain (1999) found that young people sometimes had insufficient personal competencies and environmental supports to act as buffers against risky behaviours. They also found that young people often had limited access to resources that

promoted the development of positive behaviours. A report by Dryfoos (1994) called for society to increase efforts to give young people opportunities to develop and improve their problem-solving skills, to engage in supportive relationships that lead to enhanced personal strengths and competencies. In this way, he suggested, potential mental health problems could be reduced and anti-social behaviour in young people could be minimised.

Benard (1991) stated that it was up to society to harness the potential of young people by assisting them to acquire developmental assets, and the acquisition of these assets could be a means of promoting positive behaviours and personal strengths.

2.08 Developmental assets

Benson and the Search Institute (1997) sought to provide an answer to the question: what protects young people from today's problems? Or in other words, what are the components, the personal competencies and environmental supports that act as protective factors in young people and buffer them against vulnerability to risky behaviour and mental health difficulties?

They coined the phrase “developmental assets”, which they described as the nutrients to build protective factors and promote positive development. They believed that encouraging and nurturing these developmental assets would assist young people's psychological well-being and help them become healthy, thriving, and active members of society. They created a framework of forty developmental assets (Table 2.2) called “universal building blocks” which were powerful influences on adolescent behaviour—both protecting young people from many different risky behaviours, and promoting positive attitudes and actions.

According to Benson, Scales and Roehlkepartain (2011) these developmental assets were forty essential positive experiences and qualities that helped to influence choices young people made and helped them to become caring, responsible, successful adults. Because of its basis in youth development, resiliency, and prevention research and its proven effectiveness, the Developmental Assets framework has become one of the most widely used approaches to positive youth development.

The developmental assets were categorised into external and internal assets, collectively identified as “primary contributors to personal thriving” (Snyder and Lopez, 2006). They represented the relationships, opportunities, and personal qualities that young people needed

to avoid risks and to thrive. External assets were positive experiences that young people accrued through their interactions with supportive others and institutions and internal assets were their own personal characteristics and behaviours that stimulated their positive development.

Table 2.2 The Search Institute’s Forty Developmental Assets (1997)

| The Search Institute’s Forty Developmental Assets (1997) | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| External Assets Positive experiences that children and youth gain through interactions with people and institutions | | Internal Assets Personal characteristics and behaviours that stimulate the positive development of the individual | |
| Support | Family support | Commitment to learning | Achievement motivation |
| | Positive family communication | | School engagement |
| | Other adult relationships | | Homework |
| | Caring neighbourhood | | Bonding to school |
| | Caring school climate | | Reading for pleasure |
| | Parent involvement in schooling | | Positive values |
| Empowerment | Community values youth | Equality and social justice | |
| | Youth as a resource | Integrity | |
| | Service to others | Honesty | |
| | Safety | Responsibility | |
| Boundaries and expectations | Family boundaries | Social competencies | Restraint |
| | School boundaries | | Planning and decision making |
| | Neighbourhood boundaries | | Interpersonal competence |
| | Adult role models | | Cultural competence |
| | Positive peer influence | | Resistance skills |
| | High expectations | | Peaceful conflict resolution |
| Constructive use of time | Creative activities | Positive identity | Personal power |
| | Youth programmes | | Self-esteem |
| | Religious community | | Sense of purpose |
| | Time at home | | Positive view of personal future |

2.09 Conclusion

The unique developmental period that is adolescence and young adulthood has been examined in this chapter. While it is acknowledged that most adolescents do successfully manage this transitional period into adulthood, it is evident that others experience psychological, social, behavioural and/or emotional difficulties during this period.

What is abundantly clear from the empirical literature is that during this period *all* young people, not just the most vulnerable, need to develop positive personal attributes and have

access to protective factors in the form of supportive relationships and positive institutions to enable them to enhance their well-being and to allow them to become healthy and contributing members of society.

The subject matter of the next chapter is the field of positive psychology, which aims to enhance personal well-being through the promotion of positive relationships, positive institutions and programmes, and positive attributes (Lopez and Snyder, 2009; Seligman 2002).

Chapter 3 Positive Psychology

3.01 Introduction

Positive psychology is emerging as an important and valuable approach to the understanding, appreciation and promotion of human well-being, and to protecting individuals from mental health difficulties. This chapter provides an introduction to the evolution and development of positive psychology as a discipline which promotes the nurturing of positive attributes, positive relationships and positive institutions (Lopez and Snyder, 2009; Seligman, 2002).

According to Seligman (2011) the overall goal of positive psychology is to enhance and promote well-being. Well-being is a complex psychological concept. While a number of components have been identified by researchers as contributing to the global construct of well-being, this research measures the positive attributes of hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness and psychological well-being, in order to assess the effectiveness of Gaisce–The President’s Award as an example of a positive youth programme that claims to enhance well-being in its participants.

3.02 What is positive psychology?

Positive psychology is the scientific study of the human strengths that facilitate individuals and communities to prosper. It holds the belief that individuals want to nurture what is best within themselves in order to lead meaningful and fulfilled lives. Positive psychology has three principal areas of concern: positive relationships, positive institutions and positive attributes. All of these contribute to human well-being, which has been defined by the World Health Organisation (2011) as a state in which the individual realises his or her potential, can cope with normal stressors of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her own life.

3.03 The emergence of positive psychology

As early as 1902, William James was working on what he called “healthy-mindedness”, examining the positive factors of happiness and hope, which he believed contributed to the health and well-being of an individual. Humanistic psychologists Maslow and Rogers, recognised as the “official grandfathers” of positive psychology, claimed in the 1950s that humans had a disposition towards positive actions and behaviours. They believed that

humans possessed an inherent drive towards ‘self-actualisation’, which was achieved by accessing and realising one’s full range of talents and strengths.

Maslow (1954) was the first psychologist to coin the phrase “positive psychology”. He noted that “the science of psychology had been far more successful on the negative than on the positive side....it is as if psychology has voluntarily restricted itself to only half its rightful jurisdiction, the darker, meaner half” (Pg. 354).

In 1998, four decades after Maslow, Seligman picked up the banner of positive psychology with renewed energy and drive. He saw the science of psychology as imbalanced, as “half-baked”, with a disproportionate emphasis on mental illness rather than on well-being. He agreed with Maslow that psychologists had chosen to concentrate their efforts and attention on negative human aspect at the expense of the positive.

In 2011, Seligman stated that the essential concerns of positive psychology should be with building human strengths as well as addressing weaknesses, with making the lives of normal people fulfilling, with nurturing high talent, and with the promotion of organisations, programmes and relationships that enhanced personal positive attributes. Psychology, he said, should be more universal in its approach, emphasising that prevention was of equal importance to treatment. Lopez and Gallagher (2009) supported this viewpoint, observing that *all* humans needed assistance and guidance to stay healthy.

In 1998, Seligman took positive psychology as the theme of his presidency of the American Psychological Society, advocating with his colleague Csikszentmihalyi for a world of psychology that had the potential to promote well-being. Seligman used his presidency to provide a forum for positive psychology that brought psychologists together to promote the practice of positive psychology based on solid science (Diener, 2009).

Positive psychology infiltrated into the public consciousness in the modern day over a relatively short number of decades. The ethos of positive psychology stands in direct opposition to the over-arching stance of academic discourse on positive thinking before the 1970s, where an optimistic disposition was viewed as a “psychological deficit, a sign of immaturity or weakness of character” (p. 76, Carr, 2004). Such a negative view can be identified in writings as diverse as the works of Sophocles, Nietzsche, and Freud (Peterson, 2006). Even in the modern day, where Seligman (2011) argues that positive psychology is the dominant paradigm in the field of psychological science, support for this movement from researchers in the field has not been unanimous (see Held, 2004).

In a strongly worded attack, Lazarus (2003) expressed doubt over the potential longevity of positive psychology influence, warning: “as of now, the movement is, in my view, in danger of being just one of the many fads that come and go in our field, which usually disappear in time, sometimes to return again in another form because the issues addressed are important but unresolved” (p.93).

The issues within the positive psychology field and related research that raise concerns among psychologists will be acknowledged throughout these chapters.

3.04 Positive psychology as a science

Duckworth, Steen and Seligman (p630, 2005) described positive psychology as the “scientific study of positive experience, positive human attributes and the institutions that facilitate their development”. Gable and Haidt (2005) defined positive psychology as the study of the processes and circumstances that enhanced the most advantageous thriving of people, groups and organisations. Steen, Park and Peterson (2005) also portrayed positive psychology as an investigation into positive attributes and positive emotions. According to Snyder and Lopez (2007), positive psychology was a scientific and applied approach for uncovering and nurturing people’s positive strengths.

Maddux (2008) highlighted that positive psychology emphasised the development of positive human attributes as a predictor of psychological mental health. According to the positive psychology movement, methodically promoting individual competences and relationships will build and enhance well-being in individuals. Positive psychology provided a framework and language to help individuals to develop their skills, build competencies and relationships, thus advancing their personal strengths and reducing the possibility of psychological illness.

However, Lazarus (2003) has highlighted that a major issue with the positive psychology movement is that researchers within the field have an increasingly lax attitude towards empiricism. Implicit within this matter is the popularity of this research in the public domain with constant demand for new breakthroughs, putting pressure on researchers to release novel articles at a consistent pace. Others would argue that this pressure is not unique to the field of positive psychology.

Lazarus (2003) also argues that the majority of theories within the positive psychology field can only be fully tested with longitudinal samples. While researchers in the field are increasingly depending on various forms of correlational analyses with cross-sectional samples to find grounded evidence for their hypotheses (Lilienfeld, Lynn, Ruscio, &

Beyerstein, 2010), these techniques are limited in their ability to relate to practical applications as they are solely descriptive of relationships within the data and do not allow for causal identification (Wade & Tavris, 2009). The fact that positive psychology researchers are promoting their research without, as some suggest, a properly grounded evidential base is a major cause for concern (Lilienfeld et al., 2010). However, this may be said to apply to many fields of research, particularly the human sciences.

3.05 The fundamental aspects of positive psychology

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) and Duckworth, Steen and Seligman (2005) considered positive psychology to be about promoting at a subjective level an individual's levels of hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness and well-being. At a group level, they perceived positive psychology as the programmes and organisations that encouraged a person to develop greater responsibility, altruism, and a greater awareness of relationships and citizenship. Diener (2009) stated that positive psychology placed importance on both the actualisation of the individual, and the contribution they played in the lives of others.

Positive psychology was not intended to impede clinical work on the pathology of human suffering. Rather, as Gable and Haidt (2005) suggested, positive psychology was complementary to the clinical approach. While it was important to treat and support psychological un-wellness, it was equally important to examine and explore those aspects that promoted well-being in individuals, according to Snyder and Lopez (2007). Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) and Duckworth, Steen and Seligman (2005) suggested and that positive attributes, with the support of positive relationships and programmes, could act as a buffer against mental illness.

Viewing individuals as dynamic and capable agents for positive change lies at the heart of positive psychology. Maddux (2008) believed individuals to be self-initiating agents for change in their own lives and the lives of others. Seligman (2011) agreed that individuals were capable of increasing their levels of engagement, accomplishment, sense of meaning, and positive relationships, which would increase their personal well-being, and ultimately allow them to flourish.

Positive psychology, according to Lopez and Snyder (2009), aims to enhance individual strengths and well-being by promoting three fundamental aspects of an individual's life: positive relationships (family and peers), positive institutions (such as schools, clubs and

Positive Youth Development programmes) and positive attributes (such as hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness and psychological well-being). It is the goal of positive psychology to nurture these three fundamental aspects. For young people, realising this goal can provide them with access to developmental assets and protective factors, and in turn increase their personal strengths and enhance their well-being.

3.06 Positive relationships

Positive relationships are considered vitally important to individual human development and well-being. For young people, the most influential relationships are the care-giver relationship (family) and the peer relationship (friendship). Seligman (2011) believed that facilitating the development of positive relationships could scaffold young people against mental illness and contribute to their overall psychological health and well-being.

3.06.01 Family relationships

It is universally accepted that the family is the natural, primary, and fundamental unit group of society. It is responsible for the survival, protection and development of the child. Ainsworth et al. (1978) and Bowlby (1969) saw the early care-giving experience as a fundamental relationship from a developmental standpoint. The family is an agent of socialisation, and is considered the primary influence behind the formation of the personality and the growth of the child.

For some children, the early developmental period is the beginning of a loving supportive journey and the formation of a secure attachment to a care-giver. For others, it is the first example of the harshness of life and the development of an insecure attachment. Cassidy and Shaver (2002) highlighted that children with secure attachments were more likely to bounce back with adequate functioning following a phase of difficulty. While secure attachment could not be regarded as a guarantee of positive mental health, it certainly could be viewed as a protective factor. Research by Booth-La Force and Kerns (2009) supported the view that secure care-giver attachment was significantly related to consequent social competence.

During the early developmental period, the sense of self develops. From birth, parents are mentors to their children; through interaction with them, their children learn to regulate their own emotions and behaviours. From this first relationship experience, a child builds a template or blueprint, that is, a mental representation, of what to expect from subsequent relationships (Bowlby, 1969).

From a developmental standpoint, strong debate still exists between developmental theorists over whether it is through the caregiver-infant relationship that children learn social skills that they later transfer to their peer relationships or that children develop social skills in the two relationships in parallel (Hay, Caplan and Nash, 2009).

3.06.02 Positive peer relationships

While parents may be the key impetus behind social competence skills, theorists such as Piaget (1960/1995) and Piaget and Inhelder (1969) argued that peers were equals rather than authoritative figures, like parents, and could help children and adolescents to learn about reciprocal relationships. Thus the peer relationships contributed to the child's or adolescent's social, cognitive and moral development, in ways that the parent relationships could not.

Sigelman and Rider (2012) found that new-borns showed an interest in their peers from an early age, with evidence of primitive capacities for sharing, cooperation and sympathy. Fiske (2004) suggested that this innate orientation towards peers is a result of human evolution, with cooperation and collaboration seen as advantageous for survival.

When reviewing longitudinal data, Simpson, Collins, Tran and Haydon (2007), in the procedure called 'the strange situation' (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall, 1978), were able to link secure attachment at twelve months with quality of peer relations in elementary school, which in turn predicted peer relationship qualities during adolescence, which subsequently was a predictor of the emotional quality of romantic relationships in early adulthood. Simpson et al. (2007) highlighted that these relationships were not directly linked, but were instead indirectly associated through a chain of influence in which the quality of relationships in one period affected the quality of relationships in the next.

Positive peer relationships are important across the lifespan, but take on different characteristics at different ages, according to Blienszner and Roberto (2004). Parker and Gottman (1989) also showed that characteristics of friendships differed across childhood, with friendship in adolescence serving to contribute to knowledge about behavioural norms and the skills necessary for successful interpersonal relationships. La Fontana and Ollessen (2009) and Boyd and Bee (2005) believed that adolescence was a time when friendships and peer relations took on significant potency, with much personal importance being attached to successful peer functioning. Furman and Buhrmester (1992) stated that in adolescence peer relationships begin to rival and even surpass parental relationships as sources of intimacy and

support. For many adolescents, relationships with friends are the crucial interpersonal bridges that moved them towards psychological growth and social maturity.

Olenik-Shemesh, Heiman and Eden (2012) argued that the availability of close personal relationships was more crucial during the adolescent years than at any other period of development. Wade, Cairney and Pevalin (2002) and Nolan, Flynn and Garber (2003) saw the adolescent years as a particularly vulnerable period for the onset of depression, with negative and stressful peer interactions and relationships salient predictors of depressive symptoms. Griffiths (1995) hypothesised that friends alleviated both the uncertainty and the vulnerability which stemmed from being alone. Hodges, Boivin, Viraro and Bokowski (1999) highlighted that positive peer relationships served as a protective factor for psychological well-being.

Duck (1991) argued that friends imparted a sense of self-worth and belonging, and provided both physical and psychological support. Meeks and Burnet (1990) highlighted specific needs that were met by peers, such as love, belonging and approval. Friends of the same age group could offer a sense of acceptability inherent in belonging to a group.

As Rubin, Chen, Coplan, Buskirk and Wojslawowicz (2005) emphasised, positive peer relationships were of critical importance in the formation of self-identity. Adolescents needed to loosen ties to their parents in preparation for eventual independence; peers could offer a form of substitution for the parents. While the adolescent “I” was still in a stage of transition, adolescents also needed the physiological safety of the “we” which they could get from a positive peer group. Friends, according to Schneider, Atkinson and Tarif (2001), could become attachment figures and, through the medium of social support and comfort, promote positive adjustment during stressful times.

Iwaniec et al. (2006) stressed that adolescents’ sense of well-being could be enhanced if they were able to develop and maintain rewarding friendships, which acted as a significant protective factor against adversity. Rutter (1999) believed that positive peer relationships were an essential element for the development of well-being in young people. Newcomb and Bagwell (1995) also highlighted that positive peer relationships provided a number of significant factors for the development of well-being, such as support, enhancement of self-esteem and positive self-evaluation. Peers could also offer consensual validation for interests, hopes and fears, and when necessary, provide instrumental and informational assistance. According to Argyle (2001), positive peer relationships were required to promote positive

psychological attributes such as happiness, hope and positive adjustment. Positive and supportive peer relationships are thus seen as a crucial component of adolescent psychological well-being (Bukowski, Newcomb and Hartup, 1996; La Greca and Harrison, 2005).

3.07 Positive institutions and organisations

The second fundamental aspect of positive psychology is the understanding of positive institutions. In conjunction with the family and peer group, the institutions and organisations that young people engage with and in can provide opportunities for promoting individual strengths and well-being. Positive Youth Development programmes in particular have been identified as a positive institution.

According to Duckworth, Steen and Seligman (2005), participation in positive institutions such as Positive Youth Development programmes engendered pleasure, engagement, and meaning for the individual, all vital ingredients for the development of personal strengths and well-being in young people. Dryfoos (1994) also advocated for the promotion of well-being in young people through the provision of Positive Youth Development programmes.

Roth, Brooks-Gunn, Murray and Foster (1998) proposed that it was possible to influence an adolescent's trajectory toward positive outcomes and enhanced well-being by exposing them to appropriate developmental supports and opportunities. Pittman et al. (2001) also suggested that to build strengths and well-being in young people, they must be provided with, and actively encouraged to avail of, resources and opportunities to foster and develop personal competencies and strengths.

Positive programmes, by promoting mutual help and trust, contributed to what Putnam (2000) called 'social capital', the increased well-being of both the individual and the community. Youniss, McLellan and Yates (1997) proposed that relationships with group members and adult leaders provided the young person with access to valuable social capital. Theorists Bartko and Eccles (2003), Scales et al. (2000) and Mahoney, Larson, Eccles and Lord (2005) all suggested that positive values and individual well-being were reinforced by Positive Youth Development programmes which were rich in structured time, provided access to caring adults and responsible peers, and offered opportunities for skill-building activities. Positive Youth Development programmes, they stated, had the potential to contribute to the

development of a young person's well-being, by increasing their personal developmental assets which ultimately served as protective factors against life stressors.

Perhaps the strongest criticism that has been made of the positive psychology movement, and in particular its promotion of an optimistic thinking style, is that it may cause people to blame themselves for their mental health issues (Held, 2004; Ehrenreich, 2004): "it is perhaps not overstating things to say that the current official preoccupation with 'happiness' amounts at best to a naive attempt to improve the world through wishful thinking, and at worst to a form of insidious social control, where people are encouraged to look inwards to the sources of their troubles and in the end to implicitly blame themselves for these ills" (p. 425, Cromby, Diamond, Kelly, Maloney, Priest & Smail, 2004). Melzer, Fryers, & Jenkins (2003) pointed out that, cross-culturally, increased psychiatric morbidity is associated with markers of unemployment, low income and impoverished education. This perspective is reinforced by evidence indicating that rising levels of social malaise are strongly associated with the widening gap between rich and poor in Western society and the related erosion of communal ties (Holmes, 2006; James, 1998; Lewis, 1993; and Rogers and Pilgrim, 2003). A key tenet of positive psychology is the building and nurturing of human relationships, in the family, in the community, indeed across all groupings. Reinforcing such relationships is seen as a means of fostering not only the mental health of the individual, but also that of society.

In a vitriolic attack on positive psychology, the Midlands psychology group in the United Kingdom (Cromby et al., 2007), argued that prominent politicians, such as the economist Richard Layard, are using positive psychology research to distract from the social inequalities that truly lie at the heart of psychiatric disorders, therefore maintaining a social order that serves only to sustain their own interests.

Some of these criticisms would appear to be provocative and sensationalist.

With all research, there is always the danger that diverse groups can potentially manipulate and selectively extrapolate aspects of the results of research to further their own ends. Positive psychologists do not consider that the movement will solve all of society's ills. They don't see positive psychology as about apportioning blame. However, they do view it as about helping individuals, whatever their circumstances, to empower themselves by developing and enhancing their own unique strengths and attributes, and in turn to become contributing members of society. A number of these positive attributes are discussed in the following sections.

3.08 Positive individual attributes

The third principal concern of positive psychology is the understanding of positive individual attributes that promote human strengths and well-being. Positive psychology is based on the belief that it is possible to build and advance human strengths by developing and nurturing positive attributes, which in turn buffer the individual against mental health difficulties.

However, this theoretical concern has been met with much criticism. Held (2004) argued that positive psychologists ignore the issue of individual differences and instead promote ‘one size fits all’ solutions. Lazarus (2003) labelled positive psychology as ‘Pollyanna’ psychology, which ignores the negative in life and human condition. Miller (2004) furthered this argument, highlighting that much of the discourse in positive psychology is characterised by a model of health and well-being that is little more than “a caricature of the traditional extravert” (p.591). Miller (2004) openly criticised this model, arguing that this focus on isolating qualities and traits relating to perseverance shows a fundamental disregard for how motivation, ability and situation are irrevocably intertwined. He raised concern that researchers in the field of positive psychology have become so enamoured by their extraversion model that they are detracting from the core ideal of the movement to identify the mechanisms of true self-knowledge that will improve people’s circumstances.

Norem and Chang (2002) were of the opinion that one of the greatest challenges to the advancement of positive psychology is to acknowledge that there is no one human condition, and that the key to bettering the human condition is to look beyond simple variables of positive affect.

While all these viewpoints have validity, they are perhaps too simplistic and narrow in their attitudes, and detract from the awareness of the clinician and researcher of the complexity of human nature, and his or her constant efforts to avoid falling into such obvious traps. As Seligman (2011) argues, positive psychologists do acknowledge individual differences and negative aspects of positive attributes. However, the underlining ethos of positive psychology as a movement means that positive psychologists place themselves in stark opposition to the deficit model and, while acknowledging limitations, purposively focus on positive findings for a general population in order to positively benefit as many individuals as possible.

While many attributes can be credited with enhancing personal well-being, for the purpose of this research the attributes of hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness and psychological well-being are examined.

3.08.01 Hope

“When the world says, ‘Give up’, Hope whispers, and ‘Try it one more time.’” – Anonymous

Historically, the psychological attribute of hope has been recognised as one of the key aspects of positive psychology and well-being. Hope has been defined as the feeling that what is wanted can be had or that events will turn out for the best. According to Snyder (2000), hope has no hereditary component; it is entirely a learned process. Hope develops during infancy and continues to grow through adolescence and adulthood, mirroring the development of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy and hope both have the potential to be enhanced and influenced by internal forces and external influences.

According to Snyder (1994), hope has two main components: agency thinking and pathways thinking. Agency thinking is an individual’s ability to strive for goals regardless of obstacles. This is reflected in statements such as “I can achieve this” or “I will get there”. Pathways thinking are an individual’s ability to see a way through obstacles to achieve a desired goal. This is illustrated by a statement such as “I will find a way to complete this task”. Pathways and agency thinking combined are needed to generate hopeful motivation which facilitates an individual’s ability to attain their goals. Snyder and Harris et al. (1991) noted that pathways thinking was associated with positive self-talk, as the individual encourages himself to find an alternative route or attempt a different path. Luther (2006) used the terms waypower and willpower to describe these two aspects of hope. Waypower was defined as the ability to generate alternative pathways, and willpower was defined as positive expectancies of achieving a desired goal.

Carr (2011) proposed that the teaching of agency and pathways thinking is an intrinsic part of parenting. Secure parental attachments assist young people to attempt challenges that require hopeful thinking. Adolescents who do not develop secure parental attachments must rely on other people like teachers, friends or other adults to provide them with a framework for hopeful thinking.

Seligman (2000) believed that depression in a young person at genetic risk can be prevented by nurturing their attributes of optimism and hope. Research indicates that the prevalence of depression is now ten times that which it was in the 1960s, and that depression strikes at a much younger age, with first episodes reported in adolescence. Given the prevalence of depression and despair and hopelessness in young people, positive youth programmes can be

useful in providing adolescents with additional relationship opportunities to help them develop and expand their levels of hope. Snyder (2000) suggested that with guidance from others and the setting of personal goals, young people could increase their capacity for hopeful thinking.

The theory that hope inspires greater personal well-being has been borne out in research. Snyder (1994) indicated that individuals with higher levels of hope enjoyed greater psychological well-being than those who possessed lower levels of hope. The work of Arnau et al. (2010) and Snyder, Sympson, Michael and Cheavens (2001) showed that individuals with higher levels of hope achieved higher academic success and athletic performance. Onwuegbuzie and Snyder (2000) suggested that higher levels of hope were indicators of greater physical and psychological well-being, and enhanced interpersonal well-being. Kwon (2000) linked hope positively to enhanced mental health. Snyder (2000) believed that high levels of hope corresponded to enhanced confidence, which Stajkovic (2006) proposed shared a common core with self-efficacy, resilience, optimism and hope. Bernard (2006) suggested that hopeful people believed that they could do things and were more likely to be successful rather than unsuccessful. Frankel (1966) argued that hope provided a remedy for the angst associated with despair about the meaning of life. Afflect and Tennen (1996) reported that people with high levels of hope believed that their hope would protect them against life's difficulties in the future.

Studies using the Snyder Hope Scale (Appendix A) demonstrated the importance of hope for young people. A study by Valle, Huebner and Suldo (2006) revealed that high hope scores predicted high levels of global life satisfaction. They noted that high levels of hope acted as a buffer to multiple life stressors. Research by Brown Kirschman, Roberts, Shadlow and Pelley (2010) showed that participation in a summer camp led to increased hope and increased friendship. The findings of Gilman, Dooley and Florell (2006) suggested that academic and interpersonal variables related positively to 'Hope' scores on the Children's Hope Scale.

Seligman (2011) believed that society could scaffold young people against the risk of mental illness by developing and enhancing their levels of hope. A core objective of Positive Youth Development programmes is to nurture and enhance positive attributes in young people, including hope.

3.08.02 Self-efficacy

"In order to succeed, people need a sense of self-efficacy to meet the inevitable obstacles and inequities of life." - Bandura

Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as an individual's perceived competence, the belief in his or her capabilities to produce desired effects by their own actions. An individual's sense of self-efficacy plays an important role in how they approach goals, tasks and challenges. According to Bandura, individuals with high self-efficacy believe they can perform and master challenges; they view difficult tasks as opportunities to be embraced rather than avoided. Carr (2011) defined self-efficacy as the belief that a person holds about his or her capability to organise and perform tasks, ultimately leading to the acquisition of specific goals or achievements. This definition is similar to that of Corsini (2002), who saw self-efficacy as an individual's judgement about their own capabilities to organise and execute a plan in order to attain a desired outcome.

Bandura (2001) emphasised the evolving nature of self-efficacy (1989, 1997), believing it to be influenced by five primary sources:

1. **Performance experiences:** the most influential on self-efficacy; these include one's own thoughts about how well one has done in previous circumstances.
2. **Vicarious experiences:** Self-efficacy can also be shaped by our observations of others rather than direct personal experience – includes learning by watching others.
3. **Imagined experiences:** Simply imagining oneself behaving effectively, and vice-versa, can affect self-efficacy levels.
4. **Verbal persuasion:** can be affected by an individual's ability to be influenced by persuasion, and by the strength of others ability to persuade.
5. **Physiological and emotional states:** can be influenced, both positively and negatively, by physiological sensations or emotional states.

Parents and families are the first crucial agents in facilitating the growth of self-efficacy. As children grow, other institutions, such as schools and teachers, clubs and organisations, also become influential in the development of self-efficacy.

Beginning in infancy and continuing throughout their lifespan, an individual may at times experience high levels of self-efficacy and at other times lower. Snyder and Lopez (2007) confirmed that self-efficacy was a learned and evolving pattern of thinking, rather than a genetic inheritance. If an adolescent is in an environment that is responsive to their actions,

their sense of self-efficacy is nurtured and developed. If the environment is non-responsive to their actions, their sense of self-efficacy can be thwarted. Most adolescents and adults therefore have the potential to change their levels of self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy plays a fundamental role in our acquisition of targeted goals. Rutter (1994) claimed that learning to triumph over barriers and obstacles was equivalent to a psychological immunisation process. Snyder and Lopez (2007) proposed that self-efficacy thoughts were the last and most crucial cognitive step before people commenced goal-directed thoughts. They believed that as individuals worked towards goals, they formulated self-evaluative reactions about their progress towards those goals; this ability played a very important part in actually obtaining selected goals. Self-efficacy thus gives an individual the belief that they have power and control over their environment and their behaviour. Cervone, Jiwani and Wood (1991) and Bandura (1997) believed that people who possessed high levels of self-efficacy developed advanced strategies for coping with complex situations and tasks. According to Locke and Latham (1990) and Bandura (1997), individuals with high levels of self-efficacy engaged in more challenging goals.

Research with adolescents using the General Self-Efficacy Scale designed by Jerusalem and Schwarzer (1995) to measure optimistic self-beliefs proved that self-efficacy levels affected positive emotion and mental health (see Appendix B). The study by Luszczynska, Gutiérrez-Doña and Schwarzer (2005), with 8,796 participants, revealed that higher levels of self-efficacy correlated positively with positive affect, life satisfaction, quality of life and mental health. In their study of 630 adolescents, Bancala and Mittelmark (2005) showed that for boys, social support and self-efficacy were key coping supports. In boys, high self-efficacy was correlated with high social support. In girls, low self – efficacy scores correlated with worries and depressed mood. In other studies by Bandura (1997) and Maddux and Meier (1995), low self-efficacy was linked with depression and a sense of powerlessness. Williams (1995) drew parallels between low self-efficacy and avoidance anxiety, the self-efficacy further decreased by the anxiety, activating a vicious circle. Bandura (1997) noted that good levels of self-efficacy enhanced the activation of endorphins in the brain, which played an important role in the management of stress and anxiety.

Bandura (1997) also examined self-efficacy and self-regulation, highlighting three important ways that self-efficacy affected self-regulation.

- 1 The higher the level of self-efficacy, the higher and/or more complex the goal that will be set. Therefore people with high self-efficacy will strive to conquer difficult challenges as their personal belief is one of success.
- 2 The greater the level of self-efficacy, the more likely one is to persist in the face of adversity and challenges. One believes that they possess the capabilities to overcome setbacks and difficulties.
- 3 Levels of self-efficacy influence the problem-solving and decision-making abilities. People who have high self-efficacy also believe that they have the cognitive ability to solve problems.

Many activities and strategies directed towards improving mental health and well-being include enhancing self-efficacy as a key component and indicator. As research indicates that self-efficacy is a learned attribute affected by experiences, participation in Positive Youth Development programmes can provide evaluable opportunity for young people to acquire or enhance their levels of self-efficacy through encouragement and achievement. The process of setting and working towards desired goals in these programmes promotes the development of essential problem-solving skills and the ability to persist in the face of adversity, all of which ultimately leads to enhanced self-efficacy and self-belief, which in turn provides the young person with a sense of personal power and well-being.

3.08.03 Self-esteem

“If you wish to achieve worthwhile things in your personal life, you must become a worthwhile person in your own self-development.”— Brian Tracy

The term self-esteem is used to reflect a person's overall evaluation of his or her own worth. According to Coopersmith (1967), it is the feeling of self-worth and value that results when the self judges itself. Rosenberg (1965) believed that people with high self-esteem had a favourable view of themselves as competent, likeable, attractive and successful.

Self-esteem has been consistently found to be a powerful predictor of happiness and life satisfaction. Diener and Diener (1995), in their study of 13,000 participants in America, showed a correlation between self-esteem and life satisfaction. Baumeister (2005) highlighted that levels of self-esteem are a significant predictor variable for desirable and undesirable behaviours in adolescence, with high levels of self-esteem linked to desirable behaviours and conversely, low levels of self-esteem significantly negatively correlated to problem behaviours and depressive symptoms.

High self-esteem is viewed as an important resource for mental and physical health. Steele (1988) stated that high self-esteem may act as a buffer against stress and anxiety caused by life experiences. Individuals with high self-esteem were not as easily overwhelmed by negative events and were better able to remain hopeful. Lopez and Snyder (2009) found that individuals with high levels of self-esteem were able to perform within their optimal limits, and as a result were securely positioned socially.

Research into self-esteem by U.S. researchers Baldwin and Hoffman (2002) using the Rosenberg Scale found that age had a significant effect on self-esteem (Appendix C). They found that self-esteem varied significantly among individuals, and that it changed and fluctuated significantly during adolescence. They noted that for females, self-esteem decreased steadily from the ages of 12 to 17 years. For males, self-esteem increased during the period between 12 and 14 years, then decreased until 16 years, and then increased again in early adulthood.

Research by Laible, Carlo and Roesch (2004), also using the Rosenberg Scale, found that both parental attachment and peer attachment were significantly related to self-esteem. Parental attachment was stronger and more directly related to self-esteem for males than for females. Findings also suggested a correlation between peer relationships and levels of self-esteem. Research by Ackerman and Wolman (2007) showed that high levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy correlated positively with estimates of ability.

Life events were shown to have a significant effect on self-esteem. According to sociometer theory (Leary, 1999), self-esteem played an important role in maintaining the social relationships so vital to psychological health and well-being. Leary also found that self-esteem was highly sensitive to social inclusion and exclusion. He suggested that affording young people opportunities to mix and integrate was an important contributor to their positive mental health and positive self-evaluation.

Like the other core attributes examined in this chapter, it is evident that self-esteem requires a supportive environment in which to grow and develop. Durlak et al. (2010) found that children and adolescents who participated in Positive Youth Development programmes showed increased self-esteem and improved social behaviour, relationships and academic attainment scores.

3.08.04 Happiness

The purpose of our lives is to be happy. Happiness is not something ready-made. It comes from your own actions. – Dalai Lama

Happiness can be broadly defined as a positive emotional state, a sense of emotional well-being and contentment. Aristotle (350 BC) believed that each individual's happiness was determined by his or herself. He enshrined happiness as a central purpose of human life and a goal in itself. Diener (2000) agreed that for most people, happiness was an emotional state to be aimed for.

There are two main theories of happiness. The hedonic view of happiness, according to Ryan and Deci (2001), is that the primary goal of life is the pursuit of personal happiness and pleasure. Waterman (1990) defined happiness as the enjoyment of life and its pleasures. Diener (1984) studied the hedonic perspective through his work on happiness, or as he called it, subjective well-being, which looks beyond short-term or physical pleasure to life satisfaction, the presence of positive affect and relative absence of negative affect. Some theorists refer to these the three components of happiness.

The eudaimonic perspective of happiness is reflected in Seligman's (2002) theory of a deeper level of happiness, which he termed authentic happiness. Aristotle (350 BC) defined happiness as self-realisation, the expression and fulfilment of inner potential. From this perspective, a good life resulted from living in harmony with one's true self. Baumgardner and Crothers (2010) held that the eudaimonic perspective reflected the idea that humans were happiest when they set and followed goals and strived towards self-actualisation. Seligman (2002) stated that the Pleasant Life was achieved through the enjoyment and appreciation of such basic pleasures as friendship, the natural landscape and works of art. The Good Life was achieved through discovering our unique virtues and strengths, and using them innovatively to enhance our lives. The Meaningful Life was realised when a deep sense of achievement was found by employing our unique strengths for a purpose greater than ourselves.

King and her colleagues (2006) believed that there was no clear line between eudaimonic and hedonic happiness. They highlighted that positive emotions such as joy, contentment, laughter and love (hedonic happiness) could enhance people's ability to find meaning and purpose in their lives (eudaimonic happiness). King and her colleagues postulated that positive emotions opened up people's thinking to greater experiences and more imaginative possibilities by placing current concerns in a broader context. Meaningful activities and

accomplishment could bring enjoyment and satisfaction to life, and positive emotions may bring an enhanced sense of meaning and purpose.

According to Baumgardner and Crothers (2010), some psychologists have called for the enlargement of the definition of happiness to include personal qualities and life activities. Seligman (2002a; 2002b) and Diener and Seligman (2004) called for an expansion of the definition to include engagement in absorbing activities or, as Csikszentmihalyi (1997) called them, 'flow', meaning a state of concentration or complete absorption.

Research by Tkach and Lyubomirsky (2006) using Lyubomirsky and Lepper's (1999) Subjective Happiness Scale found that levels of happiness were influenced positively by social affiliation, socialising, investment in goal pursuit, passive and active leisure, and direct attempts at happiness (Appendix D). A study of 2000 American adolescents by Froh, Kashdan, Yurkewicz, Fan, Glowacki and Allen (2010) also using the Subjective Happiness Scale found that strong positive relations with others correlated with life satisfaction and positive emotion, and that capitalising on one's strengths and fostering positive traits through engaged living could help one to experience fewer psychological maladies. They also noted that students who were passionate about helping others were likely to realise academic dividends in the future. Diener, Lyubomirsky and King (2005) found that happy people were more successful in virtually every domain of life.

Fordyce (1977) explored the possibility of trying to increase happiness levels in students by teaching them what he called fundamental principles of happiness. These included such strategies as, among others, being more active, socialising, learning to stop worrying, and developing positive optimistic thinking.

Lyubomirsky (2007) and Lyubomirsky, Sheldon and Schkade (2005) proposed three factors that contributed to an individual's levels of happiness: set-point, circumstances and intentional activities. They suggested that happiness had a set-point in individuals which was determined partially by genetic factors (accounting for 50% of individual differences in levels of happiness), and partially by environmental circumstances (accounting for 10% of individual differences in levels of happiness), leaving 40% to be determined by the individual's intentional activities. They believed, like Fordyce, that individuals had considerable control over their own happiness, and could increase their happiness and well-being by engaging in meaningful activities. Russell (1930; 1958) emphasised that happiness

was not something that happened without effort; it was something which individuals must strive for.

A meta-analysis by Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) indicated that happiness levels could be increased by engaging in what they called positive activity interventions (PAIs). PAIs were self-directed positive behaviours intended to increase positive thoughts and positive feelings, and contribute to enhanced well-being. Examples of PAIs include counting one's blessings (Froh, Sefick and Emmons, 2008) and using personal strengths in a new way (Seligman et al. (2005). Lyubomirsky, Sheldon et al. (2005) believed that the "dosage" and "timing" of PAIs was important. Concentrating PAIs to one day in the week showed greater benefits than spreading PAI activity over the week. Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) stated that motivation and enthusiasm were enhanced with voluntary engagement in PAIs. The work of Cohn and Fredrickson (2010) and Sheldon and Lyubomirsky (2006b) showed that individuals who successfully managed to incorporate PAI activities into their daily life maintained enhanced well-being.

Significant evidence is available that happiness levels are increased by good interpersonal relationships. The study by Diener and Seligman (2002) on very happy people discovered that students who evinced the highest levels of happiness and demonstrated the fewest signs of depression were those who had strong ties to friends and family and who were committed to spending time with them. Diener (2002) advocated that levels of happiness could be increased by working on one's interpersonal skills and by putting time and effort into positive relationships. Buss (2000) proposed that happiness could be increased by having a small number of good friends and spending time with them. Carr (2011) believed that group-based activities encouraged interaction with others and helped to increase happiness levels by meeting such needs as affiliation, altruism, excitement and achievement.

The research suggests that happiness and well-being can be enhanced by having positive attitudes, developing positive relationships, setting meaningful goals and engaging in positive activities. Positive activity interventions (PAIs) have been proven to increase positive thoughts, positive behaviours and positive feelings. Positive Youth Development programmes can provide young people with the framework to create their own PAIs, and thereby assist in developing personal strengths and well-being.

3.08.05 Psychological well-being

“Well-being is a state of complete physical, psychological and social health, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” - Anonymous

Psychological well-being has been described as a helpful framework for categorising human functioning. Ryff (1989) believed that Diener’s (1984) three-component model of subjective well-being that defined happiness as life satisfaction, the presence of positive affect and absence of negative affect failed to describe the features of a person’s life that provided the basis and meaning of well-being. Ryff (1989) argued that well-being was more than happiness with life; what was missing from the three-component model was a conceptualisation and assessment of positive functioning.

Ryff (1989) argued that well-being and happiness were based on human strengths, personal striving and growth. In attempting to combine a number of different concepts of well-being from the ancient Greek to the modern theories of Jung, Maslow and others, she devised the psychological well-being scale which sought to measure self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, and positive relations with others, which, according to Ryff, reflect human resilience, positive functioning, personal strengths and mental health. Ryff also believed her model included both the hedonic and eudaimonic views of happiness.

Using Ryff’s psychological well-being scale, research by Cooper, Okamura and MacNeill (1995) found a correlation between positive relationships with others and overall psychological well-being. They noted that the quality of these relationships was the important attribute, rather than the frequency (see Appendix E). Vleioras and Bosma (2005), also using the Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale, found that a strong sense of identity was related to higher levels of psychological well-being.

3.09 Criticism of positive psychological attributes

Critics sometimes infer that positive psychology is nothing more than an over-indulgence of one psychological state or attribute, that of happiness. Research has shown that there are many psychological attributes beyond happiness that contribute to the prevention of psychological distress (for example, hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, perseverance, courage, optimism, future-mindedness, and others).

Positive psychology research has shown that it is possible to help people by building their personal strengths and attributes. In addition, prevention research has discovered that strengths act as buffers against mental illness.

Generally, positive psychology acknowledges that suffering can't be completely eliminated, but it works towards successfully manage and reduce suffering. As Masten (2001) indicated, psychology's concern with remedying human problems is understandable and should certainly not be abandoned. Suffering and well-being are both part of the human condition, he stated, and psychologists should be concerned with both.

In Peterson's (2006) view, positive psychology focuses on productive approaches to pain and suffering by promoting strengths and attributes to provide the individual with essential tools to manage and reduce their suffering.

3.10 Conclusion

Maddux (2008) highlighted that positive psychology emphasised the development of positive human attributes as a predictor of psychological mental health. This chapter has examined the empirical evidence of how each of the three core components of positive psychology inter-reacts and inter-relates to contribute to the enhancement and development of human well-being.

For young people, positive relationships are identified as of crucial importance to their well-being. The evidence highlights that the development of positive relationships helps to build psychological attributes, buffering them against psychological distress and contributing to their overall well-being. In addition, there is growing evidence of the effectiveness of Positive Youth Development programmes in promoting the well-being of young people by providing an optimum environment for the enhancement of positive psychological attributes and strengths.

The positive psychological attributes of hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness and psychological well-being, as well as the significant contribution each offers to human well-being, have been examined. These are the attributes being measured in this research in order to assess if Gaisce—The President's Award acts as a catalyst in the promotion of positive psychological attributes in its participants.

As noted, issues have been raised about the discipline of positive psychology. Apart from concerns about empirical rigour, these issues mainly arise from what is seen as its dominating focus on positive thinking styles and its lack of focus regarding individual difference and contextual factors. Lazarus (2003) argued that positive psychology needs to become less 'positive', as narrowing focus of attention on one facet of individuality was causing the field to lose perspective and distracting from the original aims of the movement.

However, many positive psychologists refute these criticisms, strongly arguing that they do not ignore negative or clinical issues or environmental context; instead they aim to understand these variables whilst building on positive human attributes (Gable & Haidt, 2005). Rather than focusing exclusively on the negatives or 'deficits', they use a holistic approach (Seligman, 2011) which involves acknowledging the individual's weaknesses and vulnerabilities at the same time as identifying their personal strengths and resources.

As confirmed by Miller (2004), it is only through the study of the vast array of human attributes and human experiences over a variety of situations will the field of positive psychology better identify the self-knowledge needed to truly flourish.

Furthermore, advocates of positive psychology understand that the field can benefit from recognising the issues pointed out by critics and addressing their concerns in a pro-active way, for the improvement and development of the discipline.

The current research adopts a design and methodology intended to address many of the methodological criticisms of other works in the field. The specific analyses pertaining to respondents in the lowest quartile of participants studied display a recognition of individual differences and attributes. In addition, the research provides a forum for individual participants to speak about themselves from their own perspective, thus acknowledging and taking into account their views and opinions.

The following chapter will discuss Positive Youth Development programmes in considerable detail. It will outline, in a balanced and considered nature, how such programmes provide young people with opportunities for developing psychological attributes, skills and strengths, building protective factors, all intended to contribute to their overall well-being, whilst noting limitations in the research in the area.

Chapter 4 Positive Youth Development

4.02 Introduction

This chapter seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of Positive Youth Development. It begins with the history of Positive Youth Development, which is followed by an exploration of the definition of Positive Youth Development. The chapter details the outcomes of an empirical review of research on Positive Youth Development programmes, acknowledges the relative limitations, and examines the rationale for such programmes. It goes on to outline the key structural components of any Positive Youth Development programme, and describes the two main operational models which have emerged in the past decade. Finally it reviews the two most prominent methods of examining the outcome goals of Positive Youth Development programmes.

4.02 Historical context

Late twentieth-century American society began to adopt a greater sense of responsibility for its young people than in previous decades. During the 1950s, in light of rising juvenile crime rates, America allocated an increased Federal budget to assist and help its younger population. Despite the increased financial assistance, crime rates continued to rise during the 1960s (Catalano et al., 2004). The increase in rates of youth disorder coincided with changes in American family structure and society. Rates of divorce were increasing, the number of single-parent families was rising, and there were a growing number of families living in poverty. Initially, US Federal funding was targeted at reducing crime rates by addressing the perceived poor character of young people. However, even with interventions, problem behaviours of young people continued to rise. Interventions and treatment programmes aimed at specific youth groups and specific problems were then introduced as a further attempt to curb rising youth crime and problem behaviours. In the last three decades, prevention programmes began to materialise with the rationale of trying to prevent, rather than treat, problem behaviours. Many of the prevention programmes were based on earlier treatment programmes, and as a result, focussed on preventing a single problem, such as substance misuse or teen pregnancy.

Many of the earlier prevention programmes were not theory-based, according to Ennett et al. (1994) and Thomas et al. (1992), and failed to produce evidence of positive outcomes. A major shift of focus occurred when information from longitudinal research became available,

which identified predictors of problem behaviours in young people. This sparked a second wave of prevention programmes where empirically identified predictors of adolescent behaviour were utilised in the development of specific programmes. For example, Ellickson and Bell's (1990) work on drug abuse and young people provided empirical evidence that peer and societal influences had a significant effect on the drug-taking habits of young people.

According to Catalano (2002), programmes that addressed one single problem behaviour exclusively came under disapproval in the 1980s. It was generally viewed that it was now important to examine the co-occurrence of problem behaviours. This view held that in order to assist young people to develop into fully-functioning adults, solely addressing risk factors was not enough. At the same time as theorists were calling for the examination of the common predictors of multiple problem behaviours, other practitioners were seeking an examination of factors that promoted positive youth behaviours. From these dual perspectives, prevention science emerged, which sought to prevent or curb human psychological difficulties before they occurred. These scientists urged policy-makers to expand the brief of prevention programmes to include aspects aimed at promoting positive behaviours. W.T. Grant Consortium (1992) appealed for the promotion of children's social, emotional, behavioural and cognitive development, on the grounds that such a holistic approach was the key to preventing problem behaviours. Other prevention scientists called for interventions across several social domains of young people, such as the home, school and community.

The developmental systems theory of Lerner M., Jason, Theokas and Lerner J.V. (2005) stated that difficulties inevitably emerged during the adolescent years; however, any problem that arose should be seen as a single occurrence in a collection of occurrences, comprising both positive and negative events.

Prevention science provided empirical support and substantial evidence that many youth outcomes, both positive and negative, were affected by the same risk and protective factors. Evidence further showed (Hawkins, Catalano and Miller, 1992) that risk and protective factors were found across family, peer, school and community environments. According to Catalano (2002), Positive Youth Development advocated for a prevention science that encouraged greater attention to the importance of social and environmental factors that affect the successful completion of developmental tasks in young people.

The concept of Positive Youth Development emerged, according to Lerner (2005), from an interest among developmental scientists in using developmental systems models of human behaviour and development for understanding the plasticity of human development, as well as understanding the importance of relations between individuals and their real world ecological settings. Developmental systems theorists rejected the reductionist idea that a young person's development was determined by set, or fixed, genetic influences; rather they emphasised the plasticity of human development. Their work was based on the premise that an individual can continue to grow, develop and improve throughout his or her life. Gottlieb's (1997) research in evolutionary biology and comparative psychology acknowledged the possibility and potential of systematic change through the plasticity of the adolescent brain.

Damon (1990), along with other developmental systems theorists, argued that humans were biologically hard-wired from birth towards positive behaviours and were predisposed to interacting positively with life. He suggested that all youth programmes should harness that biological disposition for positive interaction.

Damon (2004) went on to highlight that adolescence was an identity formation stage, when the young person developed a sense of self. He saw late childhood as the time when moral identity took place and hence the ideal time for the young person to take his or her rightful place in their community. He saw the young person as an equal player in the community, sharing the rights and responsibilities that go with that status.

Nisan (1996, p83) wrote, "If people see a value or a way of life as essential to their identity, then they feel that they ought to act accordingly". This process would lead to, as Seligman (2002) called it, altruistic social behaviour. As Youniss and Yates (1997) showed, character education and community service programmes triggered positive development when they succeeded in engaging the young person, thereby promoting the development of the self and the sense of moral identity.

Affording young people opportunities for trying new roles and taking on additional responsibilities, through which they learn to contribute more efficiently and successfully, was of paramount importance to their development, as stressed by Catalano et al., (2002), McNeeley, Nonnemaker and Blum (2002), Benson et al. (1990) and Pittman et al. (2001). Such opportunities facilitated problem-solving and solution-focussed strategies. Further, they facilitated and nurtured enhanced participation and connection with peers, adults and

community. With the development of increased positive social behaviour, the likelihood of anti-social behaviour decreased.

Empirical evidence also shows that increasing Positive Youth Development programmes and promoting character strengths in young people were likely to reduce or prevent the development of problem behaviours. The U.S. National Research Council Institute of Medicine (2002), Pitman and Fleming (1991), Chalk and Philips (1996) and Weisberg and Greenberg (1997) advocated that models of Positive Youth Development programmes held the key to both health promotion and prevention of problem behaviours. This was further evidence that risk and protective factors must be viewed in tandem, and not in isolation. The evidence showed that, given their similar etiological base, decreasing risk and increasing protective factors affected both negative and positive outcomes.

The great variation in design, approach, and focus of different youth programmes presented significant challenges for definition and evaluation purposes. Some programmes focussed on the prevention of specific problem behaviours, while others promoted positive youth behaviours across multiple domains. Some programs were highly structured, with detailed curriculum and step-by-step guidelines. Others had a looser structural content that involved young people determining the programme priorities and content. Some programmes served young adolescents (ages 10-14 years), while others focussed on older youth preparing for their transition to adult life. Furthermore, there were no agreed specific psychometric measures available to measure human strengths or accurately capture the effects of participation in Positive Youth Development programmes.

Roth and Brooks-Gunn's (2003) studied three meta-analyses of Positive Youth Development programmes. They concluded from their investigation that:

- Positive behavioural outcomes, including the prevention of problem behaviours, could result from a wide range of Positive Youth Development approaches.
- The empirical evidence of the effectiveness of Positive Youth Development programmes in promoting healthy adolescent development remained unclear for definitional and methodological reasons.
- Without clearly knowing what components, elements, or characteristics are necessary for a programme to be considered a youth development programme, researchers

struggled to define the usefulness and assess the success of these programmes in assisting youth development.

This point was also made by Gore (2002), who believed that the lack of clarity on what constituted a youth development programme hindered the advancement of Positive Youth Development.

4.03 Definition of Positive Youth Development

In the last decade there has emerged from this confusion and complexity, a general consensus on what defines a Positive Youth Development programme.

“Positive Youth Development” is a term generally used to describe interventions that endeavour to promote a range of competencies in young people. According to Durlack et al. (2008), Positive Youth Development refers to intentional efforts of other people, communities, government agencies and schools to provide opportunities for young people to develop their interests, skills and abilities into adulthood.

It is accepted amongst Positive Youth Development theorists that helping young people to enhance their personal strengths and to realise their potential is the best method of preventing undesirable behaviours. While Positive Youth Development programmes vary tremendously in scope, design and duration, all Positive Youth Development interventions directly target some aspects of youth competency, with support from parents, teachers, mentors, communities, or some combination of these.

The University of Minnesota drew the distinction between youth development overall and Positive Youth Development. Youth development overall was the physical, social, and emotional processes that occurred during the adolescent period, from ages 10 until 24 years. Simply speaking, it was the process through which young people acquired the cognitive, social, and emotional skills and abilities required to navigate life (University of Minnesota Extension Centre for Youth Development, 2005). Although the word ‘youth’ can be used synonymously with ‘child’, ‘adolescent’, or ‘young person’, the phrase ‘youth development’ or ‘Positive Youth Development’ is usually used in the scientific literature and by practitioners who work with young people to refer to programmes designed to optimise these processes.

“Positive Youth Development” therefore is a term which describes any services and supports organised for young people, aimed at assisting them in acquiring skills and competencies to enhance their personal strengths and well-being.

4.04 Development of the concept of Positive Youth Development

Lerner et al. (2005) summarised the theoretical and empirical basis of the concept of Positive Youth Development. In the 21st century the Positive Youth Development movement emerged from the developmental systems theory model as a framework for engaging with and discussing the development of young people. The developmental systems theory framework emphasises the inherent plasticity of human development, the ability for systematic change throughout the human lifespan, but particularly during adolescence. The theory further emphasises that character and strength are as influential on human development as genetic influences.

The underlying philosophy of Positive Youth Development programmes is the belief that, with adequate nurturing and encouragement, all young people have the capability to become competent adults and ‘social assets’, i.e., able to make positive contributions to society. Positive Youth Development takes account of the difficulties that young people face during adolescence, but asserts that in general, young people are resourceful, energetic and enthusiastic, and can, with appropriate support structures, gain in competence and confidence to take their place as fully functioning adults.

The Positive Youth Development movement holds that those working with young people must do more than simply reduce risk; they must focus on building the assets and capabilities of young people to enable them to advance positively throughout life. Dotterweich of Cornell University (2006) summarised the main differences between traditional youth services and Positive Youth Development programmes (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Differences between Traditional Youth Services and Positive Youth Development Programmes

| Differences between Traditional Youth Services and Positive Youth Development Programmes | |
|---|--|
| Traditional Youth Services | Positive Youth Development Programmes |
| Focus on problems | Focus on positive outcomes as well as problems |
| Reactive to issues | Proactive |
| Targeted youth | Universal |
| Youth as recipients | Young people as active participants |
| Prescriptive programmes | Community response programmes |
| Expert-led | Community-based |

Benson (2003) provided a five-component framework to understand and promote the concept of Positive Youth Development.

1. The aim of Positive Youth Development programmes is of mutually beneficial relationships between people and their environments;
2. This mutually beneficial relationship has its origins in integrated biological and cultural heritage;
3. In action, this model provides opportunities for mutually beneficial supportive relationships between flourishing individuals and social institutions;
4. This theory encourages and rewards the aspirations of young people who wish to contribute to others and society;
5. Finally, this idealised relationship between individuals and society may be achieved through promoting the positive development of a young person into a flourishing person in a thriving society.

4.05 Review of literature on Positive Youth Development

4.05.01 Search strategy

A search of literature using online engines Psych-info, Google scholar and psych articles was conducted for articles, dissertations, journals, journal articles and peer review journals, using the terms “Positive Youth Development programs/programmes” and “programs/ programmes for adolescents”. The search was limited to articles post-1985. The search yielded a total of 1,254 publications.

An initial perusal of the articles revealed that including in the search “programmes for adolescents” yielded 958 articles which had no relevance to Positive Youth Development programmes (see Table 4.2):

Table 4.2 Criteria for Exclusion of Articles/ Reviews

| Criteria for Exclusion of Articles / Reviews | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Reason | Number of reviews |
| Commentaries | 109 |
| Research specifically in relation to sport | 96 |
| Research specifically in relation to army / military | 61 |
| Mental health treatment programmes | 121 |
| Government policy and guidelines | 47 |
| Grounded theory research | 12 |
| Examining parental relationships | 45 |
| Prescribed school curriculum | 139 |
| Delinquency and drug addiction | 181 |
| No outcome measures | 147 |

The search was then restricted to “Positive Youth Development programs/ programmes”. This search produced 296 articles. From a reading of the remaining abstracts, it emerged that 86 of the articles simply made reference to the term “Positive Youth Development” and were excluded.

For the 210 remaining articles, to be included in this empirical review, the programmes studied had to meet the following criteria:

- Must address one or more of the Positive Youth Development constructs identified by Catalano (2002) and/or the US National Research Council and Institute of Medicine’s Committee on Community-Level Programmes for Youth (2002);
- Must specifically involve work with young people aged between 10 and 25;
- Must operate with young people in the general population (i.e., a universal programme), not for those with pre-existing psychological or medical conditions;
- Must have addressed at least one youth development construct, in single or dual socialisation domains, e.g., school or community and/or school and community; programmes that targeted the domain of the family exclusively were omitted for this review as the Gaisce–The President’s Award does not operate in the domain of the family;
- The programme must have pre- and post-research findings.

The review of the remaining 210 articles indicated that 89 studies were of Positive Youth Development programmes that operated exclusively in the family domain and a further 36 were studies of children under the age of 10 years, and these two groups were therefore excluded. Finally 65 studies did not gather pre- and/or post- data and hence were ineligible for inclusion.

Consequently, twenty studies in twelve publications were considered relevant to the current research and are reviewed in Table 4.3.

4.05.02 Findings from empirical review of identified studies

Of the twenty studies, seventeen were completed in the United States, one in Canada, one in China and one in New Zealand. No studies were identified from Europe. Five headings were used to summarise the data from each of the empirical studies: sample type, sample size, measures used, limitations and main findings.

The current review of literature found that Positive Youth Development programmes generally fell into two broad categories:

- Positive Youth Development programmes that targeted specific problematic or risky behaviours in young people;
- Positive Youth Development programmes that were universal (i.e., targeted at whole populations, without identifying any particular adjustment problems) in their approach and sought to promote positive behaviours and build young people's individual strengths.

The first nine programmes reviewed in this empirical study (see Table 4.3[1] to [9]) were also reviewed in the meta-analysis conducted by Catalano et al. (2002), "Positive Youth Development in the United States: Research Findings on Evaluations of Positive Youth Development Programs". All nine studies sought to reduce specific problem behaviours in young people, following the traditional approach of Positive Youth Developments.

Three programmes were aimed at educating young people about substance misuse in this review. Schinke, Botvin, Trimble, Orlandi, Gilcrest and Locklear (1988) (see Table 4.3 [1.1]) reviewed a Positive Youth Development programme with an educational component. The study concluded that following participation in the programme "Preventing Substance Misuse among Native American Adolescents", the participants were reported to have greater knowledge about substance misuse, to have a less positive attitude towards drug taking.

Programme participants had higher scores of assertiveness and greater ability to generate alternative thinking strategies. More programme participants post intervention described enhanced skill capacity which allowed them to come up with helpful suggestions to counter peer pressure than the control group. Moreover, these changes were detectable at six-month follow-up. However, this study was severely limited by its pilot nature and, most significantly, by its' dependence on novel measures which were solely constructed for the study purposes and were not psychometrically validated and standardised. Furthermore, the main grounded theory behind the programme was that focusing on bio-cultural competencies would lead to a reduction in substance abuse among the sample. However, the design of the methodology did not allow for examination of whether this aspect of the programme directly affected the attitudes and knowledge that the study addressed as no intervention without this focus was utilised for comparative purposes. Furthermore, the sample was randomly divided into control and intervention groups and there was no controls taken to ensure the samples were matched on demographic characteristics, meaning inherent differences between the two groups may possibly have accounted for the outcome findings. In addition, the sample was recruited from only two reservation sites in Washington which means that it would be unwise to generalise the findings to not only general population but to other Native American youths. In conclusion, despite the promising longitudinal findings of this study, the methodological flaws undermine and raise concern about the generalisability of these findings.

The second of these studies, "Preventing Adolescent Drug Abuse through a Multi-Modal Behaviour Approach", by Botvin, Baker, Dusenbury, Botvin and Diaz (1995) (see Table 4.3 [1.6]), also examined a substance misuse programme with a total of 5954 participants. Immediately post-intervention, positive changes such as better knowledge, attitudes and behaviours were recorded by participants. Programme participants also showed lower levels of cigarette, marijuana and alcohol use. The follow-up revealed that only one of the three targeted behaviours showed a long-term positive outcome. The sample was skewed in that it was predominately made-up of white, middle-class, suburban and rural residents. Further bias was evident in the high attrition rate amongst substance users. Furthermore, the outcome measures were flawed in that, although some were based on previously validated measures, they were not validated in the modified form used or standardised for use with these age categories.

The third study (see Table 4.3 [1.8]) by Ellickson, Bell and McGuigan (1993) examined the “Preventing Adolescent Drug Use” programme. A total of 6,257 students took part in the programme. The programmes were noted to have short-term positive effects on behavioural measures and on cognitive risk factors associated with substance misuse. All intervention effects reported were diminished by the end of high school. Moreover, those whose pre-test scores indicated increased risk factors for drug use were significantly more likely to be lost to attrition. This study failed to utilise standardised measures, instead relying on outcome measures specifically developed for this evaluation.

The “Teen Outreach Programme”, a study of 695 girls and boys by Allen et al. (1997) (see Table 4.3 [1.9]) exclusively targeted problem behaviours including teen pregnancy, academic failure and school absenteeism. The study reported that those who remained in the programme had significant decreases in measures of school failure, school suspension and teen pregnancy. Age and gender were recognised as a contributing factor to non-completion of the programme, with males and younger participants identified as more likely to be in this group. However, despite the identification of this programme as a positive youth development programme, outcome measures focused on problem behaviours alone and, furthermore, these outcomes were measure with novel tests that were not previously examined in terms of psychometric characteristics. Therefore, the positive mental health benefits of the programme cannot be identified and, due to problems with the measures employed, it is questionable if the findings could be replicated with other samples.

“Making A Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters Mentoring Program” was a study of 959 students by Tierney, Grossman and Resch (1995) (see Table 4.3 [1.2]). The participants, both boys and girls, reported, post participation, improved parental relationships, enhanced capacity to trust others and the belief that they had the ability to complete school. Minority group girls reported greater academic success, while minority group boys showed the greatest decrease of substance abuse. Yet, similar to other programmes which were reviewed, no standardised outcome measures were used, with findings based on self-report interview data. Moreover, findings were based on immediate post-intervention reports. It is unclear if these findings would still be detectable at long-term follow-up. Moreover, the study was limited in that it failed to examine important relational aspects between the intervention group and their mentors, such as whether certain youths with specific characteristics benefited more significantly from the programme and whether

youth worked better with a mentor who shared a common ethnic background. Therefore, it is difficult to establish how objective the findings are and, furthermore, the aspects of the programme which may contribute to improved life outcomes for the youth involved.

Two programmes which targeted smoking and unhealthy eating patterns by young people were the “Know Your Body” programme reviewed by Walter, Vaughan and Wynder (1989) (see Table 4.3 [1.3]) in their study “Primary Prevention of Cancer among Children” and the “Growing Healthy Study” by Connell and Turner (1985) (Table 4.3 [1.4]). The “Know Your Body” study specifically addressed the smoking and dietary habits of 1105 high school students. The findings indicated that the programme was successful in modifying rates of smoking and unhealthy dietary habits over a 6 year period. However, in the evaluation of this programme, the students in programme and control students were not matched in terms of demographic characteristics and there was a dependence on non-standardised outcome measures. The 1397 students from 130 classrooms that participated in the “Growing Healthy study” reported greater knowledge and better attitudes and practices in relation to healthy physical well-being. However, the evaluation of this study was severely compromised by the variations in response rates and buy-in to the programme by the various school districts involved, as is evidenced by the follow-up review by Smith, Redican and Olson (1992). Again, this study was reliant on novel assessment measures which were not standardised. Therefore, both studies are critically impaired by their lack of stringent methodology and outcome measures.

A total of 75 children aged between the ages of 10 and 15 took part in the “Children of Divorce” programme, studied by Pedro-Carroll et al. (1992) (see Table 4.3 [1.5]) in their “Summary of Findings of the School Health Education Evaluation”. Significant reductions in anxiety and learning problems were reported by classroom teachers post-participation. Teachers noted greater overall classroom adjustment within the group. The participants scored higher on their post-programme competency questionnaires rated by their class teacher which measured peer social ability, compliance and adaptive assertiveness. Post participation, participants were also rated more favourably by teachers on frustration tolerance and compliance with rules. However, an obvious fundamental limitation with the study is its dependence on teacher perceptions which may be affected by their own subjectivity and knowledge of the programme. This limitation is compounded by the dependence on non-standardised outcome measures which opens the evaluation to further

bias. Moreover, it is unclear if these findings would be identifiable at long-term follow-up. Therefore, the fundamental flaws in this study raise concerns about the validity of the findings and whether the programme is suitable and efficacious for use with a general population.

Three PATH's (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) programmes, which aimed to enhance the social and emotional learning of children in the classroom, were reviewed by Greenberg and Kusche (1997) (see Table 4.3 [1.7]) in their study, "The PATH's Project: Preventative Intervention for Children". They evaluated a combined total of 426 boys and girls in Fourth and Fifth Grades over a two-year period. Both groups made significant improvements in their ability to make important discriminations among internal emotional states. Improved reasoning, with respect to others' feelings, was evident. Lower rates of aggressive solutions were reported, as well as a significant increase in social competence. The follow-up data showed that there were continued effects on measures of emotional and interpersonal understanding, and problem-solving skills. However, outcome measures were novel and non-standardised and there was a lack of matching procedures in the evaluative methodology. Therefore, the generalisability of these findings is questionable.

Melzer, Fitgibbon, Leahy and Petsko (2006) also appraised a PATH's programme by a mixed-methods approach in their study "A Youth Development Program: Lasting Impact" (see Table 4.3 [4]). This programme studied 111 high school boys and girls. The findings revealed that the greater the involvement in the programme, the greater the likelihood that participants achieved a healthy adulthood as measured by high school graduation, college attendance, employment and lack of involvement in the criminal justice system. Nearly three-quarters of the programme participants were interviewed at age 18, and attributed feelings of competence and self-empowerment as the long-term positive impact of the programme. Again, the outcome measures of the PATH's programme in this study were novel and non-standardised. Moreover, the sample was small and homogenous in terms of geographical location, limiting the generalisability of findings.

A sense of empowerment and community was also evidenced in the qualitative and quantitative findings from Lakin and Mahoney (2006) (see Table 4.3 [5]) in "Empowering Youth to Change Their World", which identified key components of a community service programme to promote positive development. They found an increase in pro-social attitudes and higher levels of self-reported empathy, following the programme. Programme

participants stated their intention to become further involved in community social action, post programme participation. However, although the design of the study was based on psychometrically established outcome measure, the sample size was extremely small placing extensive limitations on the statistical power and generalisability of the findings. Moreover, no outcome measure focused on explicit behaviours meaning that it is hard to establish whether positive mental health benefits had any functional impact.

Kalish et al. (2010) (see Table 4.3 [9]) in their study, “Listening to Youth: Reflections on the Effect of a Youth Development Program”, conducted interviews with 60 African-American low-income young adults aged between 18 and 27. All participants, even those who dropped out of the programme, acknowledged universal benefits in the programme. It encouraged them to stay in education, kept them out of trouble, and provided them with a safe place to go. The programme participants also expressed that the programme had exposed them to new things, gave them an opportunity to help others and made them better people. However, the sample was self-selected and therefore, may have been over-representative of those with a positive experience of the programme. Moreover, coding practice meant that diversity in experience between participants may have been under-represented. Furthermore, no standardised measures were used.

There were three reviews of outcomes of the 4-H programme, the largest universal Positive Youth Development programme in the United States, with more than 6 million young people up to the age of 25 years enrolled. With the support of adult volunteers and mentors, 4-H fosters a “learn by doing” ethos, and aims to inspire the young people in their programmes to work collaboratively, to take the lead on their own projects, and to set and achieve goals with confidence.

This is the programme most similar to the programme being studied for this research. Participants are empowered to chart their own course and set challenges for themselves. The underlying goals of 4-H are to develop citizenship, leadership, responsibility and life skills of youth through experiential learning programmes and a Positive Youth Development approach.

The first review of 4-H programmes, “Positive Youth Development, Participation in Community Youth Development Programs and Community Contributions of Fifth Grade Adolescents” is that of Lerner et al. (2005) (see Table 4.3 [2]) who gathered data from 1,700

male and female participants aged approximately 11, from 40 cities across 13 states. The findings from the online questionnaires were the first to provide evidence based on the “5 Cs” (Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character and Caring). The findings of this research suggested a sixth C should be included, that of Contribution. This study found a direct relationship between youth engagement and thriving. It should be noted that the measures used were developed specifically for the evaluation of the 4-H programme and were designed based around the programme aims. Although some were based on previously established measures, the measures employed were by no means standard measures and it is, therefore, unwise to compare findings with these novel measures with findings from other studies utilising psychometrically sound outcome measures. Furthermore, the problems with the programme measures are identifiable in all evaluative studies of the 4-H programme conducted by Lerner and his colleagues.

A second 4-H study (see Table 4.3 [6]) of 2,392 boys and girls, “Intentional Self-Regulation and Positive Youth Development in Early Adolescence: Findings from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development”, was conducted by Gestsdottir and Lerner (2007). Participants were recruited from 57 schools and 4 after-school programmes in 14 States. Their findings were that the adolescents most likely to stay in the programme were slightly more advantaged as indicated by mother’s education, household income levels, home residency and whether parents had taken part in the same programme when they were adolescents. A positive relationship was found between the scores for intentional self-regulation, the 5C’s and overall Positive Youth Development. However, these findings should be considered in light of the limitations of this study, most significantly that the data was only collected over a twelve month period. In addition, findings were dependent solely on self-report data, although all measures were established and validated, although perhaps not for the age group under study. Moreover, there may be issues pertaining to sample characteristics as not only was the sample non-representative of a general population sample, but there was a high attrition rate between schools. Overall, this is a promising study that is limited only by its’ sample characteristics, short data collection period, and its’ dependence on a single-method design.

The final 4-H study by Lerner and Lerner (2011) (see Table 4.3 [10]), “The Positive Development of Youth: Findings from the First Seven Years of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development” recruited from a vast database of 7,000 4-H participants. For this study, data was examined from 2,974 male and females in grades 5 to 11. The findings highlighted

that positive youth benefits continued to develop consistently throughout adolescence. 93% of the participants reported no or very low levels of risk behaviours. Participants were over three times more likely than youths in other out-of-school activities to have higher scores for contribution. Participants had higher levels of the developmental assets considered important in Positive Youth Development. Participants were more likely to report high academic competence and higher engagement in school. They were also more likely to have healthy habits and to have significantly lower scores on measure of delinquency. As highlighted previously, the use of specifically-developed measures is a significant limitation in understanding the findings of this study. Moreover, the study emphasises that the programme delivery was not universal and there was great diversity in participants. Yet, the study evaluated the programme in a uniform manner where differences were not taken into account, presenting serious challenges to understanding what aspects of the programme, if any, contributed to the increased competencies observed.

Durlack et al. (see Table 4.3 [7]), in their study “Effects of Positive Youth Development Programs on School, Family and Community Systems” assessed many universal intervention programmes, the total yield being 526 studies attempting to build positive competencies in youth aged 5 to 18 years. The purpose of the research was to investigate participant meso-systematic change (between home environment and one other environment). Such change is most commonly found between the school and family domains. The study found that these programmes had achieved positive results. Changes resulted from programme participation led to less negative behaviour and higher achievement levels. However, as has been a significant limitation in most of the studies that have been reviewed in this chapter, Durlak and colleagues (2007) note that only a minority of the studies (24%) contained quantitative assessment of changes observed. However for those who did include statistical analyses, results were promising with several mean effects sizes of statistical significance found, ranging from moderate to large effect sizes. Yet, a significant limitation of this meta-analysis that must be considered is that the coding procedure utilised was not intended to be exhaustive or definitive and, therefore, findings may be limited to the coding practice used.

Balsano et al. (see Table 4.3 [8]), in “Patterns of Early Adolescent Participation in Youth Development Programs Having Positive Youth Development Goals”, studied participation rates in after school programmes involving 1,720 eleven-year-olds. They found that the young people engaged in, on average, three extracurricular activities per year. During the two

years they followed the participants, they also observed that as a child got older, there was a decrease in participation in extracurricular activities, although the study design meant that the researchers were not able to find the reasons behind this decline. Moreover, data was only descriptive in nature, with no established psychometric measures used in the study.

The Canadian study of 401 participants by Busseri et al. (2006) (see Table 4.3 [3]), “A Longitudinal Examination of Breadth and Intensity of Youth Activity Involvement and Successful Development” revealed that those who dropped out of a Positive Youth Development programme were likely to be younger and male. Those who stayed were less likely to be involved in risky behaviour and reported more positive well-being, greater academic success and stronger interpersonal functioning. The findings indicated that youth involvement in Positive Youth Development programmes predicted further developmental success, independent of baseline development success. They also found that getting involved in more activities over time was positively predictive of future development, while changes in intensity in involvement did not have strong predicative powers. However, there was a selection bias in that those who displayed less positive developmental patterns were less likely to participate in the programme. Moreover, the follow-data was skewed as only 3 out of a potential 25 schools provided follow-up data at 20 months. However, a strength of this study is its extensive use of a battery of psychometrically established questionnaires.

The two most recent studies included in this empirical review are the work of O’Connor and José (2012) (see Table 4.3 [11]) and Sun and Shek (2012) (see Table 4.3 [12]). The research of O’Connor and José (2012) in “A Path to Positive Outcomes for Youth in New Zealand” was undertaken in New Zealand with 1,774 ten- to fifteen-year-olds. The findings highlighted that young people who participated in community-based activities experienced more positive outcomes in adolescent years than those who didn’t engage. No gender modification was found. Older participants gained more personal satisfaction, and younger participants reported a greater gain in social support. However, the authors highlight that the design of the study, which was not randomised or controlled, placed related limitations on the data. In addition, the use of composite survey, consisting of an amalgamation of abbreviated and modified established measures, raises concerns about the standardised nature of findings. The study by Sun and Shek (2012), “Positive Youth Development: Life Satisfaction and Problem Behaviour among Chinese Adolescents”, included 7,151 secondary school boys and girls in Hong Kong. All three measures used in the research, youth development scale, life

satisfaction scale and assessment of problem behaviours, were validated by the sample. The research found that participation in Positive Youth Development programmes predicted life satisfaction and reduced problem behaviours in Chinese adolescents. Findings were based on cross-sectional data from one wave of a longitudinal data limited the inference of causal interpretations. Furthermore, findings should be considered in light of the cultural context, meaning that, due to bias towards social desirability in the Chinese community, data may be open to self-serving bias. Moreover, the sample was geographically limited and the authors note that the generalisation of findings to other populations, even Chinese populations, would be unwise.

Table 4.3 Findings from Previous Empirical Studies Examining the Outcomes of Positive Youth Development Programmes

| Findings from previous empirical studies examining the outcomes of Positive Youth Development Programmes | | | | | |
|--|---|-------------|--|---|--|
| Study Number and Authors | Authors and Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Finding |
| [1] Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak and Hawkins (2002) | Review of a number of Positive Youth Development programmes with components targeting the home, the school or the community or a mixture of these domains. As the Gaisce programme does not incorporate the home environment, only findings from the reviewed programmes which contained a school or community component will be listed below. | | | | |
| Positive Youth Development Programmes in the Community | | | | | |
| | [1.1] <i>Schinke, Botvin, Trimble, Orlandi, Gilchrist and Locklear (1988)</i> Native American youths aged 11-12 years (mean age = 11.8 years) from two western Washington sites. Preliminary analyses revealed no significant differences between the two sites on a number of demographic variables. 54% of the sample were female. Participants were randomly divided into the intervention and control sample. The intervention aimed to educate youths regarding substance misuse. | n=137 | Four outcome measures were administered before and after the programme to identify knowledge and attitudes regarding substance abuse. These measures were developed specifically for this study. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No standardised outcome measures used. 2. Did not compare control and intervention groups to check if they matched for demographic characteristics. 3. Small sample size – unwise to generalise. 4. Method did not allow for assessment of efficacy of bio-cultural competency focus. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme sample had more knowledge about substance misuse and held less favourable views about substance misuse than a control sample. • The programme sample rated themselves higher in self-control. • The programme group were able to generate alternative suggestions to peer pressure based on assessments of the use of substances and assertiveness. • These differences were still detectable at six-month follow-up. |

Findings from previous empirical studies examining the outcomes of Positive Youth Development Programmes

| Study Number and Authors | Authors and Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Finding |
|---|--|-------------|---|--|--|
| [1] Catalano <i>et al.</i> (2002) (Continued) | <p>[1.2] Tierney, Grossman and Resch (1995) These participants were recruited from the database of youth who took part in the 'Big Brother/Big Sister' mentoring scheme from states all over the United States of America. 60% of the sample were minority group members. Almost all lived in a single parent household, with a significant number coming from households with a history of domestic violence and/or substance misuse. The sample was aged 10 to 16, although 94% of the sample were aged between 10 and 14. No mean age for the sample in total was reported. Over 60% of the sample was male. There was a baseline interview for all participants eligible for the programme and then these participants were randomly assigned to intervention or control group (n=487 for treatment group). Both groups were matched on demographic characteristics. They were re-interviewed 18-months post-baseline.</p> | n=959 | Interview data. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No follow-up results. 2. Did not assess characteristics of mentors. 3. Did not study the characteristics of the volunteers and their interaction with the relationship with their mentor. 4. Did not assess whether minority youth matched with someone of the same ethnic background showed a significant advantage over youth matched with someone of a different ethnic background. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A stringent significance criteria was used ($p < .05$) and using this cut-off rate, a significant decrease in drug use, hitting, absenteeism, and lying to parents was found. • There was increases in perceived ability to complete school and improved parental relationships through the medium of trust, • The greatest impact was on the rate of substance abuse for minority group boys. • Academic impact was strongest for minority group girls. • There was no statistically significant improvement in self-concept, nor in the number of social and cultural activities in which the little brothers and little sisters participated. |
| | <p>Positive Youth Development in Schools [1.3] Walter, Vaughan and Wynder (1989) 485 students (aged from 9 – 15years (no mean age provided)) from 8 schools were randomly assigned to the 'Know Your Body' intervention programme while 620 students from 7 schools were assigned to a control group. 65% of these original participants remained in the post-intervention sample when follow-up data was collected after a six year period. The participants who remained were not significantly different from those who left</p> | n=1105 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Behavioural measures. 2. Physiological measures. 3. Parent and caretaker reports. 4. 24 participants took part in a dietary recall interview. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No standardised outcome measures were used. 2. Intervention and control schools were not matched on demographic variables. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme was effective in modifying rates of smoking and diet. • There was a 73.3% decreased rate of smoking initiation at grade 9 for the programme group in comparison to a non-intervention sample. • The programme group has a 19.4% decrease in levels of saturated fat. • The programme group had a 9.8% decrease in levels of total fat. • The programme group had a 9.5% increase in carbohydrate levels. |

Findings from previous empirical studies examining the outcomes of Positive Youth Development Programmes

| Study Number and Authors | Authors and Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Finding |
|--------------------------|--|-------------|---|---|---|
| | <p>[1.4] <i>Connell, Turner and Mason (1985); Connell and Turner (1985); Smith, Redican and Olson (1992)</i> In the original studies by Connell and Turner students from 130 classrooms took part in the 'Growing Healthy Study' with varying response levels. No age or gender profile of this original sample was provided. The follow-up study by Smith, Redican and Olson (1992) examined the continued implementation of the programme.</p> | n=1397 | All measures were used post-intervention and examined: 1. Knowledge 2. Attitudes. 3. Practices | 1. The response varied between classrooms. 2. There seemed to be discrepancies in buy-in to the programme among various school districts. 3. The measures used were developed specifically to assess the programme and were not standardised. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All participants showed a positive difference in measures post-test compared to those with no exposure. • Those with greater class times dedicated to the programme showed greater outcomes. • Smith, Redican and Olson (1992) found that the majority of the school districts had discontinued the programme. Those districts that continued to implement the programme were smaller in size and employed a co-ordinator to oversee the roll-out of the programme. |
| | <p>[1.5] <i>Pedro-Carroll, Alpert-Gillis and Cowan (1992)</i> 42 boys and 33 girls (aged 9 – 12 years) took part in the 'Children of Divorce' intervention programme. Children who took part in the programme were matched with children in the control group. The participants were in Grades 3-6 of 4 suburban schools. 57 of these participants were assigned to the programme and 38 participants served as a control group. There was also a sample of 93 participants of two-parent families. Sessions in the programme were tailored to the developmental and social-cultural background of the participants. There was no attrition for the follow-up data collection but this may have been as there was only a two week period post-test.</p> | n=168 | Teacher ratings. | 1. No follow-up data was collected. 2. No standardised outcome measures used. 3. Dependence on teacher's perceptions of improved performance. 4. As the programme was tailored to the sample, it is unclear how it would generalise to other groups. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant reductions in anxiety and learning problems as well as overall classroom adjustment problems as evidence by teacher ratings. • Participants rated more highly by teachers on a competency based score including specific competencies such as peer sociability, frustration tolerance, compliance with rules and adaptive assertiveness. |

Findings from previous empirical studies examining the outcomes of Positive Youth Development Programmes

| Study Number and Authors | Authors and Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Finding |
|--|--|-------------|--|--|--|
| | <p>[1.6] Botvin, Baker, Dusenbury, Tortu and Botvin (1990); Botvin, Baker, Dusenbury, Botvin and Diaz (1995) Schools in the sample were located in eastern New York State, central New York State and Long Island. 52% of the sample were males. The participants were recruited from grades 7 to 9. No age profiles for the group were provided. Three types of intervention programme, which aimed to reduce substance misuse, were examined: I. One day teacher training and implementation feedback (18 schools) II. Video-taped teacher training and no feedback (14 schools). III. Control (22 schools). 40% of the original sample was not able to participate in follow-up data collection due to dropouts, absenteeism, transfers etc. (n=3597). Attrition rates were greatest for the control group.</p> | n=5954 | <p>Data on knowledge, attitudes and behaviours was collected immediately post-intervention and at a three year follow-up. These measures were developed specifically for this evaluation, although some were based on previously established measures.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sample was predominately from white, middle-class, suburban and rural background. 2. There was a higher attrition rate among substance users which biased the sample. 3. Although the measures were based on previously established measures, they were not standardised or psychometrically validated. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediately post-intervention changes could be identified in youths' knowledge, attitudes and behaviours. • Both intervention groups showed lower levels of cigarette and marijuana cigarette usage. • The second intervention group (taped training) had lower frequency levels of alcohol intoxication. • Both prevention groups showed increased knowledge of substance abuse. • Follow-up revealed the only long-term behavioural outcome was associated with substance abuse. |
| <p>[1] Catalano <i>et al.</i> (2002) (Continued)</p> | <p>[1.7] Greenberg (1996); Greenberg and Kusche (1997) Evaluation of the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATH's) programme, which aims to enhance the social and emotional leaning of children, focused on outcomes for two sub-samples <i>Normally Adjusted Sub-Sample:</i> 4 schools randomly assigned to control or intervention. <i>Special Needs Sub-Sample:</i> 14 classrooms from 3 school districts randomly assigned to control or intervention. At pre-test, participants were in 1st and 2nd grades. (aged 7 – 8 years) At post-test, the participants were in either 3rd or 4th grade (aged 9-10 years). 28% of the original sample completed follow-up measures.</p> | n=426 | <p>Measures filled out pre- and post- programme. Follow-up data was also collected two years later: 1. Teacher interviews. 2. Student surveys.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Outcome measures were not validated or standardised. 2. Schools were not matched in terms of demographic variables. 3. The control and intervention groups were randomly assigned and not matched. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the normally adjusted group, there were significant improvements in the ability to make important discriminations among internal emotional state, to define 5 complex feelings, to provide appropriate personal examples of different feelings. Sense of self-efficacy and belief in ability to manage feelings also improved for this sub-sample. There was improved reasoning with respect to feelings of others and how feelings change. There was also improvement in non-verbal and visual spatial reasoning. There was also a significant increase in social competence for normally adjusted boys. • Special needs group had identical gains with respect to emotional reasoning capacities as well as an increase in the percentage of non-confrontation solutions, a lower percentage of aggressive solutions and significant changes in social competence. Teacher ratings changed in accordance. • The follow-up data indicated that there were continued |

Findings from previous empirical studies examining the outcomes of Positive Youth Development Programmes

| Study Number and Authors | Authors and Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Finding |
|---|--|-------------|---|--|--|
| | | | | | <p>effects for both the normally adjusted and special needs sub-samples on measures of emotional and interpersonal understanding and problem solving skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The follow-up data also indicated that the special needs sub-sample continued to show less aggression. |
| | <p>[1.8] <i>Ellickson and Bell (1990); Ellickson, Bell and Harrison (1993); Ellickson, Bell and McGuigan (1993)</i></p> <p>30 schools from 8 school districts in California and Oregon were randomly assigned to one of the conditions in the 'Project Alert Programme', which aimed to education against substance misuse:</p> <p>I. Control II. Teacher-lead intervention III. Teacher-lead intervention with assistance from youth leaders.</p> <p>There was a high attrition rate at the fifteen month follow-up. 3852 of the original participants provided follow-up data, a representation of 64% of the original sample. No age profile for participants was provided.</p> | n=6527 | Data on knowledge, attitudes and practices were collected pre- and post-intervention and after a fifteen month period. Behavioural measures were also used and cognitive risk factors identified. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> No validated and standardised measures were used to evaluate outcomes. Those lost to attrition were significantly more likely at pre-programme to have been identified as having risk factors for drug use. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The programme had short-term positive effects on behavioural measures and on cognitive risk factors associated with substance misuse. Programme effects were smaller for alcohol use. Perceptions of marijuana use changed more than perceptions of any other substance. There was no impact of the programme on cigarette or alcohol use in the second year. There was a boomerang effect for the programme on baseline smokers one year later. All intervention effects were diminished by the end of high school. For the youth leaders, changes in perceptions persisted. However, behaviours did not change in accordance with these perceptions. |
| [1] Catalano <i>et al.</i> (2002) (Continued) | <p>Positive Youth Development Programmes that Target Both School and the Community</p> <p>[1.9] <i>Allen, Philliber, Herrling and Kuperminc (1997)</i></p> <p>25 nationwide American schools were randomly assigned to take part in the 'Teen Outreach Programme', aimed at developing positive mental health attributes in at-risk youths, in the years 1991 to 1995. Participants were in grades 9 to 12 (aged 15 -18) with 353 comprising the programme group (86% female) and 342 the control (83% female). At the end of the programme there was a 5.3% attrition rate for the programme group and 8.4% for the control.</p> | n=695 | Self-report questionnaire on problem behaviours completed both at the start and at the end of the programme. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> No follow-up data. Outcome analysis focused on problem behaviours alone. Outcome measures were novel and were not standardised or psychometrically validated. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those who left the programme were more likely to have had or to have caused a prior pregnancy, to have been suspended, to have been younger and to have been male. Significant decreases were found for the programme group on measures of school failure, school suspension and teen pregnancy. |

Findings from previous empirical studies examining the outcomes of Positive Youth Development Programmes

| Study Number and Authors | Authors and Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Finding |
|--|---|-------------|---|---|---|
| [2] Lerner, Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, Phelps, Gestsdottir, Naudeau, Jelicic, Alberts, Long, Smith, Bobek, Richman-Raphael, Simpson, DiDenti Christiansen and von Eye (2005) | Positive Youth Development Programmes that Target School and/or Community Longitudinal data was collected from participants who were participants in the 4-H study in over 40 cities and towns across 13 states in the United States. 4-H fosters a “learn by doing” ethos and aims to help participants to work collaboratively. The data used in this sample were from one wave alone and collected from 5 th to 9 th grade adolescents. 47.2% of the sample was male and these male participants had a mean age of 11.1 years. The remaining female participants had a mean age of 10.9 years. | n=1700 | 1. 2-hour long computer questionnaire 2. Additional information provided by parents as well as school databases. All measures were adapted from previously established measures or based on programme aims. | 1. As this study only focused on one wave of the longitudinal data, no causality can be determined. 2. Outcome measures were developed specifically for the purpose of evaluating this programme and are not standard measures. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results indicated the first evidence to date of the ‘5 C’s’: Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character and Caring. • The findings suggest a sixth ‘C’ should be introduced – that of contribution. • A bi-directional relationship was found between youth engagement and thriving. |
| [3] Busseri, Rose-Krasnor, Willoughby and Chalmers (2006) | Participants were recruited from 25 high schools in Canada for a universal programme that aimed to build activity expertise skills. Only 3 of these high school provided follow-up data 20 months following the conclusion of the programme and it was only data from these students that was included in the analyses of this study. The average age of these students at initial data collection was 14.8 years and at follow-up data collection, 16.8 years. The sample was 56% female and 44% male. | n=401 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demographic Survey (Designed for this study). 2. Youth Involvement Survey (Designed for this study). 3. Risk Behaviours survey (Designed for this study). 4. Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (Radloff, 1977). 5. Social Anxiety Scale (Ginsburg, LaGreca and Silverman, 1998). 6. Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). 7. Optimism and Daily Hassle Scales (Designed for this Study) 8. Academic Orientation (Designed for this study). 9. Maternal and Paternal Attachment Scales (Armsden and Greenberg, 1967). 10. Relationship with Best Friend (Gauze, Bukowski, Aquan-Asse and Sippola, | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Selection bias: Youths with less positive developmental patterns were less likely to be involved in the study. 2. Only a minority of schools provided follow-up data. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who dropped out of the study were slightly younger at time of initial data collection and were more likely to be male. However, they did not differ in terms of parental education. • Those who stayed in the study were less likely to be involved in risky behaviour, reported more positive well-being, greater academic orientation and stronger interpersonal functioning. • Youth involvement predicts further developmental success independent of baseline developmental success. • Youths who were involved in activities at initial data collection reported less risky behaviour at follow-up and more positive interpersonal functioning as well as higher scores on a composite score of successful development. • Getting involved in more activities over time was positively predictive of future development whereas changes in intensity of involvement did not have strong predictive powers. • For risky behaviour involvement and interpersonal functioning, the greater the intensity of involvement at initial data collection, the less positive the developmental patterns seen at follow-up data collection. |

Findings from previous empirical studies examining the outcomes of Positive Youth Development Programmes

| Study Number and Authors | Authors and Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Finding |
|---|---|-------------|---|--|---|
| | | | 1996). 11. Friendship Attachment (Armsden and Greenberg, 1967). 12. Victimization by Peers (Marini, Spear and Bombay, 1999). 13. Support Network Size. | | |
| [4] Meltzer, Fitzgibbon, Leahy, Petsko (2006) | Participants were recruited from the Database of Promotion of Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATH's) participants in Akron, Ohio who had enrolled since the inception of the programme and had reached the age of 18 years. The mean age of entry into the programme for these participants was 14.3 years. 29 women and 44 men from the sample were also interviewed. | n=111 | 1. 26-Item survey. 2. Two open ended questions. 3. 83 of the participants were also interviewed. | 1. Small sample size. 2. All participants were from the same geographical area. 3. Measures devised specifically for evaluation purposes in this study and were not examined in terms of psychometric characteristics. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The greater the involvement of the adolescent in the programme, the greater the likelihood of them achieving a healthy adulthood as measured by high school graduation, college attendance, employment and lack of involvement with the criminal justice system. • Some of the reasons given by the participants for the long-term positive impact of the programme were the programme's usefulness and the feelings of competence and self-empowerment instilled. |
| [5] Lakin and Mahoney (2006) | This study evaluated the efficacy of the "Empowering Youth to Change Their World" programme, which identified key components of a community service programme to promote positive development. 20 people made up both the control and the programme group. 70% of the participants in the control group and 73% of participants in the programme provided permission for their information to be used in the study. The control group was 50% female in comparison to the programme group which was 72% female. | n=29 | 1. Survey designed for this study. 2. Ongoing qualitative feedback. 3. Self-efficacy Scale (Cowen, Work, Hightower, Wyman, Parker and Lotyczewski, 1991). 4. Civic Responsibility Scale (Composite of Mesch (2001) and own questions). 5. Intent to be Involved in Future Community Initiatives (Designed for this study). 6. Index of Empathy for Children and Adolescents (18-Items) (Bryant, 1982). | 1. All participants were in the same class – some effects may be due to the classroom environment. 2. Small sample size. 3. No measure of explicit behaviours was used. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both qualitative and quantitative data indicated that the programme created a sense of empowerment and community among the participants – two factors that are integral to successful growth at this stage. • There was an increase in youth self-reported empathy following the programme. • Programme participants were more likely to endorse empathic statements (20% of the variance explained). • There was an increase in youth intentions to be involved in further community social action after the programme. • The programme participants also saw a development in their pro-social attitudes. |

Findings from previous empirical studies examining the outcomes of Positive Youth Development Programmes

| Study Number and Authors | Authors and Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Finding |
|---|--|-----------------|--|--|--|
| [6] Gestsdóttir and Lerner (2007) | <p>Wave 1: 4-H Programme Participants were recruited from 57 schools and 4 after-school programmes across 14 US states with the sample providing regional, rural/urban and racial/ethnic diversity. 1659 5th grade adolescents. 46.5% male (Mean age – 10.9 years) 51.5% female (Mean age – 10.8 years)</p> <p>Wave 2: 854 6th grade adolescents who took part in initial data collection were re-tested. 733 6th grade adolescents who did not take part in the programme were also recruited to serve as control group. Therefore 1587 6th grade adolescents comprised the sample at wave 2. 42.4% male (Mean age – 12 years) 57.6% female (Mean age – 12.1 years)</p> | n=2392 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Selection, Optimization and Compensation (SOC) Questionnaire (Freund and Baltes, 2002). 2. Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPRC) (Harter, 1992). 3. Profiles of Student Life Attitudes and Behaviours Survey (PSLAB) (Benson, Leffert, Scales and Blyth, 1998). 4. Peer Support scale (PSS) (Greenberger, 1987). 5. Eisenberg Sympathy Scale (Eisenberg, Fabes, Murphy, Karbon, Smith and Maszk, 1996). 6. Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D) (Radloff, 1977). 7. Monitoring the Future Questionnaire (Bachman, Johnston and O'Malley, 2000) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High attrition rate from wave 1 to wave 2 due to principals withdrawing consent, absence of a principal or absence of respondent permission to continue. 2. Sample not representative of the overall sample population of the United States of America. 3. There were age limitations at the time of data collection. 4. Data should be collected over a longer time period. 5. Survey data methodology only provides a single means of assessment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adolescents most likely to stay in the programme were slightly more advantaged as indicated by mother's education, household income levels, residence in suburban areas and likelihood of parents who had previously participated in the programme. • The SOC questionnaire is not evident for fifth and sixth graders. • Positive relationships were found among scores for intentional self-regulation, the individual '5 C's' and Positive Youth Development. |
| [7] Durlak, Taylor, Kawashima, Pachan, DuPre, Celio, Berger, Dymncki and Weissberg (2007) | Meta-analysis of studies that focused on the outcomes of universal interventions that targeted youths (aged 5-18 years) without any identified adjusted problems. Selected studies took place from 2005 to 2007 and all contained both a control group and at least one outcome measure that assessed youths' behaviour in some way. | n=526 (studies) | 1. Coding. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Follow-up studies are needed. 2. Not enough data on whole system changes e.g. the social system. 3. Did not include data on all Youth Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 64% of the interventions attempted some mesosystematic or microsystematic change (i.e. home environment and one other environmental system). These efforts are rare outside the Positive Youth Development field. • Most attention has been focused on schools and families. • Systematic change is most commonly found in the school and family domains and this has achieved positive results. • Changes have occurred in several ways but mainly programmes lead to fewer negative behaviours and better |

Findings from previous empirical studies examining the outcomes of Positive Youth Development Programmes

| Study Number and Authors | Authors and Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Finding |
|--|--|-------------|---|--|--|
| | | | | <p>Programmes that took place in this time period.</p> <p>4. Excluded health promotion and health prevention programmes.</p> <p>5. The findings may be limited to the coding used as the coding was not intended to be either definitive or exhausted.</p> <p>6. Analysis did not include case studies and/or qualitative reports.</p> | <p>achievement in studies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only 24% of the studies provided quantitative data on the change that occurred on the targeted system – however, studies that did provide this data produced several mean effect sizes that were statistically significant and ranged from moderate to large in magnitude. |
| [8] Balsano, Phelps, Theokas, Lerner, & Lerner (2009) | <p>Wave 1: Participants were recruited from 57 schools and 4 after-school programmes over 13 states of the United States of America with the sample representing regional, rural/urban and racial/ethnic diversity.</p> <p>Wave 1 of data collection produced a sample of 1720 5th grade students.</p> <p>48% male (Mean age – 11 years)</p> <p>52% female (Mean age – 10.11 years)</p> <p>Wave 2: 982 participants from the initial sample were re-tested with 945 of these completing all sections of the questionnaire. This sample was 48.2% comprised of male participants</p> | n=1720 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Activity participation questionnaire. Parent Questionnaire | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Data does not enable the examination of why the participation rates declined across the two years of early adolescence. Data was merely descriptive – no established psychometric measures were used. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participants participated in three extra-curricular programmes per year on average. Over the two years, there was a decrease seen in programme participation. Rates of participation in youth development programmes alone were quite low but when considered alongside participation in other programmes about 40% of youth in grade 5 and 33.33% of youth in grade 6 participated in youth development programmes. |
| [9] Kalish, Voigt, Rahimian, DiCara and Sheehan (2010) | <p>35 CUP graduates – 16 male and 19 female. This sub-sample had an age range of 18 to 27 years with a mean of 19.5 years.</p> <p>Control: 25 CUP drop-outs – 18 male and 17 female. This sub-sample had an age range of 18-31 years with a mean age of 24 years.</p> <p>Both groups were primarily African American and from low income families.</p> | n=60 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with open-ended interviews were transcribed and then coded. These transcripts were also analysed by two independent assessors. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> There was an age difference between those who dropped out and those who graduated – over years aspects of the programme changed e.g. a | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Even participants who dropped out of the programme acknowledged universal benefits in that it encourage education, kept them out of trouble, provided them with a safe place to go, exposed them to new things, gave them an opportunity to help others and made them better people. 52% of the drop-outs had completed college or were planning to go to college. This was significantly higher than the neighbourhood average. |

Findings from previous empirical studies examining the outcomes of Positive Youth Development Programmes

| Study Number and Authors | Authors and Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Finding |
|-------------------------------|---|-------------|---|--|---|
| | | | | financial assistance programme was introduced. 2. Small sample size. 3. Self-selected population that was available for interview – may be over-representative of people with positive experience of the programme. 4. Open-ended questionnaire meant that information provided was different among various participants and hard to categorise into uniform categories, 5. No standardised measure. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85% of the graduates went onto further education. • 60% of the drop-outs had children compared with 14% of those who remained. • 20% of the drop-outs left the programme due to financial limitations. • 33.33% of the drop-outs left because they became involved with gangs, selling drugs or were incarcerated. The reasons given for these behaviours were underlined by a financial impetus. • Most of the graduated stated that they stayed on due to the influence of their family. |
| [10] Lerner and Lerner (2011) | The study employed 7 waves of 4H longitudinal study in a longitudinal sequential format with data recorded from participants in grades 5-11. Wave 1 started with 1719 fifth grade students and their parents. By wave 7, the data of more than 7000 participants had been accumulated and geographic spread was more extensive. In total 1137 students were studied longitudinally over 7 waves of the study. | n=1137 | All measures were adapted from previously established measures or based on programme aims: 1. Student questionnaire. 2. Parent questionnaires. 3. School and civic data. | 1. The programme was not stable across this time period. 2. The programme was not delivered in a universal fashion – some students received different programs than others. 3. Despite the variations in | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Positive Youth Development benefits continued to consistently develop throughout adolescence. • More than 93% of the sample reported no or very low levels of risk behaviours. • Trajectories for depression were more complex and diverse. • Participants were 3.3 times as likely as youths in other OST programmes to have higher scores for contribution. • Participants had 1.6 times higher scores for Positive Youth Development. • 4H participants have higher levels of developmental assets that are found to be most important in promoting Positive Youth Development. |

Findings from previous empirical studies examining the outcomes of Positive Youth Development Programmes

| Study Number and Authors | Authors and Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Finding |
|-------------------------------|--|-------------|---|--|---|
| | | | | <p>programme and geography, the programme was evaluated in a universal manner, where differences between groups were not taken into account.</p> <p>4. Measures were developed solely for the purpose of evaluating the programme, and, therefore, may be limited in both scope and psychometric properties.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4H participants were more likely to have healthy habits. • Programme participants had significantly lower scores on measures of delinquency. • 4H participants were 1.5 times more likely to report high academic competency and 1.7 times as likely to report high engagement at school. • |
| [11] O'Connor and Jose (2012) | <p>The sample, who was tested annually over a three year period, was 48% male. The age range in the first year was 10 to 15 years with a mean age of 12.2 years.</p> <p>The sample with nationally representative with 919 of the participants reporting themselves to be New Zealand European, 172 Maori and 278 as being of dual heritage.</p> | n=1774 | 1. 370-Item survey completed annually. This survey was a composite of questions from a variety of different measures. | <p>1. Effect sizes were very small.</p> <p>2. Time spent by participants in community activity was less than in school or unstructured out of school activities.</p> <p>3. The study was not a randomised control trial meaning that there were related limitations in the design.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth who participated in community based activities experienced more positive outcomes in adolescent years. • No gender moderation was found. • Older participants gained more personal satisfaction. • For younger participants, the socially supportive aspects are more salient and significant. • Higher scores for social support and community connection were found for Maori youth. • Sports activities were most beneficial for European youth while non-sports activities were most beneficial for the Maori. • European youth had higher well-being scores. |
| [12] Sun and Shek (2012) | 7151 Chinese grade 8 students from 44 schools in Hong Kong. 3707 participants in the sample were boys and 3014 were girls. The remaining participants | n=7151 | <p>1. The Chinese Positive Youth Development Scale (Shek <i>et al.</i>, 2008).</p> <p>2. Life Satisfaction Scale</p> | 1. The sample was geographically limited. Therefore, generalisation of | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replicated the findings of Sun and Shek (2010). • All measures used were validated for the sample. • Positive Youth Development predicts life satisfaction and reduced problem behaviour. These relationships were bi- |

Findings from previous empirical studies examining the outcomes of Positive Youth Development Programmes

| Study Number and Authors | Authors and Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Finding |
|--------------------------|--|-------------|--|---|-------------------------------|
| | <p>failed to report their sex. 11.2 % of the sample were aged 12 years, 59.6% were aged 13 years and 17.2 % were aged 14 years.</p> | | <p>(Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin, 1985). 3. Assessment of Problem Behaviours Scales (Shek, 2004).</p> | <p>results would be unwise. 2. Findings were based on one wave on longitudinal data and, therefore, no causal inferences can be made. 3. Measures were self-report in nature and due to cultural bias; data may be open to social desirability and self-serving bias.</p> | <p>directional in nature.</p> |

4.05.03 Conclusions from findings from empirical review of identified studies

It is apparent from the empirical review that Positive Youth Development programmes generally produce positive outcomes for participants, irrespective of their gender, age, or social or economic background. Earlier Positive Youth Development programmes tended to focus on prevention or reducing problematic behaviours, and the positive effects from these programmes tended to diminish over time. The newer programmes, those that focussed on building participants' individual strengths and developmental assets, have been reported to have longer-lasting positive effects, i.e., the positive gains that were made through participation were sustained for longer, and often into early adulthood, predicting positive adult well-being.

A figure summarising the positive effects and outcomes from the findings of the empirical review of literature on Positive Youth Development programmes is shown in Figure 4.1.



Figure 4.1 Summary figure of the positive effects and outcomes from the findings of the empirical review of literature on Positive Youth Development programmes

The figure highlights the variety of positive effects derived from participation in Positive Youth Development programmes, including effects on behaviours, on interpersonal relationships with peers and others, on academic achievement and skills building, and on predictions for future well-being.

However, these findings need to be considered in balance with the significant limitations that are associated with these types of studies. The various limitations associated with each individual study amount to an over-arching significant concern about methodology within the evaluation of positive youth development programmes. A minority of studies used standardised, established measures, and often, even when these measures were used, they were modified and abbreviated, meaning that the psychometric properties are compromised. Moreover, there was a dependency on self-report from the programme participants when greater insight may be gained from using a mixed methods approach, especially as many studies report concerns with social desirability bias among participants. Moreover, there was dearth of control procedures put in place further attenuating issues with small sample sizes and limited diversity. Furthermore, the evaluative procedures were often universal, undermining differences within the sample and programme implementation. Moreover, some studies displayed high attrition with a bias towards participants gaining positively from the programme remaining until latter data collection points. Data collection was also in a limited time frame, normally within the first year of programme implementation meaning that the long-term benefits of the programmes are hard to determine.

A figure summarising the limitations of findings from the empirical review of literature on Positive Youth Development programmes is shown in Figure 4.2.

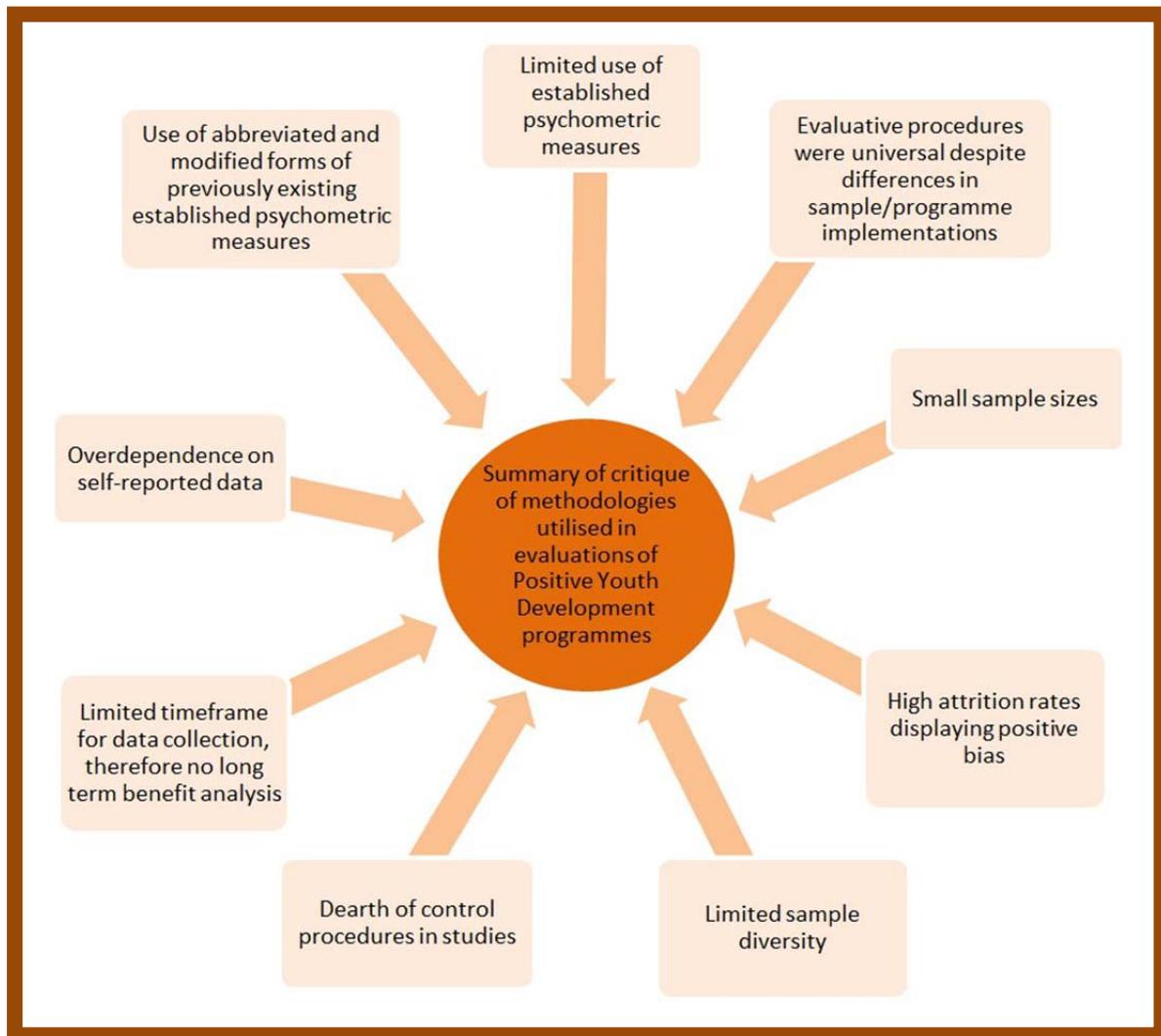


Figure 4.2 Summary figure of the critique of methodologies utilised in evaluations of Positive Youth Development programmes

4.06 Current rationale for Positive Youth Development programmes

Alperstein and Raman (2003) stated that risk factors can trigger a psychological disorder or aggravate an already existing disorder. The way to minimise risk factors is to increase and develop protective factors. Increasing the number of protective factors for young people provides them with a greater level of protection from risk factors.

Scales et al. (2000) believed that the positive experiences in youth development programmes could help to negate risky behaviour and consequent problems, and increase the young person's levels of resilience. The Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care (2000) defined resilience as the interplay between risk and protective factors for the child, the family and the community.

Dryfoos (1994) questioned whether society was assisting young people sufficiently to develop and improve their problem-solving skills and thereby to enhance their self-esteem and self-efficacy levels. He stated that if society aimed for these goals, mental health problems could be reduced and anti-social behaviour in young people could be minimised.

Trickett, Barone and Buchanan (1996) highlighted the importance of primary prevention. Their work emphasised building human resources and developing individuals' strengths, rather than needing to intercede at a tertiary level when problems were firmly entrenched.

Lerner (2004) argued that the early adolescent period was a particularly important time for young people to participate in youth development programmes, as the skills and experiences acquired in early adolescent years could help to prepare and buffer the adolescent for challenges in later years.

Albee (1996), Cowen (1994), (1998), Durlak (1997) and Elias (1995) advocated that programmes that promoted wellness and built character strengths in young people would pay great dividends, not only preventing specific disorders in the short term, but building moral, healthy, and happy people in the long term.

The importance of offering a selection of programmes to meet the differing needs of young people was noted by Brooks and Gunn (2003). They believed that the availability of a range of programmes was necessary to meet the differing needs of young people, affording them the opportunity to commit to one of their choosing. Seligman (2002) also stated that a monolithic approach to Positive Youth Development must be avoided.

Bandura (1995), Hawkins and Weis (1985) and Ladd and Mize (1983) proposed that Positive Youth Development programmes should use a variety of methods to enable young people to learn to manage their emotions, understand the perspective of others, formulate and work towards personal goals, make decisions, develop enhanced respect for self and others, and develop the ability to solve problems and manage conflicts successfully.

A collaborative approach to help American children and families was advocated by Weissberg, Kumpfer and Seligman (2003). They pointed out that children and adolescents achieved more when the adults in their lives worked in collaboration. They called for schools, healthcare workers and policymakers to work together in a united way to enhance the well-being of young people by developing strengths-based programmes that promoted the development of skills and built social and emotional competencies. Lerner (2004) highlighted the potential for systemic change, both for the individual and for society, when agencies worked together to advance the well-being of a population.

4.07 Features of Positive Youth Development programmes

4.07.01 Structural features of Positive Youth Development programmes

Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003a) suggested that any Positive Youth Development programme must have three key structural components:

- (a) Programme goals that young people could understand and endorse and could aspire to reach. The goals must promote and nurture positive development in all participants and acknowledge the need to set supportive and challenging goals for all participants.
- (b) A programme atmosphere characterised by hope, and nourished by the staff and members of the programme in the belief that young people are resources and valuable members of society. Ideally the programme atmosphere should resemble that of a caring and supportive family.
- (c) Programme activities that provide both formal and informal opportunities to develop and expand participants' interests and talents. The programme activities should also offer participants opportunities to practice their newly acquired skills in a safe and supportive environment while gaining confidence and a sense of achievement.

Lerner (2004) talked about three further essential “ingredients”, the “Big Three” constituents necessary in youth development programmes to enhance well-being in young people:

1. Opportunity for commitment – the young person must be positively sustained for a prolonged period of time – ideally a year, according to Rhodes (2002);
2. Adult-youth relationship;
3. Skill-building activities and opportunities to practice these skills.

4.07.02 Operational features of Positive Youth Development programmes

Two main operational models have emerged from evidence-based research in the past decade which list the operational features of Positive Youth Development programmes. The U.S. National Research Council (2002) identified eight processes, or “active ingredients”, and Catalano et al. (2002) listed 15 “operational objectives” or “essential elements”.

4.07.02.01 The “Active Ingredients” model

The U.S. National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine’s Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth (2002) stated that personal and social assets that contributed to adolescent well-being and the transition into successful adulthood could be organised into four general categories: physical and mental health, cognitive development, psychological and emotional development, and social development. From a list of personal and pro-social assets, they drew up a provisional list of eight features that described the processes or “active ingredients” in youth programmes that facilitated Positive Youth Development (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 “Active Ingredients” - Operational Features of Positive Youth Development Programmes

| “Active Ingredients” - Operational Features of Positive Youth Development Programmes | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Physical and psychological safety - Safe and health-promoting facilities and practices that increase safe peer group interaction and decrease unsafe or confrontational peer interactions. |
| 2 | Appropriate structure - Limit setting, clear and consistent rules and expectations, firm-enough control, continuity and predictability, clear boundaries, and age appropriate monitoring. |
| 3 | Supportive relationships - Warmth, closeness, connectedness, good communication, caring, support, guidance, secure attachment, and responsiveness. |
| 4 | Opportunities to belong - Opportunities for meaningful inclusion, regardless of one’s gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disabilities; social inclusion, social engagement, and integration; opportunities for socio cultural identity formation; and support for cultural and bicultural competence. |
| 5 | Positive social norms - Rules of behaviour, expectations, injunctions, ways of doing things, values and morals, and obligations for service. |
| 6 | Support for enhanced efficacy - Youth-based, empowerment practices that support autonomy, making a real difference in one’s community, and being taken seriously; practices that include enabling, responsibility granting, and meaningful challenge; and practices that focus on improvement rather than on relative current performance levels. |
| 7 | Opportunities for skill building - Opportunities to learn physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, and social skills; exposure to intentional learning experiences; opportunities to learn cultural literacies, media literacy, communication skills, and good habits of mind; preparation for adult employment; and opportunities to develop social and cultural capital. |
| 8 | Integration of family, school, and community efforts - Concordance, coordination, and synergy among family, school, and community. |

4.07.02.02 The Fifteen Objectives model

The second operational definition of Positive Youth Development programmes, the Fifteen Objectives Model (Table 4.5), was developed by Catalano et al. (2002) through literature reviews and consensus meetings of leading scientists. His team carried out a meta-analysis of Positive Youth Development programmes across the U.S. which instilled in young people such positive attributes as competence, self-efficacy, resilience, confidence, moral competence, social connectedness, spirituality and a belief in the future. All twenty-five programmes had three common objectives: competence, self-efficacy and pro-social norms. Several other objectives were addressed in three-quarters of the programmes: opportunities for pro-social involvement, recognition for positive behaviour, and bonding. The objectives of positive identity, self-determination, belief in the future, resilience and spirituality were addressed in half of the programmes evaluated. Their research also found that the programmes they deemed effective provided manuals or curriculum instruction guidelines to those delivering programmes, which ensured the fidelity and consistency of the programmes and their delivery.

Table 4.5 Fifteen Objectives of Positive Youth Development Programmes

| Fifteen Objectives of Positive Youth Development Programmes | |
|--|--|
| 1 | Promote bonding – Bonding was defined as a youth's social attachment and commitment to others, including family, peers, school, community, and the culture(s). |
| 2 | Foster resilience – Resilience is an individual's capacity for adapting to change and to stressful events in healthy and flexible ways |
| 3 | Promote social competences – a range of interpersonal skills that help young people to integrate thinking, feelings and actions |
| 4 | Promotes emotional competence – identify and respond in a mature way to feelings and emotional reactions in oneself and others |
| 5 | Promotes cognitive competence – ability to develop and apply self-talk |
| 6 | Promotes behavioural competence – to understand verbal and non-verbal communication |
| 7 | Promotes moral competence – assesses and responds to the ethical and social just dimensions of a situation |
| 8 | Foster self-determination – Self-determination is the ability to think for oneself and to take action consistent with that thought. |
| 9 | Foster spirituality – with the development of a youth's moral reasoning, moral commitment, or belief in the moral order |
| 10 | Foster self-efficacy – defined as youth's perception that one can achieve desired goals through one's own action. |
| 11 | Foster clear and positive identity – Clear and positive identity is the internal organization of a coherent sense of self |
| 12 | Foster belief in the future –is the internalization of hope and optimism about possible outcomes |
| 13 | Provide recognition for positive behaviour – This construct was defined as reinforcement or acknowledgement for positive behaviour |
| 14 | Provide opportunities for pro-social involvement |
| 15 | Foster pro-social norms – defined as healthy standards and clear beliefs |

4.07.03 Outcome goals of Positive Youth Development programmes

4.07.03.01 The “Five Cs” Outcome Model

Five key “latent constructs”, or outcomes, of successful Positive Youth Development programmes were introduced by Little (1993) and expanded on by Eccles and Gootman (2002), Lerner (2004) and Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003b). These five outcome components of youth programmes fundamental to successful Positive Youth Development became collectively known as the “Five Cs” (see Table 4.6). Pitman offered the model of the “Five Cs” as a framework for understanding Positive Youth Development outcomes.

Table 4.6 Five Key “Latent Constructs” of Successful Positive Youth Development Programmes

| Five Key “Latent Constructs” of Successful Positive Youth Development Programmes | |
|---|--|
| Competence | A positive view of one’s actions in specific areas (school, family, community). Such competence can be social, academic, cognitive, and vocational. Social competence pertains to interpersonal skills (e.g., conflict resolution). Cognitive competence pertains to cognitive abilities (e.g., decision making). School grades, attendance, and test scores are part of academic competence. Vocational competence involves work habits and career choice explorations. |
| Confidence | A positive internal sense of overall self-worth and self-efficacy; one’s global self-regard. |
| Connection | Positive bonds with people and institutions that are reflected in bi-directional exchanges between the individual and peers, family, school, and community in which both parties contribute to the relationship |
| Character | Respect for societal and cultural rules, possession of standards for correct behaviours, a sense of right and wrong (morality), and integrity |
| Caring and compassion | A sense of sympathy and empathy for others |

These “Five Cs”, according to Lerner (2004) and Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003), were consistent with the positive outcomes of youth development programmes. They further suggested that being in possession of the “Five Cs” was consistent with “thriving youth”. When a young person possessed the “Five Cs” over a period of time, they would be en route towards what Csikszentmihalyi and Rathuade (1998) and Csikszentmihalyi (2006) termed “idealized adulthood”, where an individual was an active agent in his or her development, and in turn actively contributed to their family, community and society.

When the “Five Cs” were present in a young person, according to Lerner (2005), there emerged a sixth “C”, that of Contribution: that is, a young person enacted behaviours indicative of the “Five Cs” by contributing positively to self, family, community and ultimately, society. Such contributions were envisioned as having a philosophical component, i.e., the young person possessed behaviours consistent with a sense of moral and civic duty (Lerner, Dowling et al. 2003).

Theorists of Positive Youth Development over the past ten years, in particular Damon (2004) and Lerner (2005) have stated that the Five Cs (competence, confidence, connection, character and caring) emerged in young people when their individual goals were achieved within a framework of supporting adults in families, schools and communities.

4.07.03.02 Values in Action (VIA) – Inventory of Virtues and Strengths (VIA-IS)

Peterson and Seligman (2004) were commissioned to develop a classification system of human strengths in order to formulate responses to two questions: How could one define the concepts of “strength” and “highest potential”? And secondly, how could one tell if a Positive Youth Development programme had succeeded in meeting its goals? They identified six overarching virtues, Wisdom and Knowledge, Courage, Humanity, Justice, Temperance and Transcendence. These positive traits or qualities in an individual were deemed to be morally good, and thus admirable. The six virtues contained twenty-four character strengths known as “psychological ingredients” that defined the virtues. These include such attributes from perspective, perseverance (not giving up), kindness, teamwork, self-regulation and hope. These character strengths are all similar in that they involve the gaining, expansion and use of knowledge, but they are also all distinct. Character strengths are regarded as dimensional traits, in that they exist in different degrees in different individuals.

The Values in Action (VIA) Inventory of Virtues and Strengths (VIA-IS – see Table 4.7) developed by Peterson and Seligman (2004) has become a common framework for practitioners working in positive psychology. Snyder and Lopez (2007) called the VIA-IS the antithesis of the Diagnostic Manual of Mental Health and Disorders (DSM).

Until this century, psychologists did not focus on long-term protective factors against human suffering and mental illness. Peterson and Seligman (2004) advocated in their Values in Action (VIA) Inventory that, through the promotion and development of human virtues and strengths, an individual would amass protective factors that would act as buffers against psychological difficulties and enhance well-being.

Table 4.7 The Values in Action (VIA) Inventory of Virtues and Strengths

| The Values in Action (VIA) Inventory of Virtues and Strengths | |
|--|---|
| Wisdom and Knowledge – Cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge | |
| | Creativity [originality, ingenuity]: Thinking of novel and productive ways to conceptualize and do things; includes artistic achievement but is not limited to it |
| | Curiosity [interest, novelty-seeking, openness to experience]: Taking an interest in ongoing experience for its own sake; finding subjects and topics fascinating; exploring and discovering |
| | Judgment [critical thinking]: Thinking things through and examining them from all sides; not jumping to conclusions; being able to change one's mind in light of evidence; weighing all evidence fairly |
| | Love of Learning: Mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge, whether on one's own or formally; obviously related to the strength of curiosity but goes beyond it to describe the tendency to add systematically to what one knows |
| | Perspective [wisdom]: Being able to provide wise counsel to others; having ways of looking at the world that make sense to oneself and to other people |
| Courage – Emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal | |
| | Bravery [valour]: Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain; speaking up for what is right even if there is opposition; acting on convictions even if unpopular; includes physical bravery but is not limited to it |
| | Perseverance [persistence, industriousness]: Finishing what one starts; persisting in a course of action in spite of obstacles; “getting it out the door”; taking pleasure in completing tasks |
| | Honesty [authenticity, integrity]: Speaking the truth but more broadly presenting oneself in a genuine way and acting in a sincere way; being without pretence; taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions |
| | Zest [vitality, enthusiasm, vigour, energy]: Approaching life with excitement and energy; not doing things halfway or half-heartedly; living life as an adventure; feeling alive and activated. |
| Humanity - Interpersonal strengths that involve tending and befriending others | |
| | Love: Valuing close relations with others, in particular those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated; being close to people |
| | Kindness [generosity, nurturance, care, compassion, altruistic love, "niceness"]: Doing favours and good deeds for others; helping them; taking care of them |
| | Social Intelligence [emotional intelligence, personal intelligence]: Being aware of the motives and feelings of other people and oneself; knowing what to do to fit into different social situations; knowing what makes other people tick |
| Justice - Civic strengths that underlie healthy community life | |
| | Teamwork [citizenship, social responsibility, loyalty]: Working well as a member of a group or team; being loyal to the group; doing one's share |
| | Fairness: Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice; not letting personal feelings bias decisions about others; giving everyone a fair chance. |
| | Leadership: Encouraging a group of which one is a member to get things done, and at the same time maintaining good relations within the group; organizing group activities and seeing that they happen. |
| Temperance – Strengths that protect against excess | |
| | Forgiveness: Forgiving those who have done wrong; accepting the shortcomings of others; giving people a second chance; not being vengeful |
| | Humility: Letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves; not regarding oneself as more special than one is |
| | Prudence: Being careful about one's choices; not taking undue risks; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted |
| | Self-Regulation [self-control]: Regulating what one feels and does; being disciplined; controlling one's appetites and emotions |

| Transcendence - Strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning | |
|--|--|
| | Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence [awe, wonder, elevation]: Noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in various domains of life, from nature to art to mathematics to science to everyday experience |
| | Gratitude: Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen; taking time to express thanks |
| | Hope [optimism, future-mindedness, future orientation]: Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it; believing that a good future is something that can be brought about |
| | Humour [playfulness]: Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people; seeing the light side; making (not necessarily telling) jokes |
| | Spirituality [faith, purpose]: Having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of the universe; knowing where one fits within the larger scheme; having beliefs about the meaning of life that shape conduct and provide comfort. |

4.08 A critique of Positive Youth Development programmes

Recent years have seen calls for the considered and balanced evaluation of youth development programmes (see Pittman & Fleming, 1991; National Research Council Institute of Medicine, 2002). Such calls have led to the identification of inherent problems in the current structure of positive youth development programmes (Catalano et al., 2004). These will be discussed in the critique that follows.

4.08.01 Efficacy-based funding

One of the main concerns with Positive Youth Development Programmes is that in the United States, where the majority of these programmes originate (see Table 4.3), government funding is only allocated to those programmes which demonstrated empirical evidence of efficacy. Due to this system of government centralisation funding, the true objective efficacy of these programmes could be compromised as organisations strive to make their programmes appear to be successful. Smith (2003) argues that these organisations, for funding purposes, may potentially manipulate figure and outcome data in order that they do present as ‘failing’ in terms of developmental outcomes. One main means of achieving this, is by selectively choosing the participants in their programmes as those most at-risk will be more likely to show significant gains of higher magnitude, therefore distorting the ‘universal’ element of the programmes. This has a knock-on effect of drawing away from the ideological aims of these revised programmes and, in contrast to revised aims of these programmes to steer away from social stigmatisation, they build on the social pathological model.

Catalano and colleagues (2004) also note that organisations are failing to provide follow-up data at programme termination, posing a further limitation to the identification of the long-

term efficacy of these programmes. Furthermore, the pressure of efficacy-based funding also means that organisations will become overly-focused on activities with proven outcomes rather than more reciprocal long-term processes such as building relationships, enhancing empathic responses and building altruistic social behaviours. All in all, the current funding practice of the American government results in a reductive view of positive youth development programmes where organisations: “have sold ‘the learning experience’ and the particular qualities of their institution in order to get the money they need to survive. Complex processes have been reduced to easily identified packages; packages to sound bites; and young people and their parents to become consumers” (p.49, Smith, 2003). Therefore, not only have the renewed focus of these organisations been compromised, but the true value of these programmes is diluted and difficult to determine.

4.08.02 Content versus relational focuses

Jeffs and Smiths (2002) argue that positive youth development programmes have become so overly focused on the aims grounding their organisations and related targets that they are ignoring the bases of all youth work such as building relationships and allowing reciprocal processes to develop. Therefore, these programmes become a shallow resemblance of what is intended with the buy-in of the young people and their families conceded to political agendas. Doyle (1999) argues that positive youth development programmes are increasingly becoming divisible into those who view youth work as a ‘profession’ and those who see it a ‘calling’. The aim of positive youth developmental programmes is to put the development of young people at the fore, with the help and support of relationships and programmes on an equal basis. It is unclear how the focus on one aspect will impact on the core ethos.

4.08.03 Summary of critique of Positive Youth Development

The problems inherent to positive youth development programmes, which are mainly related to evaluative processes, are such that Catalano and colleagues (2004) have argued that a universal standardised set of outcome measures is needed to identify if the outcomes attributed to these programmes are consistent and replicable. This standardisation would also be sensitive to the process leading to positive youth development, identifying a shared framework. Moreover, they argue that evaluations must contain sufficient narrative information and quantitative data to enable independent assessment of the programme. In line with these aims, this research provides a large body of both quantitative and qualitative

analyses of the efficacy of the youth programme under review, namely Gaisce-the President's award. Furthermore, the independent nature of the research and the universal ideology of the programme address many of the critiques of positive youth development programmes.

4.09 Conclusion

This chapter has given a comprehensive overview of the development and progression of Positive Youth Development programmes. Positive Youth Development programmes advocate that those working with young people must do more than simply reduce risk; they must also focus on building developmental assets and capabilities. Positive Youth Development programmes are intended to provide young people with access to opportunities and relationships which develop their interests, skills and abilities, and assist them to realise their potential. In general, Positive Youth Development programmes are universal, focus on positive outcomes, and encourage young people to be active participants. Positive Youth Development programmes are considered positive institutions which provide vital opportunities for the development of character strengths and positive relationships within supportive environments; combined, these components have the potential to act as buffers to prevent psychological disorders.

An in-depth review of Positive Youth Development studies was conducted, the key findings of which indicate that active participation in Positive Youth Development programmes generally produces positive outcomes for participants. In particular, the reviewed programmes found gains in interpersonal relationships, behaviours and attributes, achievements and future affects. However, there were serious concerns raised, both in the review and in a later critique, regarding the methodological procedures of these studies, raising doubts about the nature and generalisability of findings.

The Positive Youth Development movement maintains that young people, with the help of supportive peers and adults, through engaging in appropriate developmental activities, can build their individual strengths and attributes, whilst increasing their personal assets. The evidence indicates that over time, these acquired strengths will buffer the adolescent and help him or her to conquer difficulties and challenges, and thus to thrive.

It is important for society to develop and implement Positive Youth Development programmes, and to encourage young people to avail of the opportunities thus provided to

enhance their psychological attributes and their personal strengths through the development of their skills, and their experience of positive relationships.

From the definition and models of Positive Youth Development identified in this chapter, it would appear that Gaisce–The President’s Award programme meets the criteria for inclusion as a Positive Youth Development programme. The following chapter will explore the origins and development of Gaisce–The President’s Award programme, the focus of this research.

Chapter 5 Gaisce—The President’s Award

5.07 Gaisce—The President’s Award

This chapter gives a detailed overview of Gaisce—The President’s Award, from its origins based on the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme to its current position. It further explores how the Gaisce—The President’s Award programme fits the framework of a Positive Youth Development programme.

5.08 The Duke of Edinburgh Award Programme

Kurt Hahn (1886-1974) was the founder of what has become known as the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. He was central to the development of experiential education, which describes the active learning process that happens between student and teacher as a result of interacting with a learning environment, rather than the more traditional and more passive classroom setting. Hahn, in addition to founding the Duke of Edinburgh Award, also established the Atlantic College, the first United World College, Gordonstoun School, Outward Bound, and Salem College. In many ways, Hahn’s vision of enhancing youth development was ahead of its time, and was a forerunner to what is now known as the Positive Youth Development movement.

Hahn was born in 1886 in Berlin to Jewish parents. He studied in Oxford, Berlin, Heidelberg, Freiburg and Göttingen. During his time as headmaster of Schule Schloss Salem, a private boarding school, Hahn spoke out publicly against Adolf Hitler’s Nazi regime, and was imprisoned in 1933 as a result. After an appeal by the British Prime Minister, Hahn was released from prison and relocated in Britain.

In 1934 Hahn opened his first school in the United Kingdom with two pupils at Gordonstoun School in Scotland. Prince Philip of Greece (later His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh) enrolled later that same year. The school grew in numbers as word travelled of its innovative teaching philosophy, encapsulated in its motto: “There is more in you than you think.”

This motto was the leitmotiv of his educational philosophy: *that each of us has more courage, more strength and more compassion than we realise*. Hahn devoted his life to helping people find their inner strength; he believed that young people needed encouragement and support to enable them to reach and fulfil their true potential.

Hahn's ideas about experiential education were influenced by 19th Century American philosopher and psychologist William James. James believed that one of the classic political problems of modern society was maintaining social unity and civic virtue in the absence of war. He implored statesmen and educators to find an honourable equivalent to war that would inspire and mobilise young people.

Hahn believed that a programme that actively encouraged young people to seek outdoor adventure, to acquire skills, and to gain in physical fitness, would help them to develop as human beings and enhance their sense of civic virtue. He believed that adolescents possessed an innate decency and strong moral fibre. However, these inner virtues were vulnerable to corruption by exposure to what he called the six “declines of modern youth”, which he identified as:

- Decline in fitness due to modern transportation methods;
- Decline in initiative as a result of what he called “spectatoritis”;
- Decline in skill and care due to the decrease in craftsmanship;
- Decline of memory and imagination due to the over-stimulation of modern society;
- Decline in self-discipline due to easy access to drugs;
- Decline of compassion, due to the speed of modern life.

Hahn introduced a separate programme at Gordonstoun, in conjunction with the traditional academic curriculum, which aimed to develop skills, physical ability, initiative, self-belief, and a sense of responsibility. Hahn believed that these skills and strengths would build each adolescent’s character and protect them from their inevitable later exposure to corruption. Students were required to propose, and agree with a teacher, their individual goals to be achieved in each component, in an agreed period of time. Those who reached their proposed goals in all four components were awarded the Moray Badge. The programme components were:

- Fitness Training (e.g., to aim for and reach a set of goals in physical fitness, such as running, swimming and jumping, etc., by training, discipline and determination);
- Expeditions (a long, challenging endurance task in the outdoors);
- Projects (developing one’s crafts and manual skills); and
- Rescue Service (fire fighting, first aid, lifesaving).

Eventually, the County Badge replaced the Moray Badge, and the programme spread across Britain, with guidelines for components that allowed for adaptation by each county in which it was offered. In time, the Rescue Service component was replaced by the concept of Community Service, which became a trademark of the award, of Hahn's philosophy, and ultimately, of his life's work.

In 1954, Hahn convinced his former pupil, the Duke of Edinburgh, to become patron of a similar scheme to the County Badge programme. In February 1956, the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme was established. The scheme borrowed its principles from the Moray Badge and the County Badge, and was initially only for boys aged between 15 and 18 years. The Duke of Edinburgh programme was seen as an alternative to traditional youth programmes, such as Scouting, as it allowed for greater initiative from its participants. The Duke of Edinburgh Award programme was immediately successful: within the first twelve months, 7,000 adolescent boys had enrolled. In 1957, the programme was extended to girls aged 14 to 20 years, with slightly different criteria. In 1965, the Awards for boys and girls were amalgamated into a single programme for young people aged 14 to 21 years, and the upper age limit was extended to 25 years in 1980.

The programme has three levels that lead to a Bronze, Silver or Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award (see Table 5.1). The main differences between the three awards are the minimum duration of each, their difficulty and minimum starting age.

Table 5.1 Duke of Edinburgh Award Programme structure

| Duke of Edinburgh Award Programme Structure | | | |
|--|---------------------|-----------------|--|
| Award | Starting Age | Duration | Components |
| Bronze | 14+ | 3 months | 1. Physical 2. Expedition 3. Volunteering 4. Skills |
| Silver | 15+ | 6 months | |
| Gold | 16+ | 12 months | |
| Additional Component (Gold) | | | |

5.09 The International Award Association (IAA)

The Duke of Edinburgh Award and Gaisce–The President's Award programmes both currently operate under the auspices of, and are fully accredited by, the International Award Association (also known as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award International Association or IAA).

The International Award Association was founded in 1988 to co-ordinate the development and expansion of the Duke of Edinburgh Award worldwide. The IAA seeks to maintain the principles and standards of the Award Programme and develop the Award internationally. All operating authorities, whether at local or national level, are required to adopt and adhere to the IAA's International Constitution. While operating authorities may adopt different titles for their programmes, the basic structure and components in all programmes remain as stipulated by the IAA. Ireland has adopted the name Gaisce–The President's Award, but its structure and components were the same as those of the Duke of Edinburgh Award, and are now those of the IAA. Today approximately 850,000 young people participate in similar awards in over 130 countries across the world, all under the auspices of the IAA.

The programmes of the Duke of Edinburgh Award and Gaisce–The President's Award follow the philosophy of the IAA. The IAA Handbook lists four components which provide a framework to encourage physical activity, mental challenge, individual perseverance, teamwork and interaction with other people. The components are (1) Service, (2) Skills, (3) Physical and Recreation, and (4) Adventurous Journey. In Gaisce–The President's Awards, these are known as (1) Community Involvement, (2) Personal Skill, (3) Physical Recreation, and (4) Adventure Journey.

According to the IAA Handbook, participants are required to challenge themselves in order to enhance their own personal growth and development, to appreciate the needs of other people and strive to help them, and to reflect on the role they can play in helping their community. The Handbook suggests that participation in the Award programme components can contribute to the positive development of adolescents, helping them to become more altruistic and caring, while enhancing their own individual strengths.

According to the IAA Handbook, young people should develop a number of overall “benefits”, or strengths, from participating in the Award programme (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 Benefits of Participation in IAA Award Programmes

| Benefits of Participation in IAA Award Programmes |
|--|
| Self-belief and self-confidence |
| A positive and realistic self-image – participants will know and accept their own strengths and weakness, and be more aware of their own potential |
| An independent and self-motivating attitude |
| A sense of responsibility to others |
| A connection to the broader society |
| New or improved interests, skills and abilities |
| A willingness to try new things |
| New friendships and relationships with their peers and adults |
| The ability to make a plan and then make their plan happen |
| Lifelong interests |
| Team skills |
| Life skills – negotiation, research, communication, problem solving, presentation skills |

Additionally, the IAA Handbook goes on to list distinct benefits to be accrued from participation in each of the four components. For example, the Service component helps to give a greater understanding of others’ needs, increases empathy, and enhances such characteristics as trust, patience and tolerance. The Adventurous Journey component promotes teamwork, improves leadership skills, and develops planning and organisational abilities. The Skills component helps to increase self-confidence, motivation, goal-setting and time management. Physical recreation helps to improve fitness and develops perseverance, self-discipline and self-motivation. The two benefits that the IAA Handbook lists as spanning across all components are the development of social skills through on-going interaction with others, and a sense of enjoyment. For a more detailed list of benefits, see Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Sections of the International Award Programme (International Award Association Handbook)

| SECTION | 1. Service | 2. Adventurous Journey | 3. Skills | 4. Physical Recreation |
|-----------------|---|--|---|--|
| Aim | To learn how to give useful service to others. | To encourage a spirit of adventure and discovery whilst undertaking a journey in a group. | To encourage the development of personal interests and practical skills. | To encourage participation in physical recreation and improvement of performance. |
| Ethos | This Section seeks to give participants a sense of responsibility to each other and the community, and to help them become better citizens. Participants should undertake an activity in which they give service to others, and should learn and benefit from undertaking this service. The focus of the activity is to provide voluntary service to help create a caring and compassionate community, as well as developing participants' own skills. | This Section seeks to provide participants with a unique, challenging and memorable experience. The journey, with an agreed purpose, should be undertaken in a small team in an unfamiliar environment, requiring determination, physical effort, perseverance and cooperation to complete. The key elements of this Section are teamwork in planning and execution, against the background of the real challenges posed by an unfamiliar environment. The environment chosen should be challenging but within the capabilities of the team. | This Section should stimulate new interests or improve existing ones. These interests are typically of a non-physically demanding nature and may be hobbies, vocational or job-related skills, social or individual activities, cultural activities or life skills. Participants should be encouraged to interact with people who are experienced in the activity and so can share their enthusiasm and knowledge. As in the Physical Recreation Section, participants may either take up a completely new activity or seek to improve their ability in an activity that they already do. | This Section should encourage participants to improve their personal physical performance through training and perseverance in their chosen activity. Involvement in physical recreation should be an enjoyable experience, regardless of physical ability. This Section is based on the belief that a healthy body is a good end in itself and can often help to develop a healthy mind. Physical activity is essential for a person's well-being, and by introducing young people to enjoyable physical activity they will hopefully develop long term beneficial habits. Accomplishing a physical challenge also gives a lasting sense of achievement and satisfaction. As in the Skills Section, participants may either take up a completely new activity or seek to improve their ability in an activity that they already do. |
| Benefits | The specific benefits will obviously depend on the type of service chosen. Some general benefits include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning patience, tolerance, and compassion • Overcoming ignorance, prejudice, apathy, and fear • Increasing awareness of the needs and problems of others • Exploring and improving interpersonal skills and self-development skills • Enhancing leadership qualities • Trusting and being trusted • Making a real difference to the lives of others • Accepting the responsibility of commitment to others • Meeting new people from different backgrounds • Forming a lifelong habit of community involvement • Enjoyment | The Adventurous Journey has some key benefits, including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working as part of a team • Understanding group dynamics, their own role and the role of others in a team • Enhancing leadership skills • Improving planning and organisational ability and attention to detail • Learning to make real decisions and accept real consequences • Obtaining a sense of achievement and satisfaction by overcoming challenges and obstacles • Developing self-reliance and independence • Experiencing and appreciating the outdoor environment • Gaining the appropriate knowledge and skills to journey safely in that environment • Exercising imagination and creativity by choosing their own journey • Improving their investigating, reviewing and presentational skills • Enjoyment | The specific benefits to the participant will depend on the skill chosen, but there are some benefits that are more general. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovering new abilities and developing these or improving existing talents • Increasing self-confidence by successfully setting and achieving a goal • Refining awareness of one's own potential • Developing time management and planning skills • Enhancing self-motivation • Interacting socially, by meeting new people, and interacting with adults in a meaningful way • Improving employability by learning vocational skills • Enjoyment | Taking part in any form of physical activity has many benefits, including some or all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing healthy lifestyle habits • Improving fitness • Increasing self-esteem • Interacting socially, especially in a team sport, but also through meeting people with interest in a similar individual sport • Enhancing self-discipline, perseverance and self-motivation • Experiencing a sense of achievement • Raising awareness of the variety of opportunities available in the area • Encouraging teamwork, if the activity is a team sport • Enjoyment |

5.04 Main findings from research on the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme

A surprisingly small number of studies, both published and unpublished, have been conducted into the effect on participants of the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme. For the purpose of this thesis, three of those studies were reviewed.

5.04.01 The “Impact of the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award on Young People” Study

The largest (n=1,848) and most extensive piece of research was completed in June 2009. Entitled “The Impact of the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award on Young People”, this unpublished research was undertaken by Campbell, Bell, Armstrong, Horton, Mansukhani, Matthews and Pilkington (2009) at the University of Northampton. Commissioned by the Duke of Edinburgh Award, the aim of the research was to undertake an investigation into the impact of the Award on young people. The research was a mixed method design.

5.04.01.01 Quantitative findings

1,848 young people took part in an online quantitative questionnaire, which represented approximately 6% of the 275,000 young people who participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme at any point in time. The participants comprised 64% female and 36% male. The majority of respondents, 39%, were working for their Gold award (median age 21), whilst 37% and 24% were working towards their Bronze (median age 16) and Silver awards (median age 18) respectively. The vast majority (93%) of all research participants were in full-time education. Nine per cent declared themselves with a disability, with dyslexia cited as the most common type.

The participants’ self-esteem was measured during their participation in the programme, using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. The results indicated that 32% fell within the very high level and 53% within the high level of self-esteem, 13% scored within the low self-esteem range, while the remaining 2% scored within the very low range. Statistically significant differences between self-esteem scores of males and females were found, with females having lower scores on the self-esteem questionnaire than males.

5.04.01.02 Qualitative findings

Interviews were conducted with young people who had replied to the first quantitative survey and were willing to take part in a follow-up interview. A total of 100 interviews were completed with 64 females and 36 males, who comprised nearly equal numbers of participants from the Bronze, Silver and Gold awards. A further 135 young people took part in focus groups made up of 56 females and 79 males, with 58 Bronze award participants, 48 Silver award participants and 29 Gold award participants.

The majority of the respondents reported that The Duke of Edinburgh Award programme gave them opportunities to encounter new experiences, help other people and develop new friendships. The respondents recognised only a slight positive effect in their attitudes to sport or physical activity from taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

The expedition (the adventure journey) was cited as the most memorable part of the award, and the reasons given were that it was fun and that they made friendships. Volunteering was the second most memorable aspect, as they chose to do something they were passionate about. They enjoyed learning about others and how to get along with people. Overall they believed they made a contribution to others through their volunteering.

Those working towards completing their Gold award were more positive in their perception of the achievement aspect of the award than either Bronze or Silver participants.

Responding to questions about the benefits of taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards programme, the participants rated fun and enjoyment as the most rewarding experience. This was followed in order by the opportunities for new experiences, the building of confidence, and team-building opportunities. In addition, they also highlighted friendships, learning new skills, meeting new people, and better communication skills.

5.04.02 The Curriculum for Excellence Impact Project Report (2009)

This project reviewed how the Curriculum for Excellence (CFE) in Scotland was implemented across five different learning communities through the development of the Duke of Edinburgh Award. The aim of the CFE was to provide young people with a broad coherent curriculum focussed on their individual needs and designed to develop skills for learning, life and work. The CFE placed an emphasis on achievement beyond the National Qualifications Framework.

This qualitative piece of research focussed on responses from five young people from each of the five communities (n=25). Their findings indicated that the expedition was the highlight of the Duke of Edinburgh programme. The young people also found the programme fun and different, and that it gave them an opportunity to be with their friends, to try different activities, and to set and achieve challenging goals. They concluded that the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme met the criteria as set down by the CFE.

5.04.03 A Qualitative Study of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and Young Offenders in Secure Estates (2010)

This was a PhD thesis, the overall aim of which was to examine young offenders' engagement with the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme. The researcher conducted two rounds of focus groups with males (n=64) aged between 14 and 21 years. A total of 64 young men took part in the first focus group, and 46 were re-interviewed six months later.

The main findings of this research were that the participants saw the Duke of Edinburgh programme as mainly for what they termed "posh kids", and saw their own participation as a privilege which they valued. Many of the young people interviewed had no educational qualifications, and appreciated the "hands-on" approach adopted by the programme. However, the programme was primarily valued by participants for anticipated benefits in the future by way of CVs and job opportunities. They also believed that their relationships with their fellow participants had improved, and saw themselves as more mature, which was manifested in fewer behavioural difficulties. For many, completion of the Duke of Edinburgh Award was their first formal achievement and was very much valued by their families and themselves.

5.04.04 Conclusions from findings from research on the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme

The research into the effects of participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme generally indicate that participants appreciated taking part in the programme and enjoyed completing it. They highlighted the opportunities that the Award afforded them, namely, to try new experiences, to learn new skills, to be with friends and to participate in activities. They reported enhanced interpersonal relationships, better emotional self-regulation, and greater levels of confidence. Explicitly through the volunteering component of the

programme, participants reported enhanced civic awareness and belief that they were making a contribution to the lives of others and society.

5.05 Gaisce–The President’s Award

Gaisce’s mission is to contribute to the development of all young people of Ireland between the ages of 15 and 25 years, but particularly those most in need of opportunity and inspiration, through the achievement of personal challenges. It is a non-competitive award programme which invites young people to set challenging goals for themselves. The Gaisce programme aims to contribute to the personal development of these young Irish people through individual challenges and achievement, with the aim of developing and enhancing their human strengths and personal assets.

5.05.01 Origins – the National Youth Policy Committee

In 1984, the National Youth Policy Committee, chaired Mr Justice Costello, published an influential report on youth services in Ireland. The Committee had been asked for suggestions as to how the government could assist all young people to become self-reliant, responsible and active participants in [Irish] society. The Costello Report as it became known signified a shift in thinking regarding the purpose of youth work, as it prioritised the empowerment of young people and advocated that they should become active participants in their own lives and in Irish society. The report highlighted that young Irish people needed to be able to contribute to their own development, education, family life, community and social development.

The report advocated for the formation of an independent national youth service which would provide young people with the developmental and educational experiences that could equip them to play an active part in Irish society.

In December 1985 the Government produced a policy document called in “In Partnership with Youth” which acknowledged the democratic right of all young people to participate fully in Irish society through practical and coordinated programmes, and established the need to develop a National Youth Service to cater to the needs of all young Irish people.

5.05.02 Early developments

Between 1981 and 1982, the Irish government sanctioned the formation of a national award scheme for young people aged between 15 and 25 years, to be called Gaisce–The President’s Award. Gaisce, which is based on the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award programme, was launched in October 1985 by President Hillery, the Award’s founding patron. The President’s Award Council was appointed to establish the Gaisce Award Scheme. The Award was introduced in five geographical locations (Monaghan, Galway, Kilkenny, Cork City and North Dublin), each with 60 participants, both male and female, from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. By the following year 1986, the Award was taken up in 26 counties, with 3000 participants. In 1999, the Gaisce scheme was awarded charitable status.

5.05.03 Philosophy

The primary objective of Gaisce-The President’s Award programme was to establish and administer non-competitive Awards for all young people, but particularly those most in need of opportunity and inspiration. Participants would receive the Award in recognition of personal achievement in worthwhile fields of endeavour or performance, with the object of promoting the positive self-development of those young people and the betterment of their communities.

5.05.04 Operation

Participants voluntarily choose to participate in the non-competitive programme. It is open to all young people aged between 15 and 25 years. All young people have an equal opportunity to earn the award once the basic requirements are met. The Award encourages young people to set and achieve, in consultation with a President’s Award Leader (PAL), a demanding challenge for themselves in four different component areas and to persevere in achieving this challenge.

The participant earns their award once their agreed challenges have been achieved to the best of their ability, over the designated period of time (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.4 Components of Gaisce–The President’s Award

| Components of Gaisce–The President’s Award | |
|--|---|
| 1. Community Involvement | <i>e.g. Supporting older adults within their community.</i> |
| 2. Personal Skill | <i>e.g. Learning to play the guitar, karate classes, etc.</i> |
| 3. Physical Recreation | <i>e.g. Swimming, playing hurling, basketball etc.</i> |
| 4. Adventure Journey | <i>e.g. Prepare and complete a hike of Achill island</i> |

The Award is offered at three levels; Bronze, Silver and Gold, with a longer designated timeframe to each higher level (see Table 5.5).

Table 5.5 Structure of the Gaisce Award programme

| Structure of the Gaisce Award Programme | | | |
|---|---------------|---|--|
| Award | Bronze | Silver | Gold |
| Minimum Age | 15 years | 16 Years | 17 Years |
| Minimum Duration for each Component (Community Involvement, Personal Skill, Physical Recreation) | 26 weeks | 52 weeks | 78 weeks |
| Credit for Previous Award Holders | ----- | 26 weeks for Bronze Award Holder | 52 weeks for Silver Award Holder |

At each Award level, participants are allocated a President’s Award Leader (PAL). These PALs, currently numbering 1200, are volunteers trained by Gaisce staff. PALs act as mentors to support, motivate and monitor the participants on their path to completing their stated, agreed, goals. Agreeing those goals, and on-going monitoring is done through collaborative discussion, regular progress reports and the writing up and signing off on log books and completion sheets. Each Award has its own particular log book. The PALs do the final sign-off on the Bronze and Silver Awards. In the case of Gold Awards, the log books and completion sheets are also verified by a member of the Gaisce staff before the Award is approved.

Bronze and Silver Awards are presented regionally, throughout the year, by a range of invited high-profile people and Gaisce staff. Gold Awards are presented annually by the President of Ireland at a celebration event in Dublin Castle. Each participant receives a certificate signed by the President, as well as a medal and a lapel pin in the appropriate colour metal.

Gaisce’s Annual Report 2010 indicates that since its establishment in 1985, approximately 100,000 awards have been earned by young Irish people, coming from a wide variety of economic, social and educational backgrounds across the island of Ireland. The Bronze Award category attracts the largest number of participants annually. Bronze participants are typically secondary school students who have completed their three-year Junior Certificate programme, and are enrolled in the Fourth Year programme, known as “Transition Year”, prior to the final two-year Leaving Certificate programme. Table 5.6 gives a breakdown of

the number of entrants to each level of award and a total of awards earned over a six-year period from 2005 to 2010.

Table 5.6 Gaisce Awards Earned over a Six-Year Period 2005-2010

| Gaisce Awards Earned over a Six-Year Period (2005-2010) | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Award Programme Levels | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
| Bronze | 11,146 | 11,914 | 11,636 | 12,556 | 14,780 | 15,223 |
| Silver | 1,129 | 1,326 | 1,262 | 1,359 | 1,550 | 1,771 |
| Gold | 365 | 354 | 301 | 336 | 337 | 268 |
| Total | 12,640 | 13,594 | 13,199 | 14,251 | 16,667 | 17,262 |
| Awards Earned | 6,006 | 6,129 | 6,447 | 6,765 | 7,416 | 9,361 |
| Percentage of Completions | 47.5% | 45.0% | 48.8% | 47.5% | 44.5% | 54.2% |
| Average completion over 6 year period | 47.9% | | | | | |

5.05.05 External review of Gaisce–The President’s Award

In 2000, an unpublished external review was carried out on Gaisce–The President’s Award programme by organisational research company Eustace Patterson Limited. This is the only review carried out to date on Gaisce–The President’s Award. The purpose of the review was to examine the role, functions, operations and staffing of the President’s Award. The review was conducted under a steering group, comprised of representatives from the Irish Governmental Departments of Education and Finance, the chairperson of Gaisce, members of the Gaisce Council and members of the management and staff of Gaisce. The review mostly focused on staffing and operational management of the programme. A section of the review was allocated to exploring participants’ experience of taking part in the award.

5.05.05.01 Bronze Award participant responses

A questionnaire was designed by the researchers for the purpose of this review. A total of 202 questionnaires were completed by Bronze award holders. The majority of questionnaires were returned by female participants aged 16 years, in Transition Year in secondary school.

Sixty-five percent of the respondents stated that a teacher had introduced them to the Award. All respondents believed that participation in the Award was worthwhile. The respondents were asked about their experience of participating in the Award. The main benefits cited by respondents were a sense of achievement and pride, learning new skills, awareness and maturity, fun, meeting new people and making new friends. Respondents also mentioned the Award as a valuable reference on their CV, especially where there had been no academic achievement (Eustace Patterson Limited, 2000).

5.05.05.02 Gold Award participant responses

A total of 35 Gold award participants completed the same questionnaire. Nearly two-thirds of these were female. The Gold respondents stated that because of taking part in the Gold award they had experienced significant personal growth. The main other benefits cited by the Gold participants were a sense of achievement and pride, friendship, respect, and a greater awareness of environment and community (Eustace Patterson Limited, 2000).

5.06 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed and discussed the origins of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme as a philosophical idea by educationalist Kurt Hahn in the early 1930s. It has charted the development history and evolution of Gaisce–The President's Award and its affiliation to the International Award Association. It has also examined the structure and content of these Award programmes and the philosophy that governs them.

The findings of recent research on the Duke of Edinburgh and Gaisce Award programmes have been reviewed. The findings suggest that participation in these awards is a worthwhile experience. According to the research, participants reported positive benefits in the areas of relationships, achievement, behaviours and future outcomes. Participants cited making new friends, meeting new people, and spending time with others, both peers and adults as a very important aspect of the programmes. Participants expressed pride and a sense of achievement from taking part in the Award programmes, and believed that they had matured as a result. They reported increased confidence and greater respect for and awareness of others. And many participants felt that the Award would be of benefit in the future, because of the enhanced skills and experiences which they obtained during the award and which they would include on their CVs.

Gaisce's mission is to contribute to the personal development of young Irish people, but particularly those most in need of opportunity and inspiration, through the achievement of personal challenges, with the aim of developing and enhancing their human strengths and personal assets. In the 28 years since its foundation in 1985, Gaisce has worked towards becoming Ireland's most prestigious and respected award for young people, and has grown from strength to strength, with now nearly 20,000 participants annually. Given Gaisce's prominence and standing in Irish society today, and given the dearth of independent

evaluation to date of the effects and effectiveness of the programme on participants, this is an opportune time to undertake such a review.

The following chapter outlines the aim and objectives of the current research, the first study to explore whether Gaisce–The President’s Award programme acts as a catalyst for the enhancement of positive psychological attributes for participants.

Chapter 6 Research Questions

6.01 The present research study

A mixed research method was employed to determine the effects of participation in Gaisce–The President’s award. The young people participating in the award completed quantitative measures that assessed pre- and post-participation levels of hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness and psychological well-being.

As the literature review indicated a lack of insight into the young people’s experience of taking part in Gaisce–The President’s award, a qualitative approach was employed to ascertain their personal experiences. In addition to obtaining their personal perspectives and feelings about the award programme, the study also endeavoured to discover if the young people acquired new skills, thereby increasing their psychological attributes and personal strengths.

6.02 Aim and Objectives

A mixed methods approach was utilised in accordance with the literature reviewed to determine if participation in Gaisce–The president’s award a positive youth development programme acted as a catalyst in the enhancement of the character strengths of hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness and psychological well-being.

6.03 Aim

- To determine if participation in Gaisce–The President’s Award (Bronze and Gold Awards) acts as a catalyst in the enhancement of positive psychological attributes in its participants.

6.04 Quantitative study

6.04.01 Gaisce Bronze Quantitative Study Objectives

Objective 1:

- To determine if participation in Gaisce-The President’s Award increases the Bronze Award participants’ levels of hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, level of happiness and psychological well-being as measured by the Children’s Hope Scale, the General Self-

Efficacy Scale, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Subjective Happiness Scale, the Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale.

Objective 2:

- To determine if participation in Gaisce – The President’s Award increases the Bronze participant’s levels of hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, level of happiness and psychological well-being when Gaisce Bronze and control participants are matched based on five variables – gender, age, county of residence, location of residence, and parental occupation.

Objective 3:

- To determine if participation in Gaisce—The President’s Award increases the level of hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, level of happiness and psychological well-being in Bronze Award Participants and control participants who scored in the lowest quartile on each of these individual variables at Time1.

6.04.02 Gaisce Gold Quantitative Study Objectives

Objective 4:

- To determine if participation in Gaisce-The President’s Award increases the Gold Award participants’ levels of hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, level of happiness and psychological well-being as measured by the Children’s Hope Scale, the General Self-Efficacy Scale, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Subjective Happiness Scale, the Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale.

6.05 Qualitative study

6.05.01 Aim

- To obtain a detailed insight into Bronze and Gold participants’ experience of participating in the Gaisce–The President’s award programme.

6.06 Gaisce-The President's Award as a Positive Youth Development Programme

Objective 6:

- To investigate whether Gaisce-The President's Award meets the necessary criteria to be termed a positive youth development programme.

Chapter 7 Methodology

7.01 Brief overview of Gaisce Award programme

Gaisce–The President’s Award began in 1985 and is seen as Ireland’s National Award programme for young people. The mission of Gaisce–The President’s Award is to contribute to the development of all young people through the achievement of personal challenges. It is a non-competitive, voluntary Award programme offered by the President of Ireland to all young Irish people aged between fifteen and twenty-five years. Gaisce works with young people from a wide variety of economic, social and educational backgrounds across the island of Ireland.

The Award is offered at three levels Bronze, Silver and Gold. An individual can choose to take part in a single Award such as the Bronze Award, or to complete all three levels sequentially. The duration of the Award increases depending on the level undertaken by the participant.

The four components of the Gaisce Award programme are the same for all three levels, Bronze, Silver and Gold. Each Award consists of Community Involvement, Personal Skill, Physical Recreation and Adventure Journey (see Table 7.1).

Table 7.1 Components of Gaisce Programme

| Components of Gaisce Programme | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Component | Example of component activity |
| Community Involvement | <i>Volunteering for Trinity College soup run or volunteering for Saint Vincent de Paul meals on wheels for senior citizens</i> |
| Personal Skill | <i>Learning a musical instrument e.g. piano or clarinet</i> |
| Physical recreation | <i>Running, hurling, cricket, dancing</i> |
| Adventure Journey | <i>Climbing Croagh Patrick, (for Bronze Award) Camino Walk France and Spain (for Gold Award)</i> |

The current research measured Gaisce Bronze and Gold participants’ levels of self-efficacy, hope, happiness, self-esteem and psychological well-being at pre-participation and post-participation in the Award programme. Bronze and Gold Gaisce participants were compared with a community control sample. Gaisce participants and control participants completed the same five on-line questionnaires at the same time. Gaisce Bronze and Gold participants were interviewed post-participation in the Award programme to ascertain their own personal account of their experience of participating in Gaisce–The President’s Award programme.

7.02 A contextualisation of the research design

Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) and other authors, have advocated for mixed methods research to be viewed as a separate methodology or design called “mixed methods research” or “the third methodological movement”. This method moves beyond the mutual exclusion and mutual criticism of the paradigm wars of quantitative and qualitative methods. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) positioned mixed methods research as a natural complement to traditional qualitative and quantitative research. Mixed methods builds on the principle that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a greater understanding of both the complexity and problems associated with research than either approach can give on its own (Creswell, 2006).

Creswell and Plano Clark (2006) described mixed methods design as the practice of gathering, analysing and inferring both quantitative and qualitative data in a particular study based on the order and precedence of data. Using more than one method may have substantial advantages as it allows for the reduction of inappropriate certainty (Robson, 2002). The main advantage of a mixed methods approach is commonly referred to as permitting *triangulation* (Denzin, 1988), defined by Cohen and Manion (2000) as an attempt to explain more fully the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint. Sale et al. (2002) proposed that a mixed methods design allowed for cross-validation of material, which created a deeper, more complete understanding of the phenomena being studied. Such an approach may also reveal contradictions and paradoxes, and raise further questions (Green et al., 1989).

Johnston and Turner (2003) stated that the pragmatic philosophy of a mixed methods approach allowed researchers to combine the best elements of research in a manner fitting to the particular research question. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) went a step further and stated that mixed methods research in its pluralistic approach was dynamic, creative, holistic and inclusive.

This research therefore has utilised a mixed methods approach in the belief that the outcomes of one method can be enhanced through the strengths of the other, which may provide complementary results and allow for greater clarity of research findings (Green et al., 1989).

7.03 Research design

This section offers a detailed description of the research approach and design that was utilised in the current study. This chapter also provides the reasoning for the selection of the methods employed and procedures applied during the research. A mixed methods approach was adopted (see Figure 7.1). The quantitative and qualitative methods will be discussed separately.

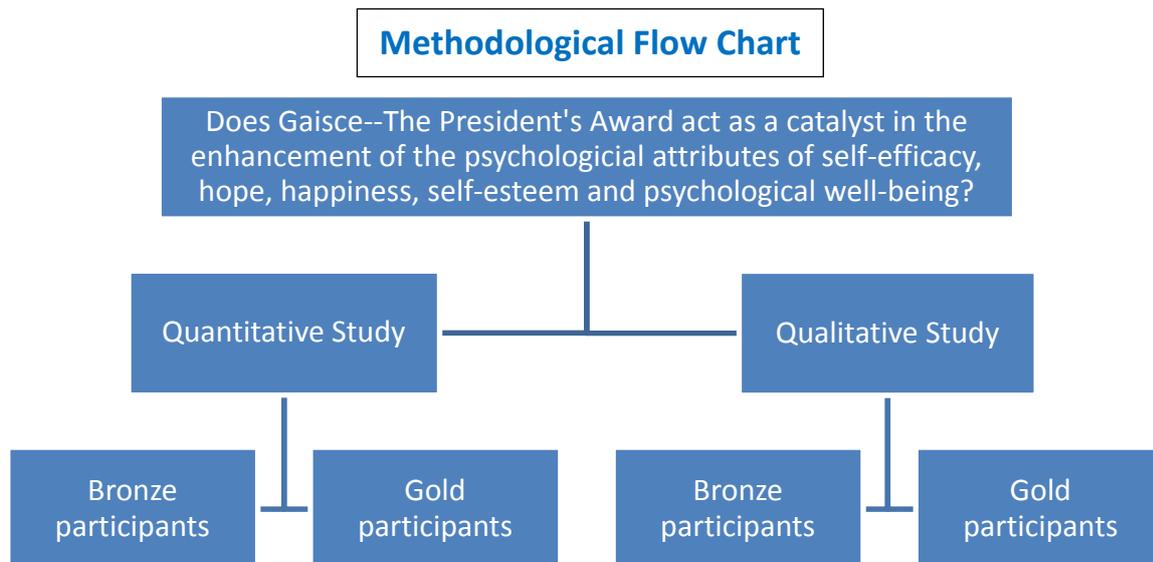


Figure 7.1 Methodological Flow Chart

The quantitative component was a mixed within-between design. This method sought to ascertain if any significant changes occurred in levels of self-efficacy, hope, happiness, self-esteem and psychological well-being for Bronze and Gold participants in comparison to a control group, following the Gaisce participants' participation in their respective programmes.

The Gaisce participants for the Bronze and Gold Award programmes comprised both males and females. Gaisce participants were compared with a same-age, mixed-gender community group who were not participants in the Gaisce programme. All five questionnaires utilised in the quantitative component were analysed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), as four of the questionnaires originated in the United States using an American population, and one in Germany using a German population (See Appendix AH) This research sought to investigate if the five scales yielded the same component structure as suggested by their authors when tested on an Irish adolescent population (Bronze group – Gaisce participants

and control participants). Following the initial Exploratory Factor Analysis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed on two of the questionnaires.

Table 7.2 Questionnaires Utilised in this Research (EFA and CFA)

| Questionnaires Utilised in this Research (EFA and CFA) | | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Questionnaire | Author and Year | Country of Origin | Exploratory Factor Analysis | Confirmatory Factor Analysis |
| <i>The Children's Hope Scale</i> | Snyder, Hoza, Pelham, Rapoff, Ware, Danovsky, Highberger, Ribinstein and Stahl (1997) | United States | Yes | Yes, indicated |
| <i>The General Self-Efficacy Scale</i> | Jerusalem and Schwarzer (1995) | Germany | Yes | No, not indicated |
| <i>The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale</i> | Rosenberg (1965) | United States | Yes | No, not indicated |
| <i>The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)</i> | Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999) | United States | Yes | No, not indicated |
| <i>The Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being (Long-Form 84-Items)</i> | Ryff (1989) | United States | Yes | No, not advised |

The qualitative component was comprised of a series of focus groups with Bronze Award participants, while semi-structured interviews were undertaken with Gold Award participants. The focus groups and the interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. The reason for undertaking this component of the research was to speak directly with the Bronze and Gold participants to ascertain their personal experiences of taking part in the Gaisce Award programme.

7.04 Quantitative component of the research

7.04.01 Introduction

The quantitative component of this research sought to ascertain if any significant changes were observed in Bronze and Gold participants' levels of self-efficacy, hope, happiness, self-esteem and psychological well-being post-participation in the Gaisce Award programme when compared against their respective control group participants. The quantitative study comprised of a Bronze participant and a Gold participant study (see Figure 7.2).

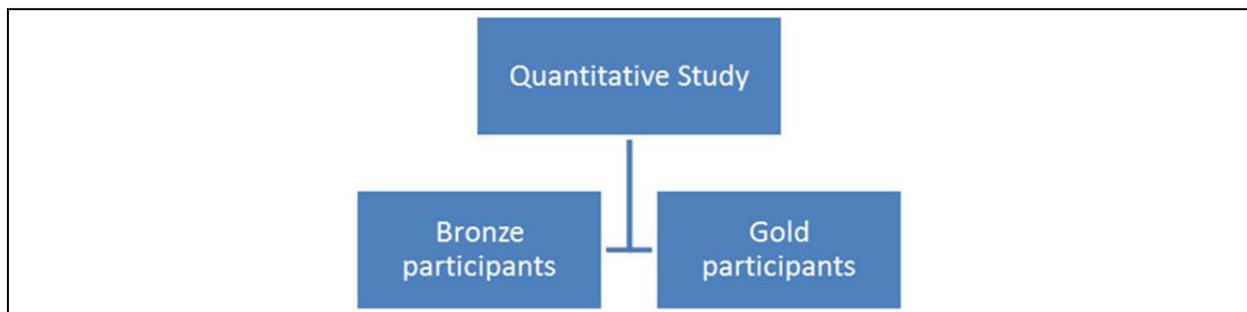


Figure 7.2 Flow chart of Quantitative Study

The bronze quantitative study will be described first, followed by the Gold quantitative study.

7.05 Bronze quantitative study

7.05.01 Bronze quantitative design

A mixed within design was used to examine if any significant changes were observed in the levels of self-efficacy, happiness, hope, self-esteem and psychological well-being of Bronze Gaisce participants following their participation in Gaisce—The President’s Award, compared with their control group counterparts. The categorical independent between-subjects variable was the relevant group: Control and Gaisce Participants. The categorical independent within-subjects variable was time: Time 1 (Pre-participation) and Time 2 (Post-participation). The dependent continuous variables were the changes in scores on the five participant and control completed questionnaires (see Table 7.3).

7.05.02 Bronze quantitative participants and control group

The Bronze Award participants and the control group participants for the Bronze quantitative study were recruited from secondary schools throughout Ireland. The students were in Transition Year (TY), an optional one-year school programme provided after the three years of the Junior Certificate cycle. Transition Year was created as a result of an initiative from the Programme for Economic and Social Progress, introduced throughout Ireland in 1994, to create a six-year secondary school programme. According to the Irish Department of Education and Science (2004), the mission of Transition Year is to promote the personal, social, educational and vocational development of pupils and to prepare them for their role as autonomous, participative and responsible members of society.

All secondary schools which participate in Gaisce—The President’s Award were invited to take part in this research. According to Gaisce staff, approximately 600 schools offer the Bronze Award annually.

It was originally planned that the control participants would be non-participating siblings of the Gaisce Bronze Award participants. In the end this did not prove feasible and so the control group recruited were mixed gender participants within Transition Year from Irish secondary schools that chose not to offer Gaisce—The President’s Award as part of their Transition Year programme.

7.05.03 Sampling of participants for quantitative study of Bronze Award

In the normal course of events, the Transition Year Co-ordinator of a school wishing their students to participate in Gaisce—The President’s Award contacts the Head Office of Gaisce to request registration packs for their students, which are then posted out to the school. For this research, as well as the standard contents of the registration packs, the following additional information was included:

- Information letter for School Principals and Transition Year Co-ordinators explaining the research aims and objectives (see Appendix F)
- Research information letter for parents and guardians of Bronze Gaisce participants outlining the research (see Appendix G)
- Research information letter for Bronze Gaisce participants and siblings explaining the research (see Appendix H)
- Parental/Guardian Bronze Consent Forms Bronze and Participant and Sibling Assent Form (see Appendix I)

The Transition Year Co-ordinator or youth leaders who agreed to take part in the research met with their students and gave them the relevant information and consent forms to take home and have signed by their parents/guardians and siblings. Completed Parental/Guardian Consent and Participant and Sibling Assent forms were returned to the Transition Year Co-ordinator in the school, who in turn returned the signed Consent and Assent forms to Gaisce Head Office.

The number of signed Sibling Assent forms returned to Gaisce Head Office was considerably smaller than the number of signed Gaisce Participant Assent forms returned. Given the low number of returned Sibling Assent forms, it became obvious that it would not be possible to rely exclusively on siblings of the Bronze participants as the control group.

Therefore schools that chose not to have their students participate in the Gaisce programme were approached to determine if they would act as a control group to the Gaisce participating schools. It was necessary to broadly match the control schools with Gaisce participating schools; hence a variety of secondary schools were contacted.

Principals of the following types of schools were contacted by phone and asked if they would be willing to meet with the researcher to discuss the current research.

- A private fee-paying – mixed-gender – urban school
- A private fee-paying – mixed-gender – rural school
- A non-fee-paying – mixed-gender – urban school
- A non-fee-paying – mixed-gender – rural school
- A non-fee-paying – single-sex boys school – urban school
- A non-fee-paying – single-sex boys school – rural school
- A non-fee-paying – single-sex girls school – urban school
- A non-fee-paying – single-sex girls school – rural school

All eight schools agreed to take part in the research. A similar set of information letters and forms as for the Gaisce participants were sent to the eight control schools (see Appendix J to Appendix L). The Control Participants returned their Assent and Parental/Guardian Consent Forms to their Principals, and the Principals returned all signed Assent and Consent Forms to Gaisce Head Office.

Subsequently, the researcher tried to contact all schools that had been sent the research information but had not returned any Consent or Assent Forms. Speaking directly with the Transition Year Co-ordinators was restricted by their busy teaching schedules. Therefore, the researcher left phone messages with the school secretaries asking that the Transition Year Co-ordinator would phone or email the researcher at a time convenient to them. Despite this, the initial number of returned Consent and Assent forms continued to remain low.

Accordingly, it was then decided to re-contact every secondary school which was participating in Gaisce—The President’s Award in order to encourage participation in the research. Four post-graduate psychology students were enlisted by the researcher to contact the schools. The researcher met with the four post-graduates and provided a power point presentation on the objectives of the research. Each volunteer was given a list of schools to phone and a telephone script to follow so that standardised information was given to all Gaisce teachers. All telephone calls were made from the School of Psychology, University College, Dublin, and some schools had to be telephoned a number of times. The postgraduates then provided the researcher with feedback on the outcome of their telephone calls. Some schools had requested further information emails about the research as they had

lost or mislaid the original correspondence. Other teachers had requested to speak to the researcher directly, while others had indicated that they were too busy and did not wish to participate in the research.

In addition to the above, Gaisce regional development officers (RDOs) were met to ask if they could contact all the schools in their catchment area to encourage participation in the research. The researcher also attended two Bronze Award prize-giving ceremonies to meet with teachers and parents to discuss the research. The researcher contacted two Teacher Unions (Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland – ASTI and Teachers’ Union of Ireland – TUI), who agreed to insert in their magazines a brief outline of the research and an appeal for help from their members to recruit research participants (see Appendix M and Appendix N). The researcher also contacted the Department of Education National Co-ordinator and he agreed to include a piece about the research on the Transition Year Department of Education website (see Appendix O).

A number of meetings also took place with the Gaisce Council members, in which suggestions were put forward to promote participation amongst schools participating in the Gaisce Bronze Award programme.

Eventually, forty-seven Gaisce participating schools and eight control schools, making fifty-five schools in total, took part in the Bronze Award research.

7.05.04 Procedure for Bronze quantitative study

Once the Consent and Assent Forms were signed and returned to the Transition Year Co-ordinators, participants logged on to the Gaisce research website (www.ucd.ie/psychology/Gaisce/index.html) as instructed in the information letters. A number of different approaches were adopted by both Gaisce and control participating schools. Some schools requested their students to complete the online questionnaires on their home computers; others facilitated their students by making the school computer room available during school hours.

Once these pre-participation questionnaires were completed, a database was created. This included details of the participating schools, contact details of the Transition Year Co-ordinators, the numbers of participants from each school along with their respective identification (ID) numbers, and the date of completion the pre-Bronze Award questionnaires

(Time 1). No identifying details of individual participants, Bronze Award or control, were recorded.

These details allowed the researcher to approximately calculate the Award completion date for each participant, and then to follow up with Transition Year Co-ordinators and Principals to arrange the completion of the post-participation questionnaires (Time 2).

The sequence of events for administering the post questionnaires to Gaisce and control participants was:

- Reminder letters in relation to completing the post-participation questionnaires were sent to all Transition Year Co-ordinators and Principals of schools taking part in the research.
- A week later, all schools were telephoned to remind them to complete the post questionnaires.
- A number of teachers contacted the researcher by telephone to advise that their students had lost their personal ID number and to request that the code number be forwarded to them.
- It emerged from communication with the schools that all had fewer students taking part in the post-participation survey as some students had dropped out of the Award, while others had changed school. A number of students had not reached the required standard to obtain the Bronze Award.
- The completion rate of the online questionnaires was constantly checked on the Qualtrics survey webpage; schools whose students had not completed the post questionnaires were telephoned again.

7.05.05 Pre Bronze Award participation (Time 1) quantitative study

The number of Bronze Gaisce participants who completed the pre-participation questionnaires was 475 (n=475). Of the 475 Bronze Gaisce participants, 269 (n=269) were female (mean age 15.67 years), representing 56.7% of the group, and 206 (n=206) were male (mean age 15.74), representing 43.3% of the group.

The number of control participants who completed pre- questionnaires was 172 (n=172). Of the 172 control participants, 93 (n=93) were female (mean age 16.08), representing 54.1% of the group, and 79 (n=73) were male (mean age 16.76) representing 45.9% of the group.

In total, 647 questionnaires were completed at Time 1 (n=647) by both Gaisce Bronze Participants and Control Participants. These 647 Time 1 questionnaires were used to complete the Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analyses.

7.05.06 Post Bronze Award participation (Time 2) quantitative study

One hundred and fifty-two (n=152) of the Gaisce participants fully completed the same questionnaires post-participation. The majority (62.5%) of this group were female (n=95) and 37.5% were male (n=57).

One hundred and thirty-one (n=131) control Participants fully completed the same post-participation questionnaires. The majority (52.7%) of this group were female (n=69) and 62 (n=62) were male.

The total number of questionnaires fully completed at post-participation (Time 2) by both Gaisce Bronze and Control Participants was 283 (n=283) (see Figure 7.3).

**Quantitative Bronze Award
Flow Diagram for Gaisce Bronze Award Quantitative Study**

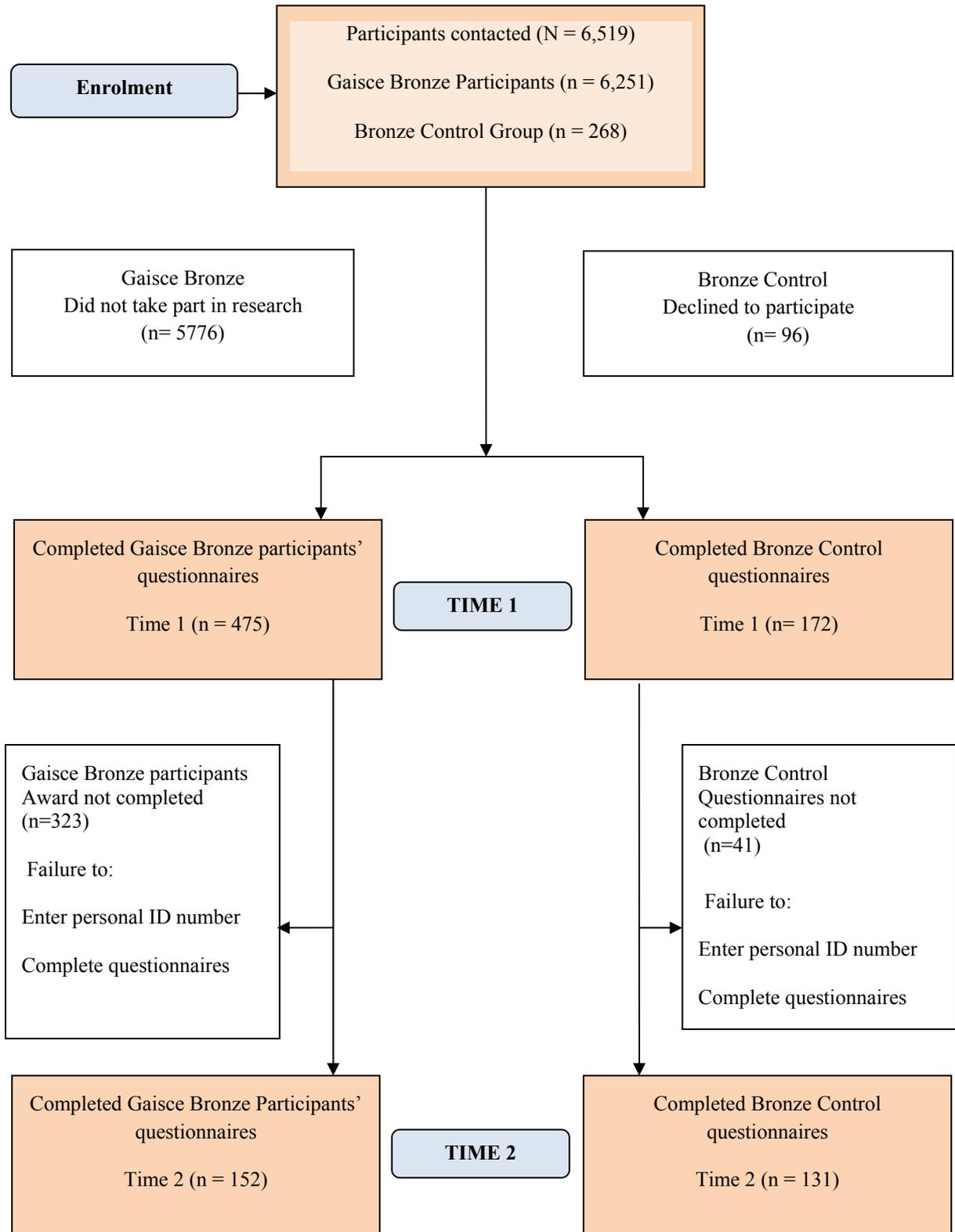


Figure 7.3 Flow Diagram for Gaisce Bronze Award Quantitative Study

7.05.07 Instruments for Bronze quantitative study

7.05.07.01 Online questionnaires

All participants, both Bronze Gaisce Award and control, completed the five questionnaires online, both pre- and post-participation, listed in Table 7.4.

Table 7.3 Questionnaires Utilised in the Bronze Quantitative Study

| Questionnaires Utilised in the Bronze Quantitative Study | |
|---|---|
| Questionnaire | Author and Year |
| <i>The Children's Hope Scale</i> | Snyder, Hoza, Pelham, Rapoff, Ware, Danovsky, Highberger, Ribinstein and Stahl (1997) |
| <i>The General Self-Efficacy Scale</i> | Jerusalem and Schwarzer (1995) |
| <i>The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale</i> | Rosenberg (1965) |
| <i>The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)</i> | Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999) |
| <i>The Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being (Long-Form 84-Items)</i> | Ryff (1989) |

All participants, both Bronze Gaisce Award and control, also completed a demographic questionnaire which was developed specifically for this research (see Appendix P). The demographic information included gender, age, and county of residency, rural or urban dweller, nationality and parent occupation.

7.05.07.02 The Children's Hope Scale

The six-item scale 'The Children's Hope Scale' (Snyder, Hoza, Pelham, Rapoff, Ware, Danovsky, Highberger, Ribinstein and Stahl, 1997) was one of the on-line questionnaires (see Appendix Q). This scale was designed for use among children and adolescents aged between eight and nineteen years. It is a measure of dispositional hope which the authors defined as, "a cognitive set involving the beliefs in one's capabilities to produce workable routes to goals...as well as the self-related beliefs about initiating and sustaining movement toward those goals..." (p. 401, Snyder et al., 1997). Consistent with this definition, the Children's Hope Scale contains two subscales: the 'Agency' subscale which assesses the child's perceived ability to reach goals and the 'Pathways' subscale which measures the child's ability to form routes to achieving these goals (Snyder et al., 1997). The scale has been validated for use with children and adolescents among multiple diverse and international samples (Snyder, 2003).

The scale contains three items belonging to the ‘Agency’ subscale and three items belonging to the ‘Pathways’ subscale. All items consist of a statement (e.g. ‘I can think of many ways to get the things in life that are important to me’) and the child is asked to indicate the level to which they agree with the statement in the majority of situations by ticking the box over the most accurate descriptor. The descriptors are as follows: ‘None of the Time’, ‘A little of the Time’, ‘Some of the Time’, ‘A lot of the Time’ and ‘Most of the Time’. To calculate the total hope score, a value of ‘1’ is given to ‘None of the Time’, a value of ‘2’ to ‘A little of the Time’, a value of ‘3’ to ‘Some of the Time’, a value of ‘4’ to ‘A lot of the Time’ and a value of ‘5’ to ‘Most of the Time’. The total hope score is calculated by adding together the values on each of the six items. The score for the ‘Agency’ subscale is calculated by adding the values on the odd-numbered items while the score for the ‘Pathways’ subscale is calculated by adding the values on the even-numbered items.

The Children’s Hope Scale takes only four minutes to complete, making it ideal as a questionnaire targeted at a large sample. However, despite its brevity, the ‘Children’s Hope Scale’ is a comprehensive and informative measure. Scales measuring the oppositional concept of ‘hopelessness’, have been used in clinical settings to identify suicidal inclinations in children (Snyder, 1994). Snyder and colleagues (1997) designed their scale based on the tenets of the new positive psychology movement, hypothesising that high hope levels would be predictive of developmental success for children. Indeed, this theory has been validated by a number of studies linking scores on the ‘Children’s Life Scale’ with high scores on adaptive indicators and low scores on maladaptive indicators (Valle, Huebner and Suldo, 2006; Gilman, Dooley and Florell, 2006).

7.05.07.03 The General Self-Efficacy Scale

The ten-item ‘General Self-Efficacy Scale’ by Jerusalem and Schwarzer (1995) was one of the on-line questionnaires (see Appendix R). Originally developed in German in 1981, it has been validated for use in numerous languages for use among adolescent and adult samples (Luszczynska, Gutiérrez-Doña and Schwarzer, 2005). The scale was designed to measure optimistic self-beliefs that are theorised to help the individual to cope with a variety of different life stressors (Jerusalem and Schwarzer, 1995). Unlike other scales that measure constructs related to optimism, the ‘General Self-Efficacy Scale’ explicitly measures personal agency that is, the belief that one’s actions are directly related to outcomes (Jerusalem and Schwarzer, 1995).

Each item on the scale consists of a statement, such as ‘I can always manage to solve difficult problem if I try hard enough’, and the respondent has to indicate on a four-point Likert scale the degree to which the statement is personally true for them. A value of ‘1’ indicates that it is ‘Not at all true’, a value of ‘2’ that it is ‘Hardly true’, a value of ‘3’ that it is ‘Moderately true’ and a value of ‘4’ indicates that the statement is ‘Exactly true’. The total score for the scale is calculated by summing the values given for each individual item. Scores for the scale range from 10 (indicative of a very low level of self-efficacy) to 40 (indicative of a very high level of self-efficacy).

The ‘General Self-Efficacy Scale’ is a validated and brief measure, making it ideal for this study. Moreover, high self-efficacy has been found to correlate positively with a number of adaptive indicators and negatively with maladaptive indicators (Luszczynska et al., 2005), indicating that self-efficacy is an important developmental asset for young people.

7.05.07.04 The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

The participants completed the ‘Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale’ (Rosenberg (1965) on line (see Appendix S). This 10-item scale is a measure of the degree of positive orientation towards oneself, and has been extensively used in studies conducted in up to fifty-three nations (Schmitt and Allik, 2005).

Five of the items on the ‘Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale’ are positively-worded statements (e.g. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself), and five are negatively-worded statements (e.g. At times I think I am no good at all). Respondents are required to indicate the degree to which they agree with the statement on a four-point scale with the options ‘Strongly Agree (SA)’, ‘Agree (A)’, ‘Disagree (D)’ and ‘Strongly Disagree (SD)’. To calculate Self-Esteem scores, on positively-worded items, ‘SA’ is given a value of ‘3’, ‘A’ a value of ‘2’, ‘D’ a value of ‘1’ and ‘SD’ a value of ‘0’. Negatively-worded items are scored in reverse, i.e., ‘SA’ is given a value of ‘0’ and so on. The values on each item are then summed to give a total Self-Esteem score.

Previous studies indicate that although Self-Esteem is an important buffer in coping with a variety of daily life demands (Leary, 1999), the period of adolescence sees significant fluctuations in Self-Esteem levels (Laible, Carlo and Roesch, 2004). Therefore, it is worthwhile measuring how Self-Esteem levels in adolescents are affected by participation in the Gaisce Award programme. The ‘Rosenberg Self-Esteem’ scale was selected for this study

due to its well-established validity for use in diverse samples (Schmitt and Allik, 2005). Its brevity also made it optimal for the widely-administered online questionnaire.

7.05.07.05 The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)

As part of the on-line questionnaires, the adolescent sample also completed the ‘The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)’ by Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999) (see Appendix T). This was designed as a brief index of subjective happiness or well-being and has been validated in fourteen studies with a total of 2,732 participants (Lyubomirsky and Lepper, 1999).

Two items on the scale offer brief descriptions of happy and unhappy people and asks the respondent to indicate the extent to which this characterisation describes them on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from ‘1’ (‘Not at All’) to ‘7’ (‘A Great Deal’). The third item on the scale requires the respondent to indicate their level of happiness relevant to peers on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from ‘1’ (‘Less Happy’) to ‘7’ (‘More Happy’). The final item requires the respondent to indicate their general level of happiness on a seven point Likert scale that ranges from ‘1’ (‘Not a Very Happy Person’) to ‘7’ (‘A Very Happy Person’). The total happiness score is calculated by adding the scores given by the respondent on each of the items. One of the characterisation items is reverse-scored.

Subjective happiness levels have been found to correlate highly with other measures of well-being (Lyubomirsky and Lepper, 1999). Yet, happiness levels are highly affected by an individual’s lifestyle and ways in which they pursue happiness (Tkach and Lyubomirsky, 2006). The ‘Subjective Happiness Scale’ was chosen as a measure for this research for its excellent psychometric properties despite its brevity as a measure.

7.05.07.06 The Psychological Well-Being Scale (Long-Form [84-Items])

Participants also completed the 84-item ‘Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being’ (Ryff, 1989) as part of the online questionnaires (see Appendix U). Although shorter versions of this measure do exist, the internal consistencies of these shortened scales are low and therefore are not recommended as a high-quality assessment of psychological well-being (Fernandes, Vasconcelos-Raposo and Teixeira, 2010). Ryff (1989) designed her scales based on principles of theoretical literature.

The Ryff scales consist of six subscales assessing different aspects of psychological well-being, namely 'Autonomy', 'Environmental Mastery', 'Personal Growth', 'Positive Relations with Others', 'Purpose in Life' and 'Self-Acceptance'. The respondent rates their level of agreement with the 84 subscale items on a Likert scale ranging from '1' (indicating strong disagreement) to '6' (indicating strong agreement). Scores for each of the subscales are calculated by summing the ratings given for each of the subscale items. About half of the items on the scale are reverse-scored. High scores on any one sub-scale indicate mastery for the respondent in that aspect of psychological functioning. Conversely, low scores indicate low levels of competency for the respondent in that aspect of well-being.

As Ryff (1989) incorporated theories of mental health, self-actualisation, appraisal, functioning, maturity and developmental lifespan into the design of these scales, they are a comprehensive set of scales measuring aspects of well-being that are not represented in other measures (Ryff, 1989). Therefore, these scales were used as a measure in this study in order to give a broader understanding of the psychological well-being of the adolescent sample.

The psychological well-being scale was originally designed for an adult population; however the researcher contacted the author of the scale, Dr Ryff, who stated that she believed that an adolescent population would not have any difficulties with the questionnaire. Dr Ryff indicated that a number of other pieces of research had successfully used the scale with an adolescent population and had reported no difficulties.

7.05.08 Analysis of data for the quantitative component of the Bronze study

The research data was analysed utilising the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 18. Initial descriptive statistics were obtained, which included useful demographic information. Parametric tests were performed using independent mixed analyses of variance and independent 2x2 between groups. As this research was exploratory in nature, and the measures used were not developed with an Irish population, it was necessary to conduct Exploratory Factor Analyses on all five measures. Confirmatory factor analyses were then conducted with two of the original five questionnaires.

7.05.09 Ethical considerations for the quantitative component of Bronze research

Information letters and parental consent forms pertaining to the current research were provided for all parents of Bronze Gaisce participants and control participants. Participants were asked to complete questionnaires prior to commencing the programme, and again when they finished the programme. It was explained in the information letter that the questionnaires would be completed online. Each participant, Bronze Award or control, were given a unique ID code number to log on to the website. It was explained that they would not be asked to give their name or address, and all information provided would be totally confidential and anonymous. ID Code numbers for participants were printed on the Consent and Assent Forms. The importance of securing the ID number was emphasised as it was required to log on to the website. Contact details for the researcher were provided to all participating parents, adolescents and teachers, if they wished to discuss any aspect of the research. In addition, a number of information evenings were held in any schools that requested same for parents of participants.

It was not envisaged that the participants would be exposed to any significant risk in the course of this research. The questionnaires that all participants completed for this research were positively based question, i.e., hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness and psychological well-being. The researcher's contact details were provided to each participant in the event that during the course of completing the online questionnaire, any participant felt the need to talk to the researcher.

The researcher obtained permission from the Irish Society of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC) Teen Focus and Childline for their website address and free-phone telephone details to be displayed at the end of the online survey (Appendix V). In addition, the researcher contacted Caroline O'Sullivan, Director of the Irish Society of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC) directly and discussed the research in detail. Ms O'Sullivan undertook to inform all (ISPCC) telephone operators that there may be a possibility of increased email or phone contact due to the participation in the survey. The citation at the end of the online questionnaire read as follows:

If any issues have been raised for you by completing the questionnaires in this research, please contact the ISPCC at the free-phone telephone number or website displayed below (see Appendix V).

In the case of the Bronze participants and many control participants, questionnaires were completed online in school and under the supervision of their teacher. The respective teachers were contacted and asked to refer the adolescent to the school guidance counsellor and contact their parents if any issues were raised as a result of the online survey.

All participating schools, parents and participants were advised that the research had obtained the approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee-Humanities, College of Human Sciences, University College Dublin (see Appendix W).

7.06 Gold quantitative component of the research

7.06.01 Gold quantitative design

Similar to the Bronze quantitative research, the Gold quantitative research adopted a mixed within design to examine if any significant changes were observed in the levels of self-efficacy, happiness, hope, self-esteem and psychological well-being of Gold Gaisce participants following their participation in Gaisce—The President’s Award, compared with their control group counterparts. The categorical independent between-subjects variable was the relevant group: Control and Gaisce Participants. The categorical independent within-subjects variable was time: Time 1 (Pre-participation) and Time 2 (Post-participation). The dependent continuous variables were the changes in scores on the five participant and control completed questionnaires (see Table 7.3).

7.06.02 Gold Award participants and control group

Approximately 200 young people obtain their Gold Gaisce Award each year. The numbers applying for and obtaining the Gold Award are significantly less than the numbers applying for the Bronze Award. Participants apply to take part in the Gold Award, not through schools, but individually and directly to Gaisce. Gold participants must be a minimum of 17 years and a maximum of 25 years to register for the Gold Award.

Gaisce personnel asked applicants for the Gold Award if they would be willing to take part in the research. Those who agreed were asked to allow their name and contact details to be given to the researcher. All Gold Award participants were subsequently contacted directly by the researcher. Each Gold participant received an email with a letter of explanation about the research, which asked them to confirm if they wished to take part in the research. After the Gold Award participant confirmed their willingness to take part in the research, the researcher contacted them by telephone to give them further details of the research and answer any questions they may have had. They were asked to recruit a control person for the research, a friend or sibling who was approximately of the same age and was not registered with Gaisce. Half of the Gold control group were recruited in the above manner. The remainder of the Gold control participants were recruited through a Post Leaving Certificate College and an Institute of Education College.

7.06.03 Sampling of participants for quantitative study of Gold Award

Applicants wishing to take part in the Gold Award contact the head office directly and information and registration packs are posted directly to the applicant's home. Those Gold applicants who agreed to take part in the research were sent the following documentation by the researcher directly.

- Research information letter for Gaisce Gold participants outlining the research (see Appendix X)
- Research information letter for siblings/friends of Gaisce Gold participants explaining the research (see Appendix Y)
- Gaisce Gold Participant and sibling/friend of Gaisce Gold Participant consent form (see Appendix Z)

The signed Consent Forms were returned directly to the researcher. It was apparent that it was not possible to form a control group composed of friends/siblings exclusively. Therefore, two post-secondary institutions were approached to seek additional control participants for the Gold quantitative study. This proved fruitful and provided the additional numbers.

7.06.04 Procedure for Gold quantitative study

Once the signed Consent Forms from both the Control and participant groups were returned to the researcher, the researcher emailed participants with their log-on ID details and asked them to complete the pre-participation batch of questionnaires. The questionnaires used were the same questionnaires as in Bronze study.

Once the pre-participation questionnaires were completed (Time 1), a database was created for the Gold quantitative study. This included non-identifying details of all participants, Gold and control, their respective identification (ID) numbers, and the expected dates of completion of the Gold Award. This allowed the researcher to contact each participant to arrange the completion of the post-participation questionnaires (Time 2).

As all Gold participants and their respective control group were adults, the researcher was able to liaise directly with them by email or telephone, to ensure the timely completion of the post- questionnaires.

7.06.05 Pre-Gold Award participation (Time 1) quantitative study

The number of Gold Award participants who completed the pre-participation online questions was 43 (n=43). Of the 43 Gaisce participants, 26 (n=26) were female, representing 60.1% of the group, and 17 (n=17) were male, representing 39.9%.

The number of control participants who completed the pre- questionnaires was 41 (n=41). Thirty one (n=31) of the control group were female, representing 75.6% while 10 (n=10) were male, representing 24.4%.

In total, 83 (n=83) combined participants completed questionnaires at Time 1. The pre-participation and post-participation evaluation comprised of five questionnaires and a demographic component.

7.06.06 Post Gold Award participation (Time 2) quantitative study

The number of Gold Gaisce participants who completed the post- questionnaire which consisted of the same five questionnaires as the pre- questionnaire was 31 (n=31). Of the thirty one Gold Participants, 67.7 % were female (n=21) and 32.3% were male (n=10).

Thirty-one control group participants (n=31) completed the same five questionnaires as the Gold Gaisce participants. The control participants were comprised of 24 (n=24) females and 7 (n=7) males.

The total number of combined participants who completed questionnaires at Time 2 was 62 (see Figure 7.4)

Gold Award Quantitative Study
Flow Diagram for Gaisce Gold Award Quantitative Study

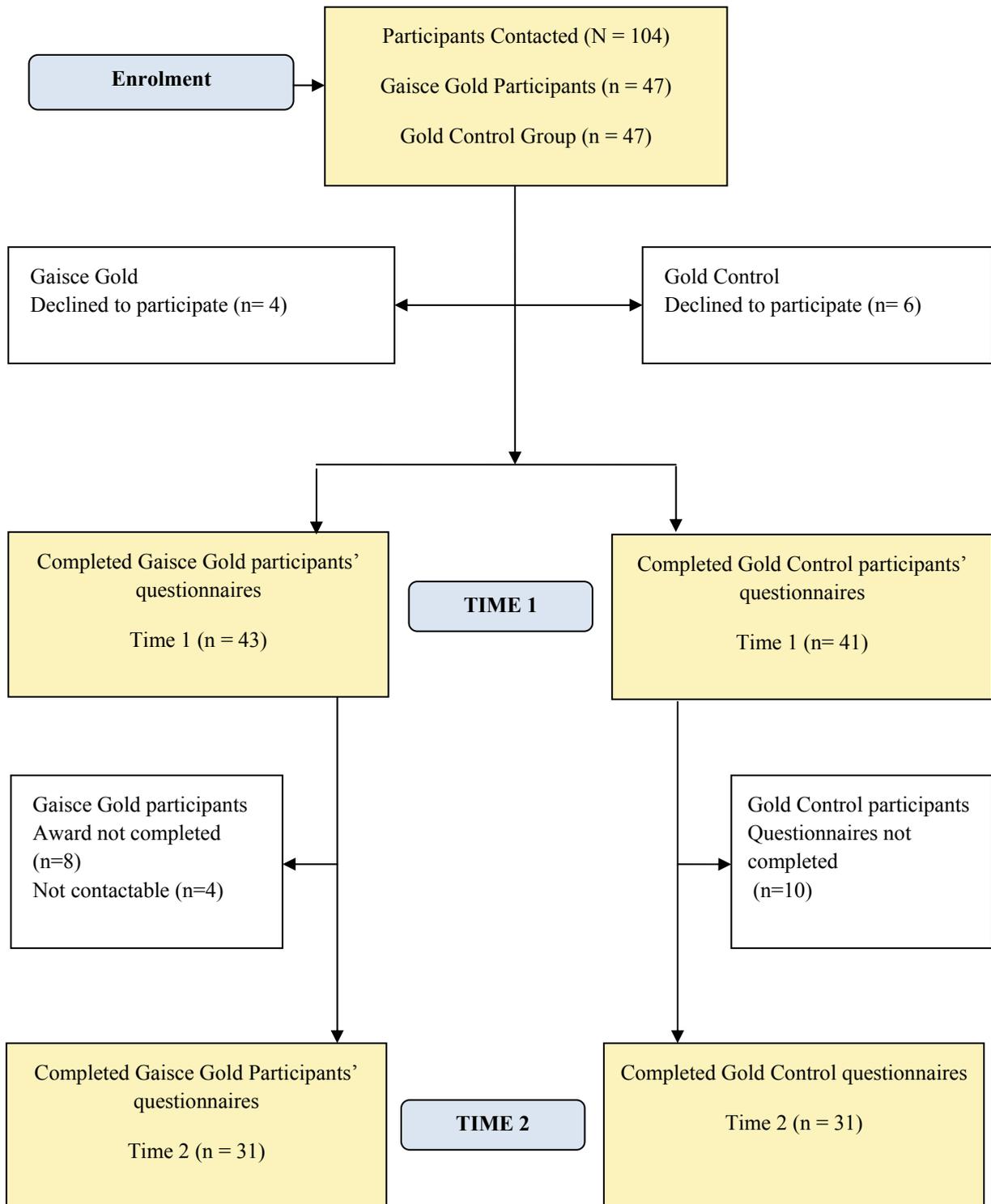


Figure 7.4 Flow Diagram for Gaisce Gold Award Quantitative Study

7.06.07 Instruments for Gold quantitative study

7.06.07.01 Online questionnaires

All participants, both Gold Gaisce Award and control, completed the following five questionnaires online, both pre- and post-participation (see Table 7.5).

Table 7.4 Questionnaires Utilised in the Gold quantitative study

| Questionnaires Utilised in the Gold Quantitative Study | |
|---|---|
| Questionnaire | Author and Year |
| <i>The Adult State Hope Scale</i> | Snyder, Sympson, Ybasco, Borders, Babyak, and Higgins, (1996) |
| <i>The General Self-Efficacy Scale</i> | Jerusalem and Schwarzer (1995) |
| <i>The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale</i> | Rosenberg (1965) |
| <i>The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)</i> | Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999) |
| <i>The Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being (Long-Form 84-Items)</i> | Ryff (1989) |

All participants, both Gold Gaisce Award and control, also completed a demographic questionnaire which was developed specifically for this research. The demographic information included gender, age, county of residency, rural or urban dweller, nationality and parent occupation.

Four of the scales and the demographic scale used in the Gold quantitative study were the same as those used in the Bronze quantitative study. These have been described in the preceding section on the Instruments used in the Bronze quantitative study (*Section 8.06.07.02*). The ‘Children’s Hope Scale’ could not be used in the Gold quantitative study, as it was designed explicitly for participants aged between 8 and 18 years. Therefore, the ‘Adult State Hope Scale’ was substituted for the ‘Children’s Hope Scale’.

7.06.07.02 The Adult State Hope Scale

The first Hope Scale developed based on Snyder’s goal-based theory of hope was the Adult Dispositional Hope Scale (Snyder, Irving and Anderson, 1991). However, one major drawback to this scale was that it only measured trait hope but not hope related to specific circumstances (Lopez, Ciarlelli, Coffman, Stone and Wyatt, 2000). Consequently, Snyder, Sympson, Ybasco, Borders, Babyak, and Higgins (1996) designed the ‘Adult State Hope Scale’ which assesses goal-directed thinking in any given situation (see Appendix AA).

Respondents are required to answer the questions in a manner that relates to, “how you think about yourself right now”. The instructions explicitly urge the respondent to take a few minutes before completing the test to focus on their present life circumstances. The questionnaire consists of six statements (e.g. ‘At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my goals’) and the respondent has to indicate the level to which they agree with this statement on an eight-point Likert scale ranging from ‘1’ (‘Definitely False’) to ‘8’ (‘Definitely True’). Three of the items belong to the ‘Agency’ (goal-directed energy) subscale and three to the ‘Pathways’ (planning to meet goals) subscale. Total scores are calculated by summing the values given on all six items. ‘Agency’ subscale scores are calculated by adding the given values on all the even items, while ‘Pathways’ subscale scores are calculated by adding the given values on all the odd items.

The ‘Adult Hope Scale’ (Snyder et al., 1996) has been validated for use among adult, mainly student, populations (Maygar-Moe, 2009). Factor analysis carried out by Snyder et al. (1996) supported the two-factor model structure. Snyder et al. (1996) found that two factors had eigenvalues above 1.0 and together accounted for 67.2% of the variance. Maygar-Moe (2009) reports that, based on data from student samples, this scale has adequate internal consistency with total scale alphas ranging from .79 to .95, and alphas for the ‘Agency’ subscale ranging from .76 to .95 with slightly lower alpha scores observed for the ‘Pathways’ subscale, .59 to .93.

7.06.08 Analysis of data for the quantitative component of the Gold study

As with the Bronze quantitative study, the research data was analysed utilising the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 18.

7.06.09 Ethical considerations for quantitative component of the Gold study

The ethical considerations for the Gold Quantitative study was similar to the Bronze Quantitative study, however as all Gold participants and Gold control participants were adults they were asked to contact their local Health Service Executive (HSE) health professionals should any issues have arisen from the questionnaires. The HSE operates a free counselling service for children, adolescents and adults.

7.07 Qualitative Study

7.07.01 Introduction

The qualitative component of this research sought to examine the participants' personal experience of participation in the Gaisce—The President's Award programme (see Figure 7.5).

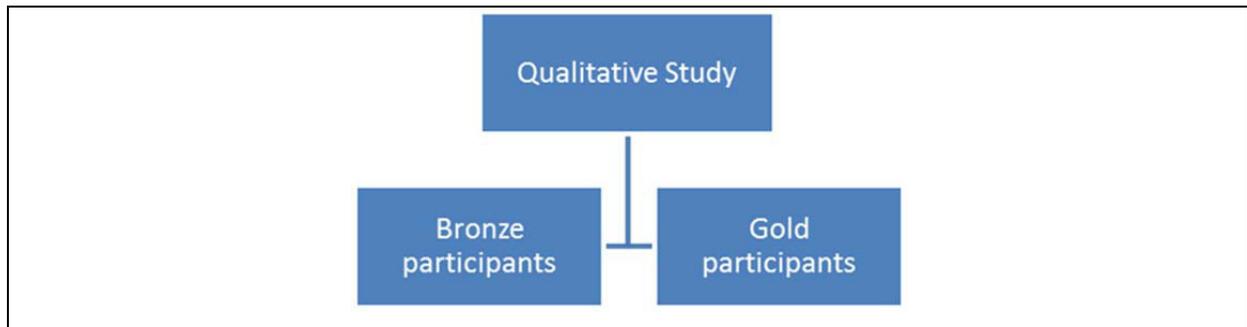


Figure 7.5 Flow chart for Qualitative study

The Bronze qualitative study will be described first, followed by the Gold qualitative study.

7.08 Bronze qualitative study

7.08.01 Bronze qualitative design

All schools and youth programmes that took part in the Bronze qualitative component of the research were entered into a database. The RAND function within Microsoft Excel was utilised to generate random numbers and eight schools were selected accordingly. All eight schools or youth programmes identified were invited to take part in the Bronze focus group. It was explained to the Transition Year Co-ordinators and youth leaders the purpose of the focus groups and that the researcher would need to obtain consent from participants' parents and assent from the participants themselves to partake in the focus groups. The following letters were forwarded to the Transition Year Co-ordinators or youth leaders of the eight schools/youth programmes that were participating in the qualitative focus groups.

- Research information letter for parents and guardians of the Bronze Gaisce participants taking part in the focus groups (see Appendix AB)
- Research information letter for Bronze Gaisce participants explaining the purpose of the focus group (see Appendix AC)
- Consent Forms for parents/guardians of Bronze participants, and Participant and Sibling Assent Forms for Focus Groups (see Appendix AD)

Each of the eight Transition Year Co-ordinators/youth leaders stated that they would be happy for their students to take part in the focus groups and would distribute the relevant information and consent forms. The names of the Bronze participants in each of the chosen schools were again chosen randomly for the focus groups by the Transition Year Co-ordinators or youth leaders. The numbers in the focus groups varied between four and ten participants, depending on the overall number of participants in each school or youth programme.

7.08.02 Bronze qualitative participants

The final number of participants that took part in the Bronze focus groups was 64 (n=64). Participants for the focus groups came from six secondary schools from counties Cork, Tyrone, Westmeath, Offaly, Longford and Dublin, one youth group from Belfast city and one Youthreach group from Cork City. The number of females was 39 and the number of males was 25.

7.08.03 Bronze qualitative study procedure

After the participants completed their Bronze Award, their Transition Year Co-ordinators or youth leaders were contacted to organise suitable dates and times for the school or youth programme and the students to conduct the focus groups. The focus groups took place during the school day, in a classroom familiar to the students as it was envisaged that this would facilitate discussion. The researcher was accompanied by a fellow psychologist who acted as an assistant to the researcher.

The eight Bronze focus group interviews adhered to best practice guidelines and the participants were given the opportunity to withdraw their assent up to and during the focus groups.

The researcher and research assistant placed the chairs in a circle to facilitate discussion and the researcher and participants remained seated during the focus groups. Prior to starting, Consent and Assent forms were collected from all Bronze participants by the researcher. Participants were warmly welcomed, brief introductions took place and the purpose and nature of the research study was explained again to the participants. Ground rules were agreed and written up by the research assistant. It was explained that all identifiers would be removed and that all information would remain anonymous. Participants were reminded that they could discontinue in the focus group at any point during the process. In addition, participants were reminded only to share information that they felt comfortable with.

A semi-structured interview style was utilised to obtain a deeper understanding and greater knowledge of the participants' experience and perspective of taking part in the Bronze Award programme. At the end of each focus group, the researcher summarised the main points that had emerged from the group discussions, and asked the participants if the summary reflected what was discussed in the group. On completion of the focus groups, all participants were thanked for their participation.

Once the participants left the room, the researcher and research assistant held a debriefing session during which the focus group was discussed in detail and field notes were written up before leaving the premises.

All focus groups were recorded with a digital voice recorder. All focus group interviews were transcribed verbatim and stored electronically under password protection. The recordings of

the focus group interviews were transferred digitally as MP3s and saved to the researcher's encrypted hard drive.

7.08.04 Qualitative instruments

A semi-structured interview was employed to obtain the participants' perception of Gaisce—The President's Award programme. While the interviews incorporated structured sequences to obtain specific information, the majority of the questions were open-ended to allow participants to speak openly and freely about the Award programme. Krueger and Casey's (2009) guidelines for "good questions and good questioning route" were adhered to. These guidelines include using language that the participants would typically use, and keeping questions short and clear. A clear simple introductory question began each focus group, which afforded participants the opportunity to relax and contribute at their ease to the discussion. A freedom of sequencing, wording and timing was counteracted by the use of cards with each question numbered.

The questions used in the Focus Group interviews were as follows:

- How did you select what you would do for each of the four challenges of Gaisce—The President's Award?
- Tell me about your experience of taking part in Gaisce—The President's Award?
- What did you like best about the Award?
- What aspect of the Award has been most helpful to you?
- What did you like least about the Award?
- What skills did you gain from completing the Award?
- Would you recommend the Award to a friend?
- Thinking back, was there any experience that stood out during your Gaisce Award?
- In what way, if any, have you changed as a result of doing the Gaisce Award?
- Is there anything about the Award that you think should be changed and why?
- Is there anything else about the Award that you would like to share?

Probes such as "tell me/us more about that..." "Is there anything else.....", "any more examples....." "Would you say more about....", "Can you describe what you mean", and "Please explain further", were used to generate further discussion or to gain greater understanding of the participants' experience.

7.08.05 Analysis of data for the qualitative component of the Bronze study

Thematic Analysis was utilised to analyse the data from both the Bronze and Gold focus groups and interviews. The analysis of the data was carried out in accordance with Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines. The researcher familiarised herself with the data by meticulous reading and re-reading of the data. Equal and total attention was given to each data item/word. During this phase, the researcher noted preliminary impressions and themes, and another psychologist read the transcripts independently and categorised comparable transcripts into sub-themes. All transcripts were imported into one column and two-columned tables with Microsoft Word. Initial codes were systematically generated from the entire transcripts and the data appropriate to each code was collated. The code was written into the second column adjacent to the relevant transcripts. The respective codes were re-examined at a broader level and all data was subsequently collated under potential themes. A coding frame was created once the main themes and sub-themes were identified.

An inter-rater reliability test was subsequently undertaken to determine the confidence in the themes selected by both the researcher and the other psychologist. Four of the eight Bronze transcripts (50%) were randomly selected for this purpose. The kappa coefficient for inter-rater reliability was .71 for the qualitative analyses. Further observations were employed through the meticulous counting and coding of the participants' comments.

7.08.06 Participant anonymity

In the analyses and discussion (Chapter 10 and Chapter 11), direct quotations from the participants support and clarify each theme. To maintain the anonymity of the individual participants, only a participant and group number is provided.

7.08.07 Ethical considerations for qualitative component of the Bronze study

Ethical approval was sought and obtained from the UCD Office of Human Research Ethics Committee for the qualitative Bronze and Gold components of this research (see Appendix W). Separate consent forms, assent forms and information letters were provided for the Bronze focus groups (see Appendix AB, AC and AD). The information letters explained to parents that while their son or daughter had already completed the online part of the research, the purpose of the focus groups was to obtain a greater understanding of participants' experience of taking part in Gaisce—The President's Award. The information supplied stated

the numbers taking part in the focus groups and when they were likely to take place. There was also information concerning the duration of the focus group interviews and the fact that the focus groups would be audio-recorded and transcribed. In addition, it was highlighted that their son or daughter would not be asked to provide any personal details and that they or their son or daughter were entitled to withdraw their consent or assent at any point up to the writing-up of the research. Parents and students were informed that participation in the focus groups was optional, and not a prerequisite for receiving their Bronze Gaisce Award.

7.09 Gold Qualitative Study

7.09.01 Gold qualitative design

After the expected timeframe for Gold participants to complete their Award, all thirty-one participants who took part in the Gold quantitative research were contacted by letter and email to ask if they would be willing to take part in a focus group/interview to discuss their experience of participating in Gaisce—The President’s Award.

- Research information letter and Consent Form for Gold Gaisce participants in the focus group interviews (see Appendix AE)

7.09.02 Gold participants

Ethical approval was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee for the Gold qualitative aspect of this research (see Appendix W). The thirty-one participants who had taken part in the Gold quantitative research were contacted by letter and email to discover if they were willing to take part in a focus group/interview to discuss their experience of participating in Gaisce—The President’s Award. The purpose of the focus groups was explained to all Gold participants. They were informed that it was important to hear first-hand their personal experience of taking part in Gaisce—the President’s Award.

Ten Gold participants were working aboard for the summer, as they were college students, and were not in a position to participate. Six participants decided that they did not wish to take part in a focus group/interview.

While fifteen participants stated that they would be willing to take part in the Gold qualitative interviews, in total 11 participants (n=11) attended for the interviews.

The remaining participants were dispersed throughout Ireland, and it became apparent that individual interviews were necessary for most of the participants. One single focus group took place in Co. Tipperary, with three participants.

7.09.03 Gold Award qualitative procedure

Gold participants were contacted by telephone the week before their scheduled interview to confirm their attendance. The interviews were conducted over a five-week period as most participants identified Saturday as the most convenient day for them. Six locations were selected to conduct the interviews/focus groups based on the fifteen Gold participants’ home

addresses. Hotels were identified in collaboration with the participants in Co. Dublin, Co. Westmeath, Co. Meath, Co. Offaly, Co. Longford, Co. Kildare, Co. Tipperary, and Co. Portlaoise as a suitable and convenient location to conduct the interviews.

It was arranged to meet the participants at the front door of the designated hotels. Prior to starting the interviews or focus group, the purpose of the research was re-stated to all participants, and then consent forms were signed (see Appendix AF). Participants were informed that no personal identifiers would appear in the written report. All participants were advised not to discuss anything which they felt uncomfortable about, or which they believed to be confidential.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain a better understanding of the participants' experience of taking part in the Gold Gaisce Award. Each interview was recorded on a digital voice recorder. The researcher sat beside the participants for the duration of the interviews. Interviews varied in length from 25 to 40 minutes. On completion of the interviews, each participant was thanked and reminded that they could withdraw their consent up to the submission of the research.

All the Gold Interviews were recorded and transcribed in keeping with the method used for the Bronze Focus Groups.

7.09.04 Gold qualitative instruments

For comparison purposes and for consistency, the same questions were asked of both Bronze and Gold participants. Participants were reminded that they could discontinue in the interview or focus group at any point during the process.

7.09.05 Analysis of data for the qualitative component of the Gold study

As indicated under Headings 7.09.05 and 7.09.06, Thematic Analysis was utilised to analyse the data from both the Bronze and Gold focus groups and interviews. An inter-rater reliability test was undertaken to determine the confidence in the themes. Five of the eleven Gold interview transcripts (45%) were randomly selected for this purpose. The kappa coefficient for inter-rater reliability was .8 for the qualitative analyses.

7.09.06 Participant anonymity

In keeping with the Bronze Qualitative Study, and maintain anonymity, Gold participants were identified only by numbers.

7.09.07 Ethical considerations for qualitative component of the Gold study

Ethical approval was sought and obtained from the UCD Office of Human Research Ethics Committee for the qualitative Bronze and Gold components of this research (see Appendix W). Similarly to the Bronze Qualitative Study (see Page 121), a letter (Appendix AE) was sent to all Gold Participants providing information on issues such as consent and anonymity.

7.10 General ethical and credibility considerations

- Ethical approval was sought and obtained from the UCD Office of Human Research Ethics Committee for the qualitative Bronze and Gold components of this research (see Appendix W).
- The researcher advised both Bronze and Gold participants to only disclose information that they were comfortable in discussing. Accordingly, no pressure was placed on the participants to answer questions, and if embarrassment or distress appeared likely to emerge, the question was altered.
- The highest ethical standards were adhered to, following the British and Irish Psychological Association guidelines for conducting focus groups and interviews.
- All focus groups and interviews were undertaken by the primary researcher (moderator), and an assistant moderator was available for all focus groups.
- All data from each focus group and interview was recalled to each focus group and interviewee at the end of interview to ensure that the information was captured accurately and as they remembered it.
- A debriefing session was held by the moderator and the assistant moderator immediately after the focus groups, to discuss any important observations or themes that had emerged from the group.
- The recording of every focus group and interview was listened to on the same day that it took place to allow the moderator to make accurate field notes.
- Sections of the focus groups and interviews were transcribed twice by two people: the moderator and another psychologist (assistant moderator) to make sure that all data was accurately captured.
- Data generated from all focus groups and interviews was coded twice by the moderator and another psychologist; codes were compared to allow for inter-rater agreement. Inter-rater coding had high agreement (85%).
- All steps taken in this study have been documented to allow for re-analysis by another researcher.

- Triangulation methods were utilized at all times during the data collection: during, before and after the focus groups and interviews, transcribing the data, and coding the data.
- All data transcripts are available which will validate that the categories used and clearly show what was central to the phenomena studied.

Chapter 8: Results of the Quantitative Study

8.01 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the results of the quantitative component of the research.

Quantitative results are organised in sections as indicated below:

Section 8.02 Introduction

Section 8.03 Presents the demographic findings of the matched participants involved in the Gaisce Bronze Award Quantitative Study

Section 8.04 Presents the quantitative results of the following research question:

Does participation in Gaisce – The President’s Bronze Award improve an individual’s hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem happiness, and psychological well-being? (Matched Gaisce Bronze Participants with Control Bronze Participants)

Section 8.05 Provides a summary of the results from the matched participants involved in the Gaisce Bronze Award Quantitative Study

Section 8.06 Presents the demographic findings of the participants involved in the Gaisce Bronze Award Quantitative Study who scored within the lowest quartile on the Children’s Hope Scale, the General Self-Efficacy Scale, the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale, the Subjective Happiness Scale, and the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being

Section 8.07 Presents the results of the following research question:

Does participation in Gaisce–The President’s Bronze Award increase individuals levels of hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness, and psychological well-being for participants who scored within the lowest quartile on the Children’s Hope Scale, the General Self-Efficacy Scale, the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale, the Subjective Happiness Scale, and the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being

Section 8.08 Provides a summary of the results from the Bronze participants who scored within the lowest quartile on the Children’s Hope Scale, the General Self-Efficacy Scale, the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale, the Subjective Happiness Scale, and the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being

Section 8.09 Presents the demographic findings of the participants who participated in the Gaisce Gold Award Quantitative Study

Section 8.10 Presents the results of the following research question:

Does participation in Gaisce – The President’s Gold Award improve an individual’s levels of hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness, and psychological well-being?

Section 8.11 Provides a summary of the results from the Gaisce Gold Award Quantitative Study

8.02 Introduction

The Gaisce Bronze Quantitative study consisted of 283 (N=283) participants in total. This study comprised of 152 (n=152) Gaisce Bronze participants and 131 (n=131) Bronze Control participants (see Figure 9.1).

The Quantitative Results for the 152 (n=152) Gaisce Bronze participants and 131 (n=131) Bronze Control participants who completed the Children's Hope Scale, the General Self-Efficacy Scale, the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale, the Subjective Happiness Scale, and the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being is provided in Appendix AG.

In order to minimise participant variability, ensure greater consistency between conditions and provide greater validity, participants from the Gaisce Bronze Quantitative study (N=283) were matched based on gender, age, county of residence, location of residence and parental occupation. Based on these criteria, 81 Gaisce Bronze participants and 81 Bronze Control participants were identified and completed the Children's Hope Scale, the General Self-Efficacy Scale, the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale, the Subjective Happiness Scale, and the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being (see Figure 8.1).

A primary objective of Gaisce–The President's Award is to establish an award programme for all young people, in particular, for those most in need. As such, Gaisce Bronze Participants scoring in the lowest quartile on the aforementioned questionnaires were compared with the lowest quartile of the Control Bronze Participants (see Figure 8.1).

The Gaisce Gold Quantitative study consisted of 62 (N=62) participants in total. This study comprised of 31 Gaisce Gold Participants and 31 Gold Control Participants. Both groups completed the Adult Hope Scale, the General Self-Efficacy Scale, the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale, the Subjective Happiness Scale, and the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being.

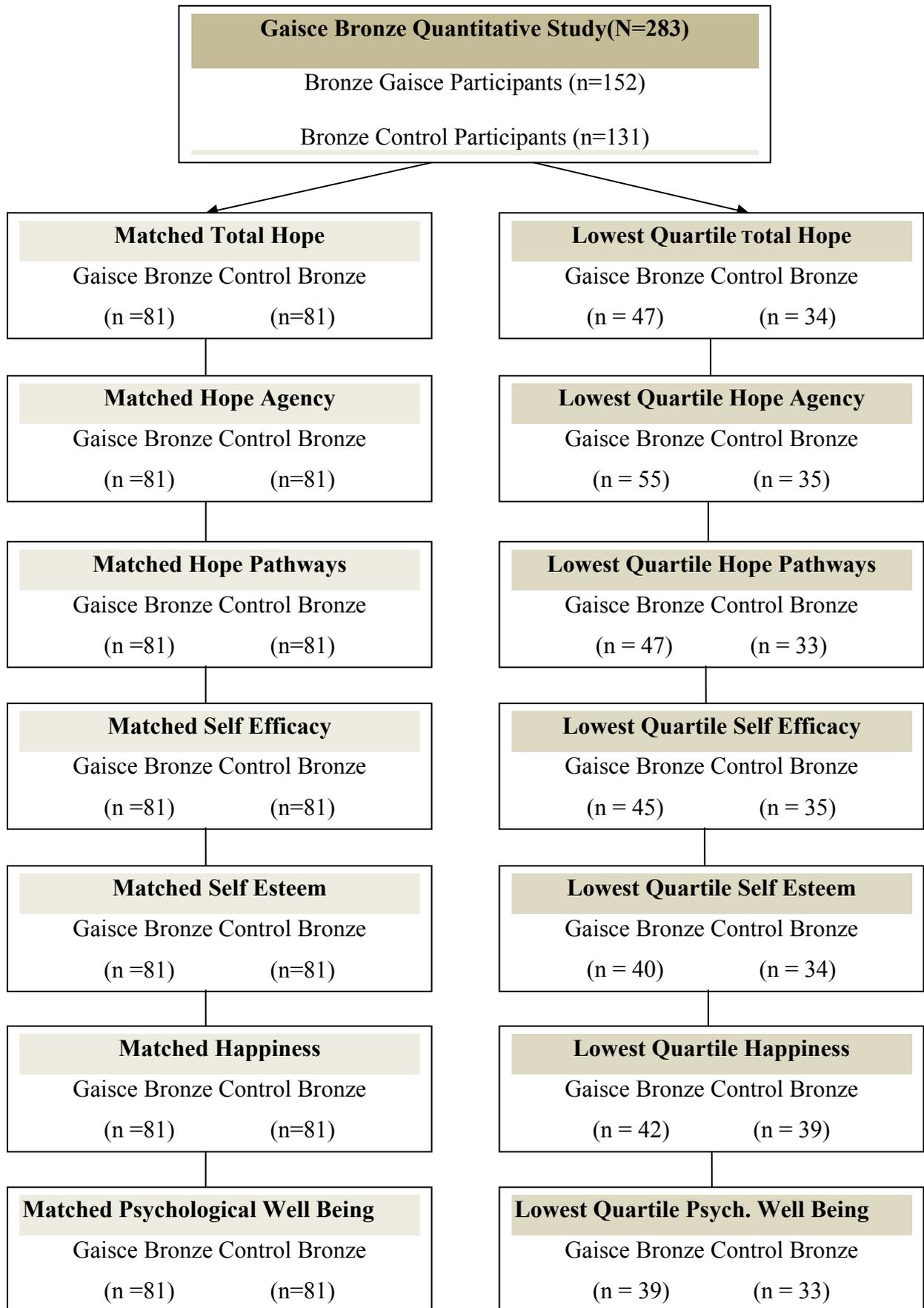


Figure 8.1 Participant Numbers for Bronze Quantitative Research

8.03 Demographic findings of the matched participants involved in the Gaisce Bronze Award Quantitative Study

8.03.01 Gender and age of participants

An independent-samples t-test indicated that there was no significant difference in age between all the matched Gaisce Bronze Participants and all the matched Control Group, $t(160) = 1.09$, $p = 0.27$ (see Table 9.1).

Table 8.1 Mean age of all Matched Gaisce Bronze Participants and Control Group

| | Gaisce Participants (n = 81) | Control Group (n = 81) | t – test |
|-----------------|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Mean Age | 15.86 | 15.96 | 1.09 |
| SD | 0.57 | 0.58 | |

An independent-samples t-test indicated that there was no significant difference in age between the matched Gaisce Bronze Male Participants and the matched Male Control Group, $t(64) = 0.72 = p = 0.47$ (see Table 9.2).

Table 8.2 Mean age of all Male Gaisce Bronze Participants and Control Group

| | Male Gaisce Participants (n = 33) | Male Control Group (n = 33) | t – test |
|-----------------|--|--|-----------------|
| Mean Age | 15.94 | 16.03 | 0.72 |
| SD | 0.49 | 0.53 | |

An independent-samples t-test indicated that there was no significant difference in age between the matched Gaisce Bronze Female Participants and the matched Female Control Group, $t(94) = 0.84 = p = 0.41$ (Table 8.3).

Table 8.3 Mean age of Female Matched Gaisce Bronze Participants and Control Group

| | Female Gaisce Participants (n = 48) | Female Control Group (n = 48) | t – test |
|-----------------|--|--|-----------------|
| Mean Age | 15.81 | 15.92 | 0.84 |
| SD | 0.60 | 0.61 | |

8.03.02 County of Residence

Dublin emerged as the county most represented by both the matched Gaisce Bronze Participants (n=37) and the matched Control Group (n=37). The second and third highest number of participants lived in Westmeath and Longford (Table 8.4).

Table 8.4 County of Residence of Matched Gaisce Bronze Participants and Control Group

| County of Residence | Gaisce Participants | Control Participants |
|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Dublin | 37 | 37 |
| Westmeath | 17 | 17 |
| Longford | 16 | 16 |
| Cavan | 6 | 6 |
| Leitrim | 3 | 3 |
| Limerick | 1 | 1 |
| Monaghan | 1 | 1 |

8.03.03 Location of Residence

Thirty-seven percent (n = 34) of both the Matched Gaisce Bronze Participants and Matched Control Group lived in the countryside (Table 9.5) with the remaining participants living in either a city (30%) or town (17%).

Table 8.5 Location of Residence of Matched Gaisce Bronze Participants and Control Group

| Location | Gaisce Participants | Control Participants |
|-----------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| The Countryside | 34 | 34 |
| A City | 30 | 30 |
| A Town | 17 | 17 |

8.03.04 Parental Occupation

The majority (n=19) of the matched participants indicated ‘other’ as their parents’ occupations, while twelve (n=12) reported that their parents worked in commerce, insurance and finance (Table 9.6). Ten of each groups’ parents worked in health while a similar number were employed in building and construction.

Table 8.6 Parental occupations of Matched Gaisce Bronze Participants and Control Group

| Parental Occupation | Gaisce Participants | Control Participants |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Other | 19 | 19 |
| Commerce, Insurance, Finance | 12 | 12 |
| Health | 10 | 10 |
| Building and Construction | 10 | 10 |
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing | 7 | 7 |
| Education | 7 | 7 |
| Service Industry | 5 | 5 |
| Manufacturing Industry | 4 | 4 |
| Transport and Communication | 3 | 3 |
| Public Administration | 3 | 3 |
| Defence | 1 | 1 |

8.04 Results to the research question:

- Does participation in Gaisce – The President’s Bronze Award improve an individual’s levels of hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness and psychological well-being?

8.04.01 Results of the Matched Gaisce Bronze Participants’ scores on the Children’s Hope Scale, the General Self Efficacy Scale, the Self Esteem Scale, the Happiness Scale and the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well Being

This section describes and compares the scores of the matched Gaisce Bronze Award Participants with a matched Control Group on the Children’s Hope Scale, the General Self Efficacy Scale, the Self Esteem Scale, the Happiness Scale and the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well Being.

Two by two (2x2) ANOVA was used to compare the scores obtained by the respective groups (Table 8.7)

Table 8.7 2x2 ANOVAs for Matched Bronze Participants

| Variable | Gold Gaisce (N = 81) | | Control (N= 81) | | ANOVA | | | Interpretation |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|--------------------|--------|-------|------|-----------------|--|
| | Time 1 | Time 2 | Time 1 | Time 2 | Group | Time | Group x Time | |
| Hope | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 25.69 | 26.86 | 26.58 | 26.15 | 0.01 | 0.58 | 2.72 | No participation related change |
| Standard Deviation | 5.17 | 5.29 | 6.31 | 5.36 | | | | |
| Hope Agency | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 13.27 | 13.58 | 13.63 | 13.42 | 0.06 | 0.04 | 1.04 | No participation related change |
| Standard Deviation | 2.89 | 2.92 | 3.37 | 2.75 | | | | |
| Hope Pathways | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 12.42 | 13.44 | 12.91 | 12.67 | .143 | 2.33 | 6.22* | Significant difference between groups at Time 1 Significant increase for Gaisce Group over time |
| Standard Deviation | 2.80 | 2.49 | 3.27 | 2.91 | | | | |
| Self Efficacy | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 29.89 | 32.54 | 31.26 | 30.74 | .252 | 2.47 | 9.05** | Significant difference between groups at Time 1 Significant increase for Gaisce Group over time |
| Standard Deviation | 3.99 | 3.87 | 4.56 | 4.57 | | | | |
| Self Esteem | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 20.21 | 20.79 | 20.79 | 20.53 | 0.05 | 0.11 | 0.77 | No participation related change |
| Standard Deviation | 5.04 | 5.54 | 5.48 | 5.61 | | | | |
| Happiness | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 18.81 | 19.19 | 19.49 | 19.41 | 0.89 | 0.24 | 0.62 | No participation related change |
| Standard Deviation | 3.79 | 3.81 | 3.31 | 3.23 | | | | |
| Psychological Well Being | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 363.42 | 371.08 | 378.48 | 368.54 | 0.76 | .068 | 4.11* | Significant difference between groups at Time 1 |
| Standard Deviation | 49.19 | 57.28 | 51.10 | 55.49 | | | | |

Note: F Values are from 2x2 group (Gaisce and Control) x Time (Time 1, Time 2) ANOVAs

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

The following variables failed to find significant effects: Hope, Hope Agency, Self-esteem and happiness (see Table 8.7). Three variables detected interactions between group and time: Hope Pathways, Self Efficacy and Psychological Well-being. Tests of simple effects for these variables are presented below.

8.04.02 Hope Pathways Subscale

A significant interaction effect emerged between Time and Group, $F(1, 160) = 6.22$, $p = .014$, however, the effect size was small, $\eta^2 = .037$ (Figure 9.2).

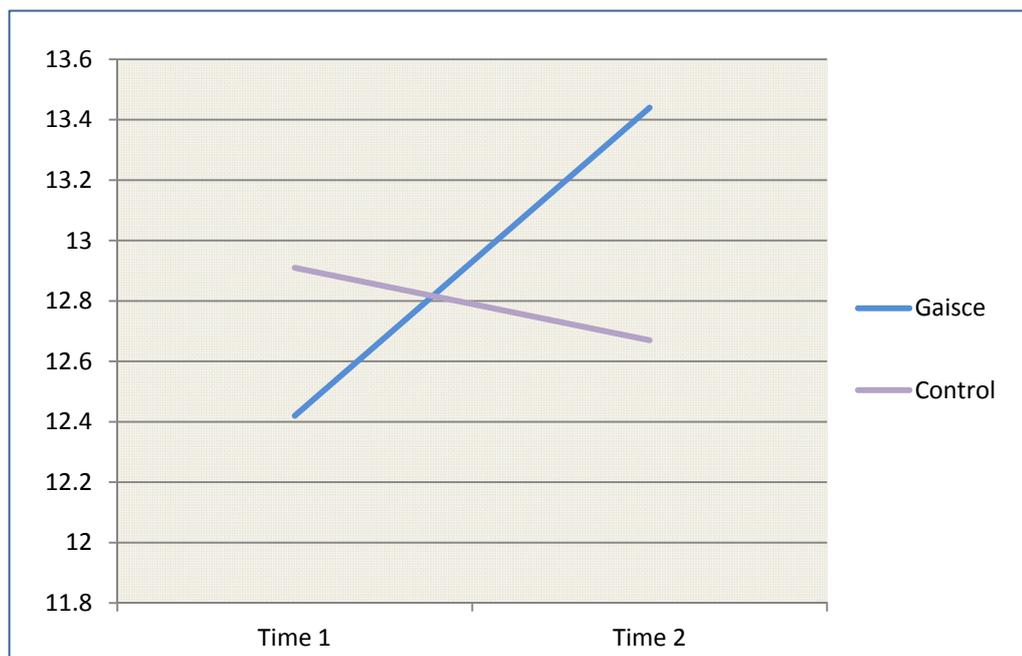


Figure 8.2 Estimated marginal means for Matched Bronze Participants and Matched Control Group in the Pathways Subscale of the Children's Hope Scale

A test of simple effects (see Table 8.8) indicated a significant difference between the Matched Gaisce and Matched Control groups at Time 1. A significant increase in scores occurred for Gaisce Participants over time.

Table 8.8 ANOVA for Matched Gaisce Participation / Time and Pathway Score
(Including Tests of Simple Effects)

| <i>Source</i> | <i>SS</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>MS</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>Sig.</i> | <i>Fcv</i> |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-------------|------------|
| <i>Group</i> | 1.633 | 1 | 1.633 | 0.143 | .705 | - |
| Group at Time 1 | 60.52 | 1 | 60.52 | 11.50 | | 5.75 |
| Group at Time 2 | 24.50 | 1 | 24.50 | 4.66 | | 5.75 |
| <i>Time</i> | 12.25 | 1 | 12.25 | 2.33 | .129 | - |
| Gaisce Participant | 42.52 | 1 | 42.52 | 8.08 | | 5.75 |
| Control | 2.469 | 1 | 2.469 | 0.469 | | 5.75 |
| Time X Group | 32.744 | 1 | 32.744 | 6.22 | .014 | |
| Error | 903.753 | 160 | 5.26 | | | |

8.04.03 The General Self-efficacy Scale for Matched Gaisce Bronze Participants

A significant interaction effect occurred between Time and Group, $F(1, 160) = 9.05$, $p = .003$, which emerged as a moderate effect size, $\eta^2 = .06$.

Table 8.9 ANOVA for Matched Gaisce Participation / Time and Self-efficacy
(Including Tests of Simple Effects)

| <i>Source</i> | <i>SS</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>MS</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>Sig.</i> | <i>Fcv</i> |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-------------|------------|
| <i>Group</i> | 6.531 | 1 | 6.531 | .252 | .616 | - |
| Group at Time 1 | 76.06 | 1 | 76.06 | 7.202 | | 5.75 |
| Group at Time 2 | 26.08 | 1 | 26.08 | 2.47 | | 5.75 |
| <i>Time</i> | 26.123 | 1 | 26.123 | 2.473 | .118 | - |
| Gaisce Participant | 110.84 | 1 | 110.84 | 10.5 | | 5.75 |
| Control | 10.89 | 1 | 10.89 | 1.03 | | 5.75 |
| Time X Group | 95.605 | 1 | 95.605 | 9.050 | .003 | |
| Error | 1690.27 | 160 | 10.564 | | | |

A test of simple effects (Table 8.10) indicated a significant difference between the Matched Gaisce and Matched Control groups at Time 1. A significant difference was observed in the Gaisce group's scores over time (see Figure 8.3).

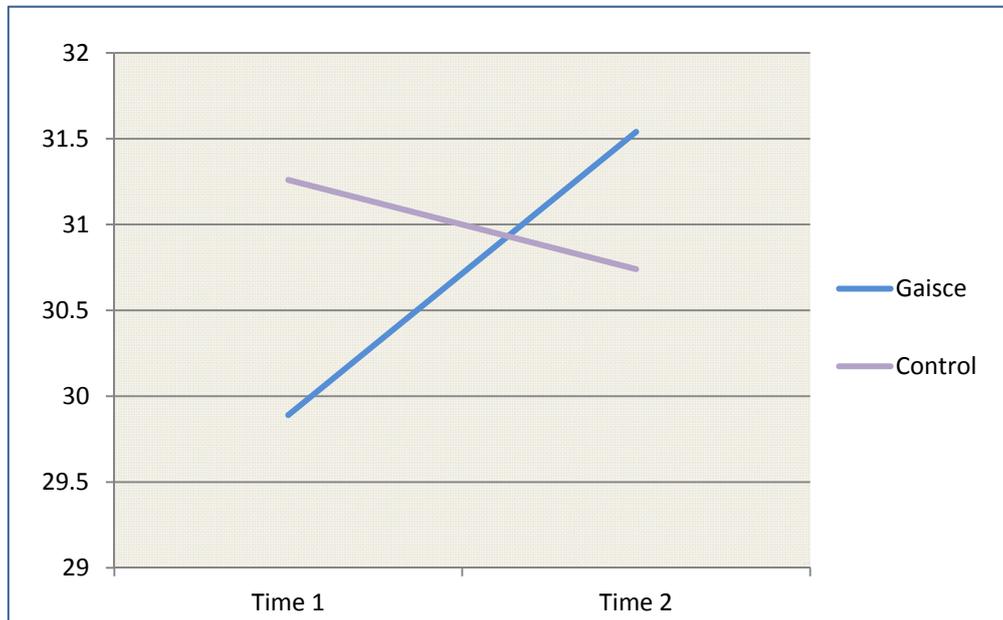


Figure 8.3 Estimated marginal means for Matched Bronze Participants and Matched Control Group in the Self-efficacy Scale

8.04.04 The Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being for Matched Bronze Participants

A significant interaction effect emerged between Time and Group, $F(1, 160) = 4.11$, $p = .044$, however, the effect size was small, $\eta^2 = .025$.

A test of simple effects (Table 8.14) indicated a significant difference between the Matched Gaisce Participants and Matched Control groups at Time 1 (Figure 8.4).

Table 8.10 ANOVA for Matched Gaisce Participation / Time and Total Well-being Score (Including Tests of Simple Effects)

| <i>Source</i> | <i>SS</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>MS</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>Sig.</i> | <i>Fcv</i> |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-------------|------------|
| <i>Group</i> | 3173.44 | 1 | 3173.44 | .761 | .384 | - |
| Group at Time 1 | 9187.65 | 1 | 9187.65 | 6.01 | - | 5.75 |
| Group at Time 2 | 261.95 | 1 | 261.95 | 0.71 | - | 5.75 |
| <i>Time</i> | 104.94 | 1 | 104.94 | .068 | .794 | - |
| Gaisce Participant | 2380.5 | 1 | 2380.5 | 1.56 | - | 5.75 |
| Control | 4000.15 | 1 | 4000.15 | 2.62 | - | 5.75 |
| Time X Group | 6276.16 | 1 | 6276.16 | 4.109 | .044 | |
| Error | 244400.3 | 160 | | | | |

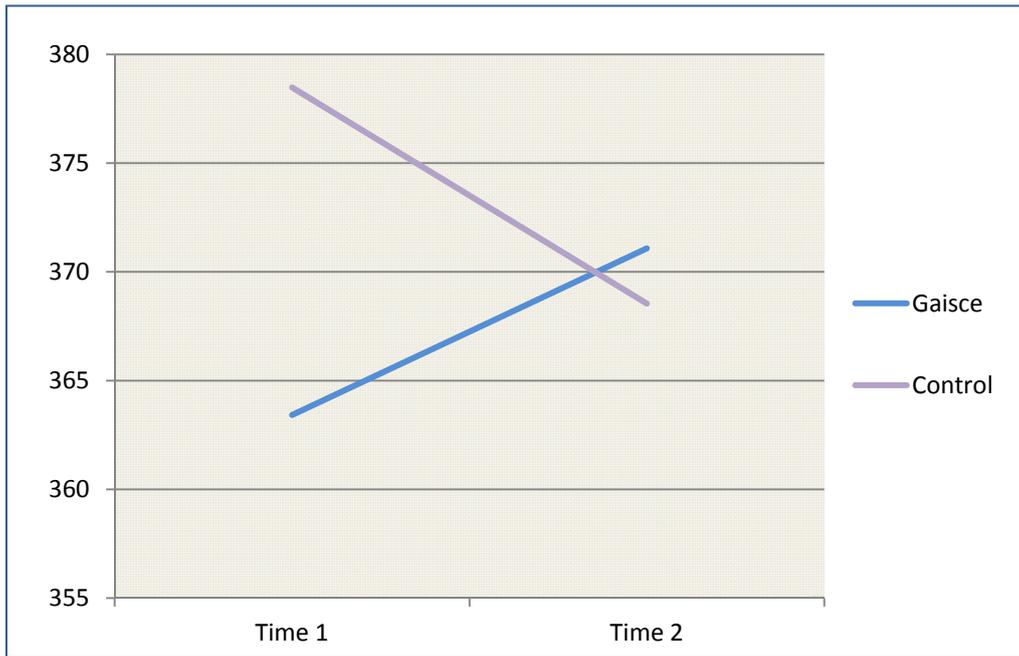


Figure 8.4 Estimated Marginal Means for Matched Gaisce Participation / Time and Total Well-Being Score

8.05 Summary of results for Matched Bronze Participants

A summary of key findings pertaining to the results from the analysis of the Matched Bronze and Control Participants' scores on the Self-efficacy, Psychological Well-being, Hope, Self-esteem, Happiness scales are presented in Table 8.15.

Table 8.11: Key findings in relation to the positive effects of participation in Gaisce the Bronze Award for Matched Participants.

Research Question:

- Does participation in the Gaisce Bronze Award improve levels of Hope, Self-efficacy, Self-esteem, Happiness, and Psychological Well-being

Addressed by:

- 2 x 2 ANOVAs were utilised to compare Matched Bronze Participants' pre and post participation scores on the on the Hope , Self-efficacy, Self-esteem, Hope, Happiness and Psychological Well-being scales, with a Control Group

Key Findings:

- No significant interaction effects were present for the scores on the Overall Hope and Hope Agency Subscale
- The Hope Pathway Subscale demonstrated a significant interaction effect for Time x Group, $(1, 160) = 6.22, p = .014$, however, the effect size was small, $\eta^2 = .036$. A significant difference between the Matched Gaisce and Matched Control groups was present at Time 1.

- A significant interaction effect occurred between Time and Group on the Self-efficacy Scale, $F(1, 160) = 9.05$, $p = .003$, which emerged as a moderate effect size, $\eta^2 = .06$. A significant difference was present between the Matched Gaisce and Matched Control groups at Time 1. A significant increase in occurred for the Gaisce group's scores over time.
 - No significant interaction effects were present for the scores on the Self-esteem and Happiness Scale.
 - A significant interaction effect emerged between Time and Group on the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-being, $F(1, 160) = 4.11$, $p = .044$, however, the effect size was small, $\eta^2 = .025$. A significant difference between the Matched Gaisce Participants and Matched Control groups was present at Time 1.
-

8.06 Demographic findings for participants who scored within the lowest quartile

8.06.01 Age and number of participants

In total, 283 (N=283) participants completed online questionnaires at pre Gaisce participation (Time 1) and post Gaisce participation (Time 2) (see Table 9.16). The majority (58%) of these participants were female, n = 164. The mean age of all participants was 15.88 years.

Table 8.12 Demographic statistics for the respondents of pre and post Gaisce Bronze Study

| Participants | Total | Mean Age | SD | Male | % | Mean Age | SD | Female | % | Mean Age | SD |
|----------------|-------|----------|------|------|------|----------|------|--------|------|----------|------|
| <i>All</i> | 283 | 15.88 | 0.66 | 119 | 42 | 15.94 | 0.57 | 164 | 58 | 15.85 | 0.67 |
| <i>Gaisce</i> | 152 | 15.7 | 0.58 | 57 | 37.5 | 15.74 | 0.48 | 95 | 62.5 | 15.67 | 0.61 |
| <i>Control</i> | 131 | 16.09 | 0.71 | 62 | 47.3 | 16.15 | 0.67 | 69 | 52.7 | 16.04 | 0.74 |

8.06.02 County of Residence

Gaisce Bronze participants from 18 counties took part in the research. Dublin was represented by 31.6 % of the Gaisce Bronze Participants (Figure 8.5). Kerry emerged as the county with the second largest number of Gaisce Bronze respondents with the remaining counties all falling below 10%.

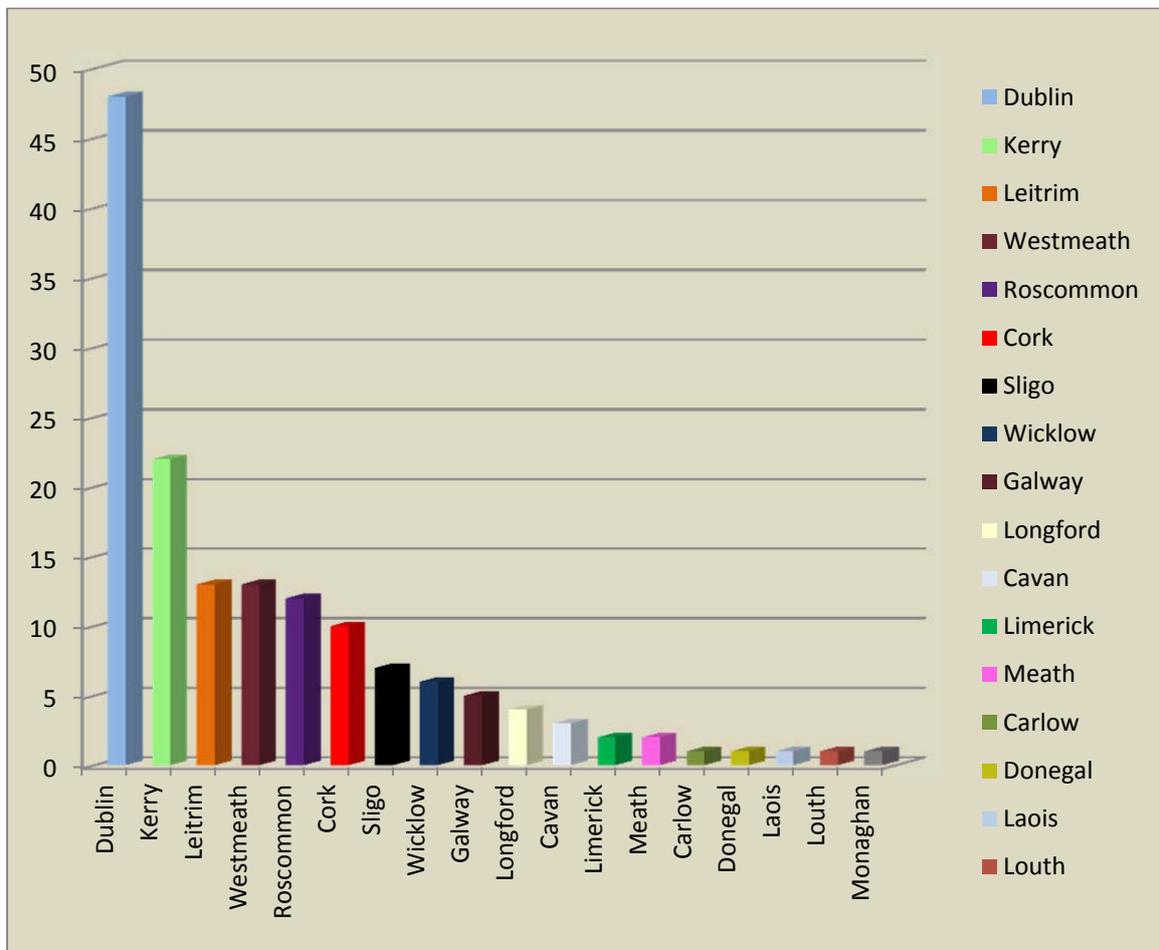


Figure 8.5 County of residence for the Gaisce Bronze Participants

The largest representation of participants for the Gaisce Bronze Award Control Group also lived in Dublin, however, a greater percentage (42.7 %) lived there (Figure 8.6). The second most represented county was Westmeath which accounted for 27% of the Control Group’s county of residence. In total the Control Group consisted of participants from 8 counties.

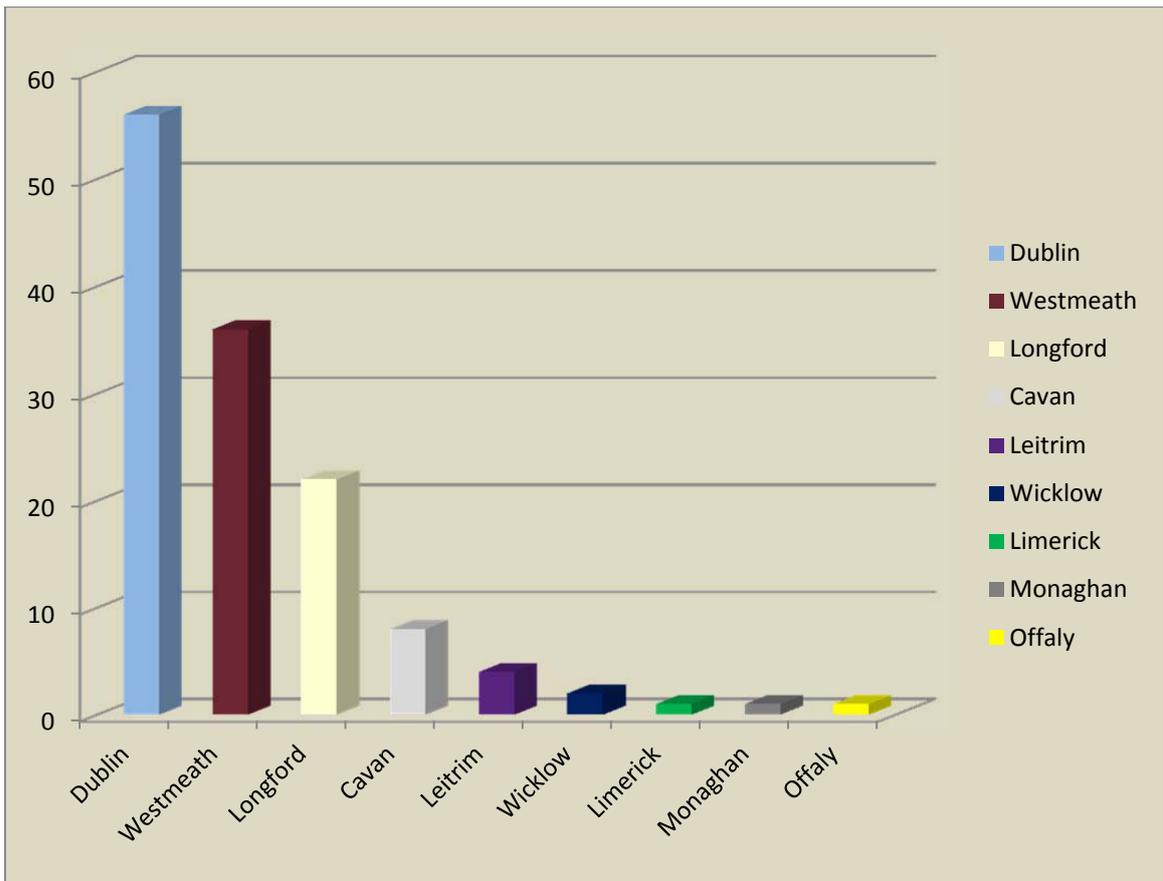


Figure 8.6 County of residence for Control Group Participants

8.06.03 Location of Residence

Eighty (53%) of the Gaisce Bronze Participants indicated that they lived in the countryside, while 25% (n = 38) of the respondents stated that they lived in a city (see Figure 8.7) The remaining 34 (n=34) participants lived in a town.

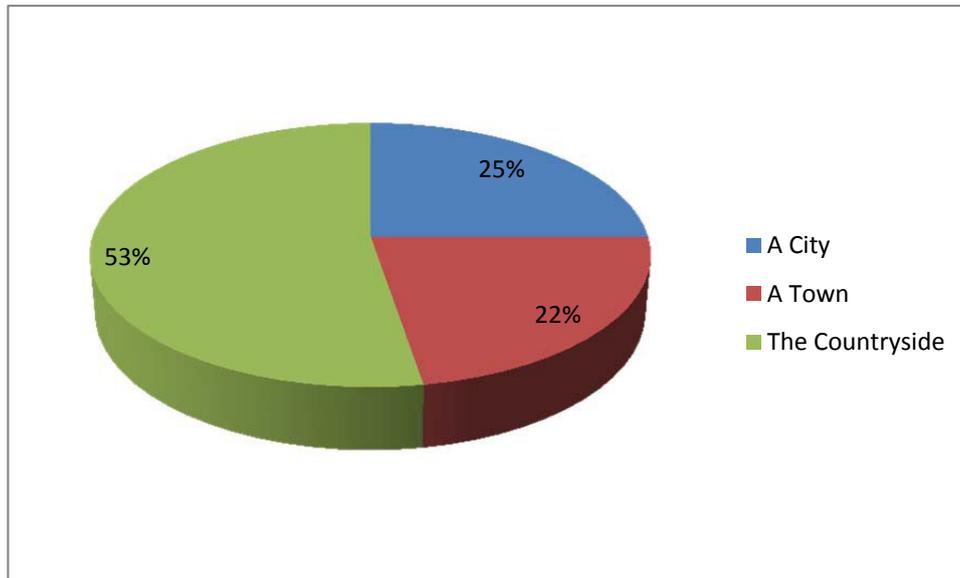


Figure 8.7 Area where Gaisce Bronze Participants lived

While the Gaisce Control group did not have as many participants living in the countryside, 44.3 % (n= 58) of the Control respondents indicated that they lived in a rural area (Figure 8.8). Forty three of the relevant group reported living in a city (32.8%).

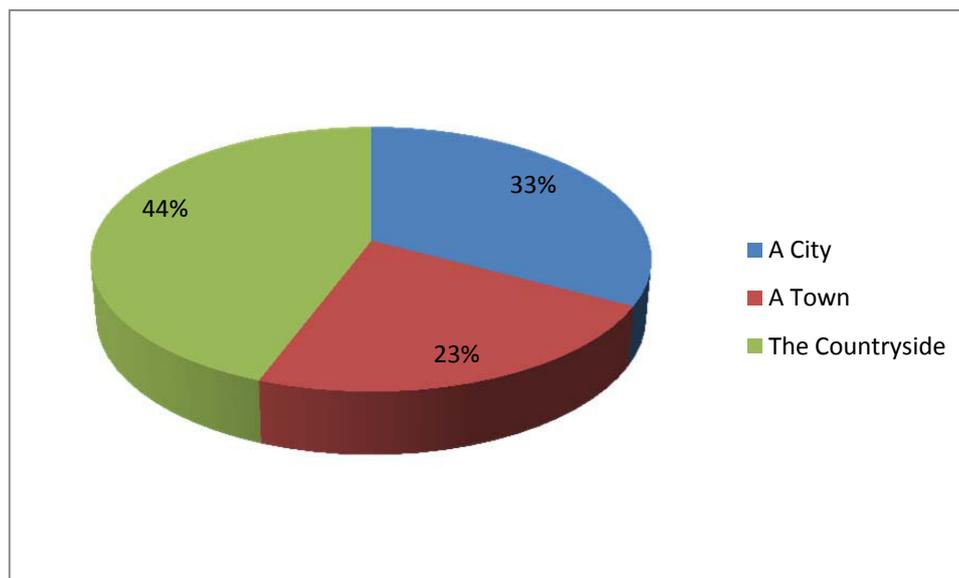


Figure 8.8 Area where the Gaisce Bronze Control Participants lived

8.06.04 Responses to the question : What is your parents' current occupation?

Thirty three, (21.7%) of the Gaisce Bronze Participants described their parents' occupations as 'other', while 12.5 % indicated that their parents worked in commerce, insurance or finance (Table 8.17) The third most common occupation amongst the Bronze Participants parents was in the area of the health.

Table 8.13 The Parental Occupations of All the Gaisce Bronze Participants

| Occupation | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Other | 33 | 21.7 |
| Commerce, Insurance & Finance | 19 | 12.5 |
| Health | 14 | 9.2 |
| Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing | 13 | 8.6 |
| Education | 13 | 8.6 |
| Building and Construction | 13 | 8.6 |
| Service Industry | 12 | 7.9 |
| Manufacturing Industry | 8 | 5.3 |
| Transport, Communication & Storage | 5 | 3.3 |
| Public Administration | 4 | 2.6 |
| Clerical / Administration | 3 | 2 |
| Defence | 3 | 2 |
| Unemployed at Present | 3 | 2 |
| Retired | 3 | 2 |
| Studying at Present | 3 | 2 |
| Electricity, Gas & Water supply | 2 | 1.3 |
| Legal | 1 | 0.7 |

Twenty five (19.1%) of the Control Group described their parents' occupation as 'other' (Table 8.18). The second and third largest category of parental employment (14.5 % and 13.7 %) was in the commerce, insurance / finance and construction respectively. The six most frequently cited parental occupations for the Bronze Control Group were also the six most frequently cited occupations for the Gaise Bronze Participant Group.

Table 8.14 The Parental Occupations of all the Bronze Award Control group

| Occupation | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Other | 25 | 19.1 |
| Commerce, Insurance & Finance | 19 | 14.5 |
| Building and Construction | 18 | 13.7 |
| Health | 12 | 9.2 |
| Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing | 8 | 6.1 |
| Education | 8 | 6.1 |
| Manufacturing Industry | 8 | 6.1 |
| Public Administration | 7 | 5.3 |
| Transport, Communication & Storage | 6 | 4.6 |
| Service Industry | 5 | 3.8 |
| Unemployed at Present | 5 | 3.8 |
| Clerical / Administration | 2 | 1.5 |
| Electricity, Gas & Water supply | 2 | 1.5 |
| Defence | 2 | 1.5 |
| Retired | 2 | 1.5 |
| Mining, Quarrying, Turf | 1 | 0.8 |
| Legal | 1 | 0.8 |

8.07 Results to the research question:

- Does participation in Gaisce – The President’s Bronze Award increase individuals levels of hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness, and psychological well-being for participants who scored within the lowest quartile on the Children’s Hope Scale, the General Self-Efficacy Scale, Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale, the Subjective Happiness Scale, and the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being

8.07.01 Results of the Lowest Quartile Gaisce Bronze Participants’ scores on the Children’s Hope Scale, the General Self Efficacy Scale, the Self Esteem Scale, the Happiness Scale and the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well Being

This section describes and compares the Gaisce Bronze Award Participants with a Control Group who scored within the lowest quartile on the Children’s Hope Scale, the General Self Efficacy Scale, the Self Esteem Scale, the Happiness Scale and the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well Being

A two by two (2x2) ANOVA was used to compare the scores obtained by the respective groups (see Table 8.15)

Table 8.15 2x2 ANOVAs for Lowest Quartile Bronze and Lowest Quartile Control Participants

| Variable | Time 1 | Time 2 | Time 1 | Time 2 | ANOVA | | | Interpretation |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|--------|---------------------|--------|----------|----------|-----------------|--|
| | Bronze Gaisce (N = 47) | | Control (N = 34) | | Group | Time | Group x Time | |
| Hope | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 18.59 | 24.02 | 19.26 | 22.70 | .183 | 36.23 | 1.81 | No participation related change |
| Standard Deviation | 3.94 | 5.96 | 2.62 | 5.18 | | | | |
| Hope Agency | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 9.92 | 12.27 | 9.45 | 11.68 | 1.50 | 39.59* | .026 | No participation related change |
| Standard Deviation | 2.27 | 3.35 | 1.37 | 2.66 | | | | |
| Hope Pathways | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 8.85 | 11.95 | 9.03 | 10.42 | 3.59 | 45.68** | 6.61 | Significant increase for Gaisce Group over time. |
| Standard Deviation | 1.64 | 2.94 | 1.04 | 2.25 | | | | |
| Self Efficacy | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 25.66 | 30.04 | 25.00 | 18.51 | 101.2*** | 3.49 | 92.87*** | Significant increase for Gaisce Group over time. |
| Standard Deviation | 2.67 | 3.89 | 3.49 | 4.55 | | | | |
| Self Esteem | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 13.62 | 18.90 | 14.55 | 17.14 | 0.33 | 42.57*** | 4.90* | Significant decrease for Control Group over time |
| Standard Deviation | 2.27 | 5.70 | 2.51 | 4.65 | | | | |
| Happiness | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 13.38 | 17.66 | 14.53 | 15.87 | 0.20 | 43.21*** | 11.93** | Significant increase for Gaisce Group over time. |
| Standard Deviation | 3.14 | 4.61 | 2.86 | 4.03 | | | | |
| Psychological Well Being | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 298.31 | 346.31 | 312.21 | 317.45 | 1.24 | 16.09*** | 10.38** | Significant increase for Gaisce Group over time. |
| Standard Deviation | 24.00 | 58.65 | 20.15 | 42.05 | | | | |

Note: F Values are from 2x2 group (Bronze Gaisce, Control) x Time (Time 1, Time 2) ANOVAs

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

8.07.01.01 Scores on the Children's Hope Scale

The following two variables failed to find significant effects: Hope and Hope Agency. Five variables detected interactions between group and time: Hope Pathways, Self Efficacy, Self-esteem and happiness and Psychological Well-being (see Table 8.7). Tests of simple effects for these variables are presented below.

8.07.01.02 Hope Pathways Subscale

A significant interaction effect emerged between Time and Group, $F(1, 78) = 6.62$, $p = .012$, with a moderate effect size, $\eta^2 = .078$. A test of simple effects (see Table 8.22) indicated a significant increase in mean scores over time for both the Gaisce and the Control Group.

Table 8.16 ANOVA for Lowest Quartile Bronze Gaisce Participants and Control group for Pathway subscale (Including Tests of Simple Effects)

| <i>Source</i> | <i>SS</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>MS</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>Sig.</i> | <i>F_{cv}</i> |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Group</i> | 17.71 | 1 | 17.71 | 3.59 | .062 | - |
| Group at Time 1 | 0.62 | 1 | 0.62 | 0.14 | | 5.92 |
| Group at Time 2 | 45.57 | 1 | 45.57 | 10.62 | | 5.92 |
| <i>Time</i> | 196.33 | 1 | 196.33 | 45.68 | .001 | - |
| Gaisce Participant | 226.76 | 1 | 226.76 | 52.85 | | 5.92 |
| Control | 32.06 | 1 | 32.06 | 7.47 | | 5.92 |
| Time X Group | 28.47 | 1 | 28.47 | 6.62 | .012 | |
| Error | 335.17 | 78 | 4.297 | | | |

The results also indicated a significant difference between the Gaisce Group and the Control Group at Time 2 (Figure 8.9).

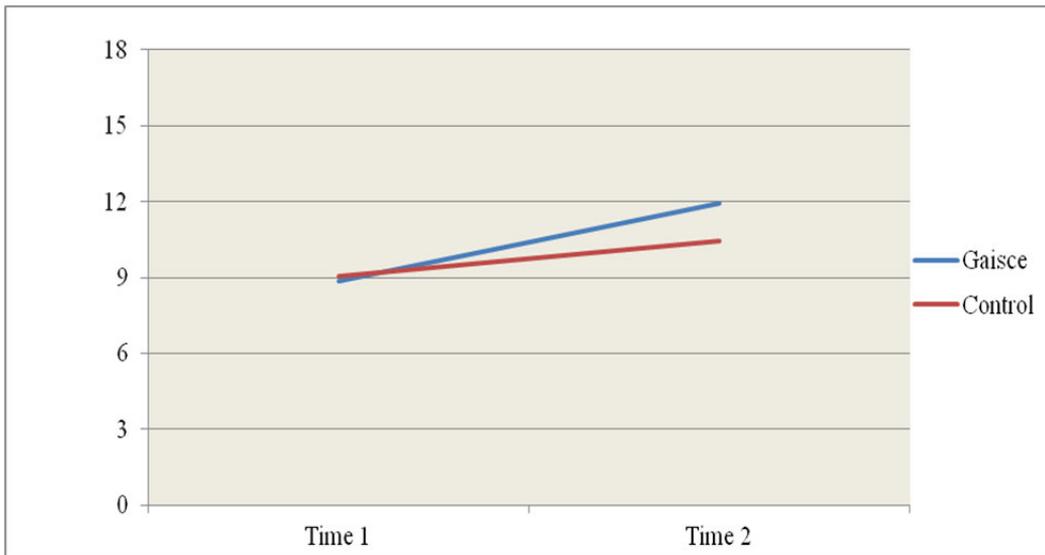


Figure 8.9 Estimated marginal means for Lowest Quartile Bronze Participants and Control Group in the Pathways Subscale of the Children’s Hope Scale

8.07.02 Scores on the Self-efficacy Scale

A significant interaction effect occurred between Time and Group, $F(1, 78) = 92.87, p = .000$, which emerged as a large effect size, $\eta^2 = .544$.

A test of simple effects (see Table 8.24) indicated a significant increase in the Gaisce Group’s mean scores and a significant decrease in the Control Group’s mean scores over Time.

Table 8.17 ANOVA for Lowest Quartile Bronze Gaisce Participants and Control group for Self-efficacy (Including Tests of Simple Effects)

| <i>Source</i> | <i>SS</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>MS</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>Sig.</i> | <i>F_{cv}</i> |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Group</i> | 1464.38 | 1 | 1464.38 | 101.17 | .000 | - |
| Group at Time 1 | 8.75 | 1 | 8.75 | 0.69 | | 5.92 |
| Group at Time 2 | 2617.34 | 1 | 2617.34 | 209.22 | | 5.92 |
| <i>Time</i> | 43.74 | 1 | 43.74 | 3.49 | .065 | - |
| Gaisce Participant | 431.21 | 1 | 431.21 | 34.49 | | 5.92 |
| Control | 736.12 | 1 | 736.12 | 58.89 | | 5.92 |
| Time X Group | 1161.75 | 1 | 1161.75 | 92.87 | .000 | |
| Error | 975.66 | 78 | 12.508 | | | |

There was also a significant difference between the Gaisce Group and the Control group at Time 2 (Figure 8.10).

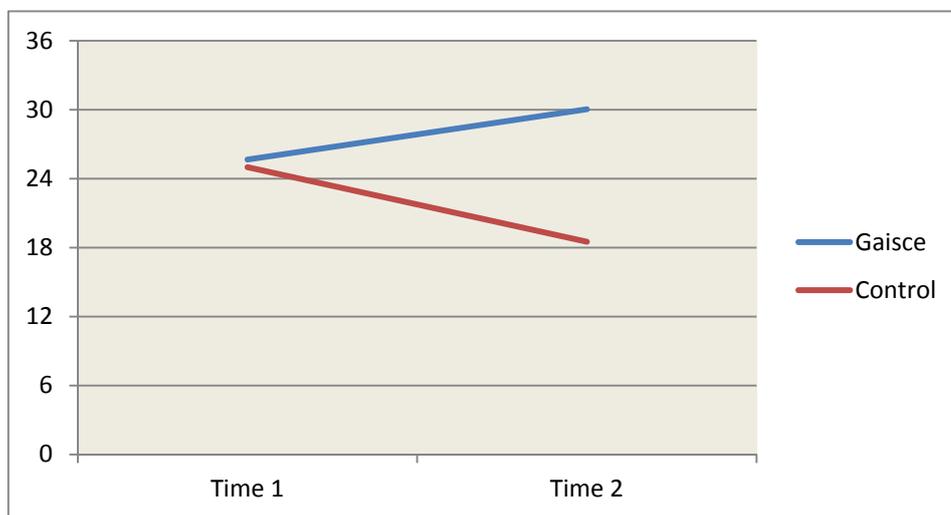


Figure 8.10 Estimated marginal means for lowest Quartile Bronze Participants and Control Group in the Self-efficacy Scale

There was a significant main effect for Group, $F(1, 78) = 101.17, p = .000$. The effect size was large, $\eta^2 = .565$.

There was no significant main effect for Time, $F(1, 78) = 3.49, p = .065$.

8.07.03 Scores on the Self-esteem Scale

A significant interaction effect was evident for Time x Group $F(1, 72) = 4.90, p = .030$, which had a moderate effect, $\eta^2 = .06$. A test of simple effects (Table 8.26) indicated significant change for both the Gaisce Participants and the Control Group over time.

Table 8.18 ANOVA for Lowest Quartile Bronze Gaisce Participants and Control group for Self-esteem (Including Tests of Simple Effects)

| <i>Source</i> | <i>SS</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>MS</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>Sig.</i> | <i>F_{cv}</i> |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Group</i> | 6.54 | 1 | 6.54 | .327 | .569 | - |
| Group at Time 1 | 15.17 | 1 | 15.17 | 1.14 | | 5.92 |
| Group at Time 2 | 56.47 | 1 | 56.47 | 4.25 | | 5.92 |
| <i>Time</i> | 564.56 | 1 | 564.56 | 42.57 | .000 | - |
| Gaisce Participant | 551.25 | 1 | 551.25 | 41.57 | | 5.92 |
| Control | 113.88 | 1 | 113.88 | 8.58 | | 5.92 |
| Time X Group | 65.10 | 1 | 65.10 | 4.90 | .030 | |
| Error | 954.86 | 72 | 13.262 | | | |

The test of simple effects also indicated a significant difference between the Bronze Group and Control Group at Time 2 (Figure 8.11)

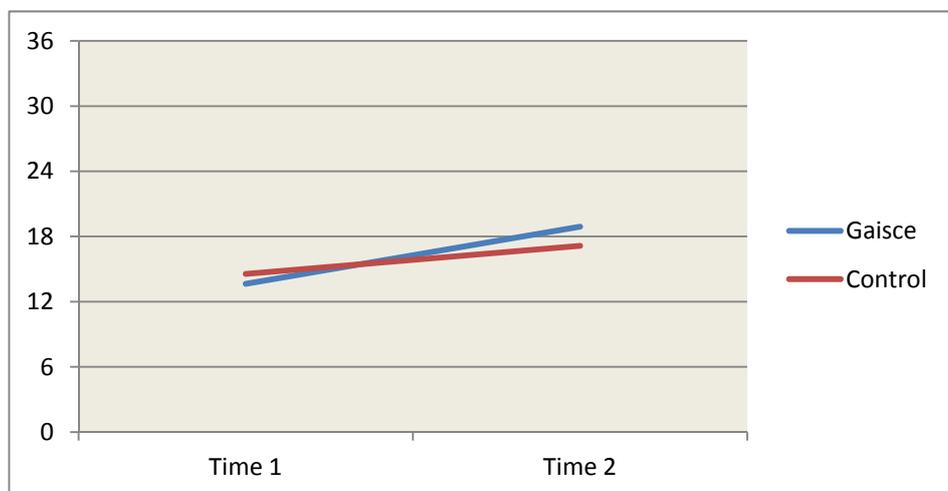


Figure 8.11 Estimated marginal means for lowest quartile Gaisce and Control Participants on the Self-esteem Scale

8.07.04

Scores on the Happiness Scale

A significant interaction effect was evident between Time and Group $F(1, 79) = 11.93, p = .001$, which had a moderate effect, $\eta^2 = .131$. A test of simple effects (Table 8.28) indicated significant change for the Gaisce Participants from Time 1 to Time 2.

Table 8.19 ANOVA for Lowest Quartile Bronze Gaisce Participants and Control group for Happiness (Including Tests of Simple Effects)

| <i>Source</i> | <i>SS</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>MS</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>Sig.</i> | <i>F_{cv}</i> |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Group</i> | 4.107 | 1 | 4.107 | 0.20 | .656 | - |
| Group at Time 1 | 27.09 | 1 | 27.09 | 3.67 | | 5.92 |
| Group at Time 2 | 65.14 | 1 | 65.14 | 8.87 | | 5.92 |
| <i>Time</i> | 319.24 | 1 | 319.24 | 43.21 | .000 | - |
| Gaisce Participant | 385.71 | 1 | 385.71 | 52.26 | | 5.92 |
| Control | 34.66 | 1 | 34.66 | 4.69 | | 5.92 |
| Time X Group | 88.34 | 1 | 88.34 | 11.93 | .001 | |
| Error | 583.619 | 79 | 7.388 | | | |

A significant difference also emerged between the Bronze Participants and the Control Group at Time 2 (Figure 8.12).

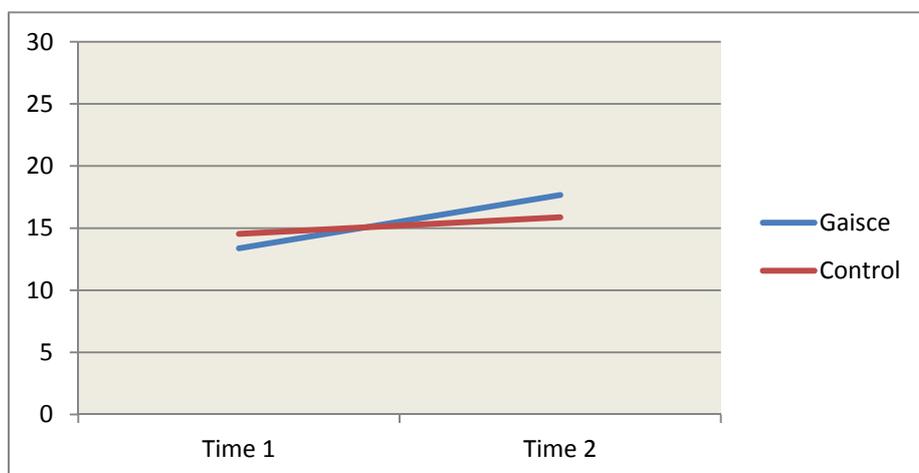


Figure 8.12 Estimated marginal means for lowest quartile Gaisce and Control Participants on the Happiness Scale

8.07.05 Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-being

A significant interaction effect was evident between Time and Group $F(1, 70) = 10.38$, $p = .002$, which had a moderate effect, $\eta^2 = .129$. A test of simple effects (see Table 8.30) indicated significant change for the Gaisce Participants over time.

Table 8.20 ANOVA for Lowest Quartile Bronze Gaisce Participants and Control group for Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-being (Including Tests of Simple Effects)

| <i>Source</i> | <i>SS</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>MS</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>Sig.</i> | <i>F_{cv}</i> |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Group</i> | 1997.21 | 1 | 1997.21 | 1.24 | .268 | - |
| Group at Time 1 | 3455.82 | 1 | 3455.82 | 2.19 | | 5.92 |
| Group at Time 2 | 14881.01 | 1 | 14881.01 | 9.45 | | 5.92 |
| <i>Time</i> | 25335.62 | 1 | 25335.62 | 16.09 | .000 | - |
| Gaisce Participant | 44928 | 1 | 44928 | 28.54 | | 5.92 |
| Control | 453.46 | 1 | 453.46 | 0.28 | | 5.92 |
| Time X Group | 16339.62 | 1 | 16339.62 | 10.38 | .002 | |
| Error | 110188.03 | 70 | 1599.89 | | | |

There was also a significant difference between the Gaisce Participants and the Control Group at Time 2 (Figure 8.13).

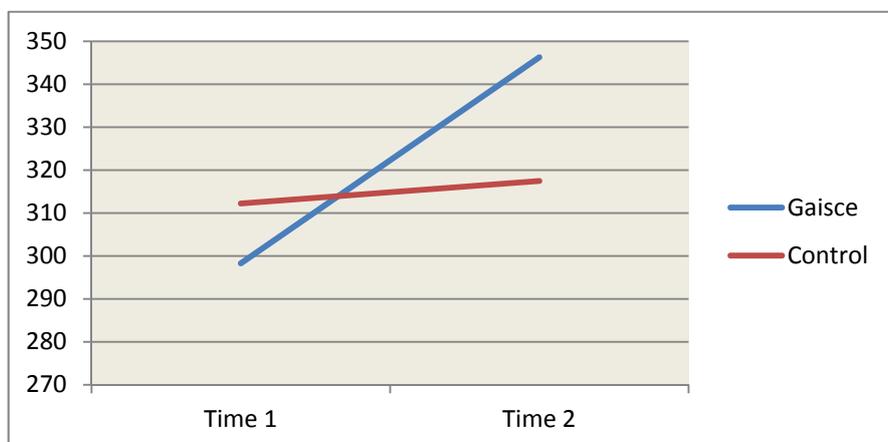


Figure 8.13 Estimated marginal means for lowest quartile Gaisce and Control Participants on the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-being

8.08 Summary of Findings for Lowest Quartile Bronze Participants

A summary of key findings pertaining to the results from the analysis of the Lowest Quartile Bronze and Control Participants' scores on the Hope, Self-efficacy, Self-Esteem, Happiness and Psychological Well-being scales are presented in Table 8.31.

Table 8.21 Key findings in relation to the positive effects of participation in Gaisce the Bronze Award for participants who scored within the Lowest Quartile.

Research Question:

- Does participation in the Gaisce Bronze Award improve levels of Hope, Self-efficacy, Self-esteem, Happiness and Psychological Well-being for those who scored within the lowest quartile?

Addressed by:

- 2 x 2 Anovas were utilised to compare Lowest Quartile Bronze Participants' pre and post participation scores on the on the Hope, Self-efficacy, Self-esteem, Happiness and Psychological Well-being scales, with the Lowest Quartile Control Group.

Key Findings:

- A significant interaction effect for Time x Group was evident for the Hope Pathways Scores, $F(1, 78) = 6.62, p = .012$, with a moderate effect size, $\eta^2 = .078$. Both groups experienced an increase in scores with the Gaisce group presenting with significantly different scores at Time 2.
- No significant interaction effects were present for the scores on the Overall Hope and Hope Agency.

- The results indicated a significant interaction effect occurred between Time and Group, $F(1, 78) = 92.87$, $p = .001$, on the Self-efficacy Scale, which emerged as a large effect size, $\eta^2 = .544$. The Gaisce group experienced a significant increase over time, while the Control Group experienced a significant decrease from Time 1 to Time 2.
 - A significant interaction effect was evident for Time x Group $F(1, 72) = 4.90$, $p = .030$, on the Self-esteem Scale which had a moderate effect, $\eta^2 = .064$. Both groups experienced a significant change over time and a significant difference was observed between the 2 groups at Time 2.
 - A significant interaction between Time and Group was present on the Happiness Scale, $F(1, 79) = 11.93$, $p = .001$, which had a moderate effect, $\eta^2 = .131$. The lowest Quartile Gaisce Group experienced a significant increase from Time 1 to Time 2.
 - A significant interaction effect present between Time and Group on the Scale of Psychological Well-being, $F(1, 70) = 10.38$, $p = .002$, which had a moderate effect, $\eta^2 = .129$. Both groups experienced a significant increase in scores and a significant difference was observed between both groups at Time 2.
-

8.09 Demographics for Gold Award Quantitative Study

8.09.01 Age and gender of participants for Gold Award Quantitative Study

The total number of individuals who completed pre and post questionnaires in the Gaisce Gold study was 61 (N=61). The majority (72.6 %) of the individuals who participated in the Gaisce Gold Study were female (n = 45) (see Table 8.32). The mean age for all those who partook in this study was 20.6 years, with females presenting as older ($M = 20.96$) than the males ($M = 19.65$).

Table 8.22 Descriptive statistics for the respondents of pre and post Gaisce Gold Study

| Participants | Total | Mean Age | SD | Male | % | Mean Age | SD | Female | % | Mean Age | SD |
|----------------|-------|----------|------|------|------|----------|------|--------|------|----------|------|
| <i>All</i> | 62 | 20.6 | 3.04 | 17 | 27.4 | 19.82 | 3.05 | 45 | 72.6 | 21.07 | 3.21 |
| <i>Gaisce</i> | 31 | 19.26 | 2.34 | 10 | 32.3 | 19.8 | 2.2 | 21 | 67.7 | 19.1 | 2.2 |
| <i>Control</i> | 31 | 22.19 | 3.26 | 7 | 22.6 | 19.43 | 3.82 | 24 | 77.4 | 22.58 | 2.62 |

8.09.02 County of Residence

In response to the question pertaining to their county of residence, Dublin emerged as the most frequent location for the Gold Gaisce Participants, with 19% of the participants living there. Forty percent of the Gold Participants lived in Sligo, Cork, Westmeath and Wicklow with (Figure 8.14).

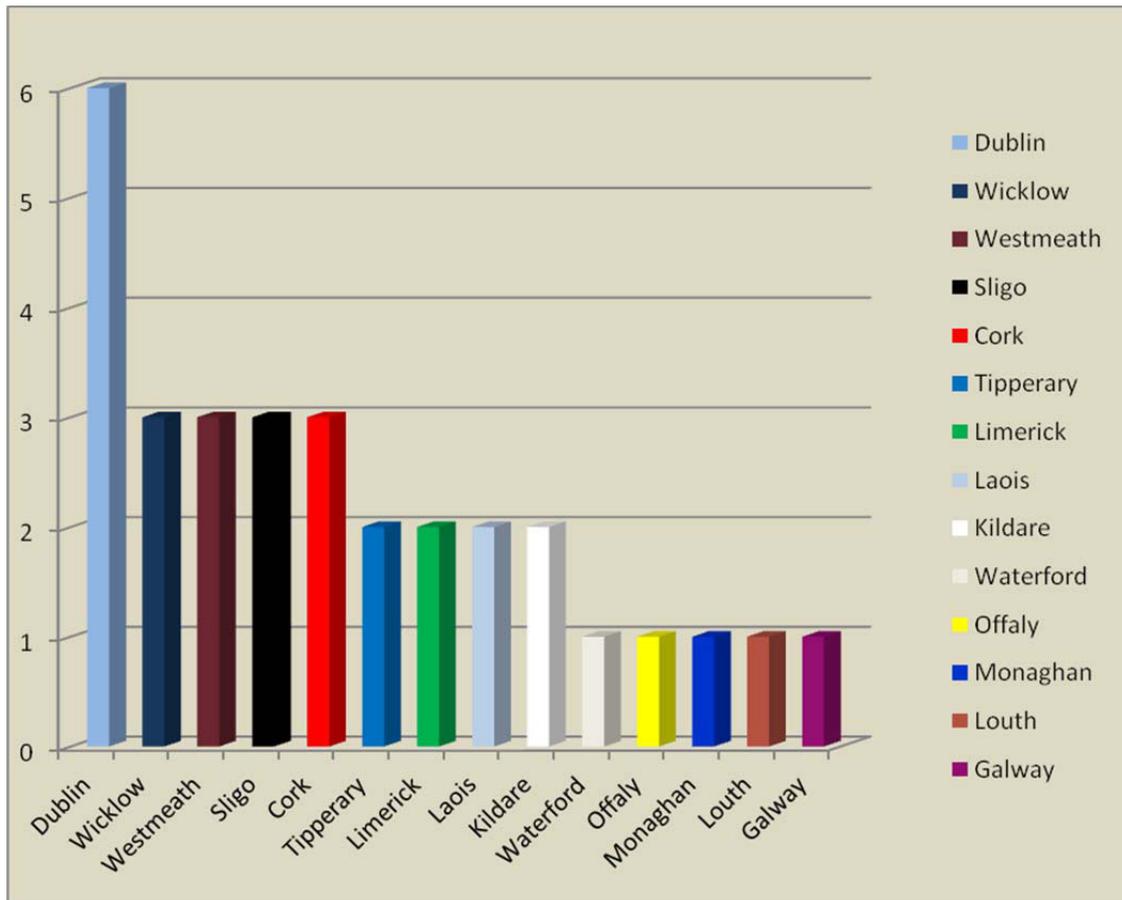


Figure 8.14 County of residence for Gaisce Participants in the Gaisce Gold Study

Similarly for the Control Group, the largest representation lived in Dublin with a quarter located in the respective county (Figure 8.15). The second most represented counties were Westmeath and Longford with each accounting for 16.1% of the Control group.

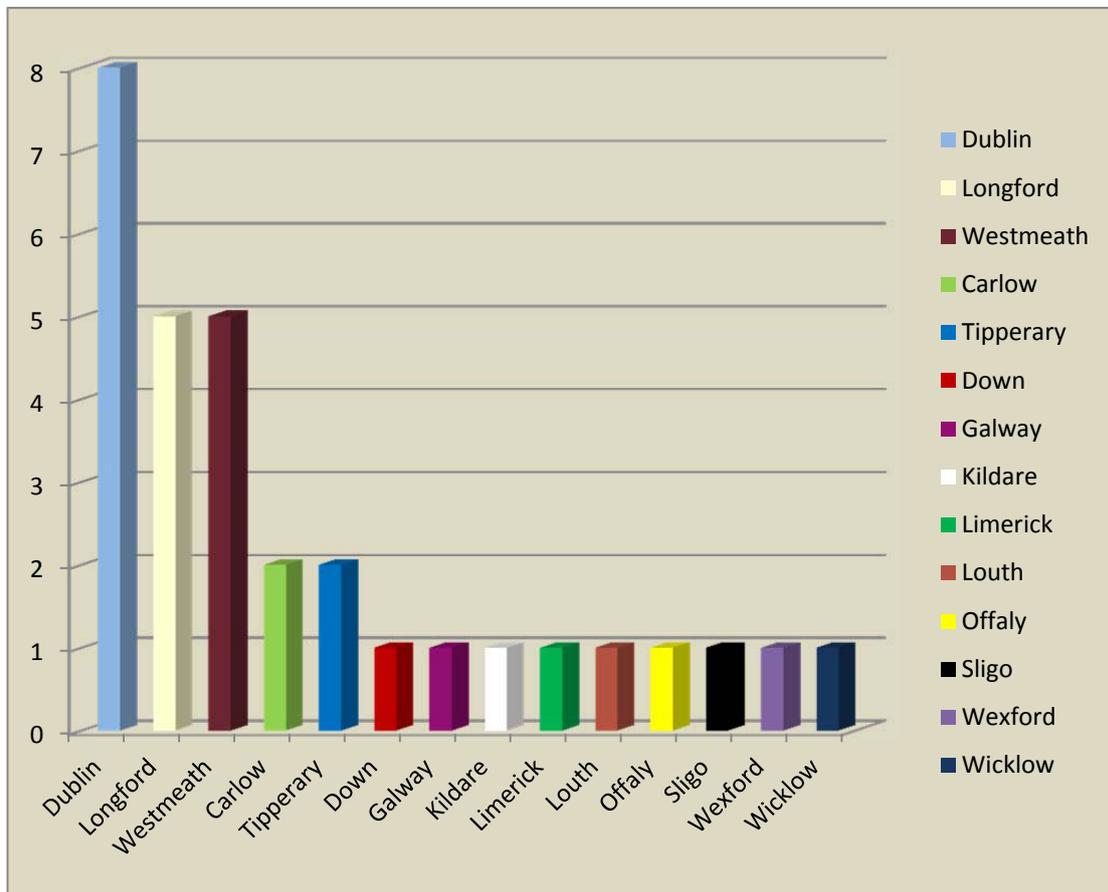


Figure 8.15 County of residence for Control Group in Gaisce Gold Study

8.09.03 Location of Residence

The majority, 48.4 % (n=15) of the Gaisce Gold Participants indicated that they lived in a town, while 32.3% (n=10) of the group cited their residence in the countryside (Figure 8.16). The least number of participants (n=6) lived in a city.

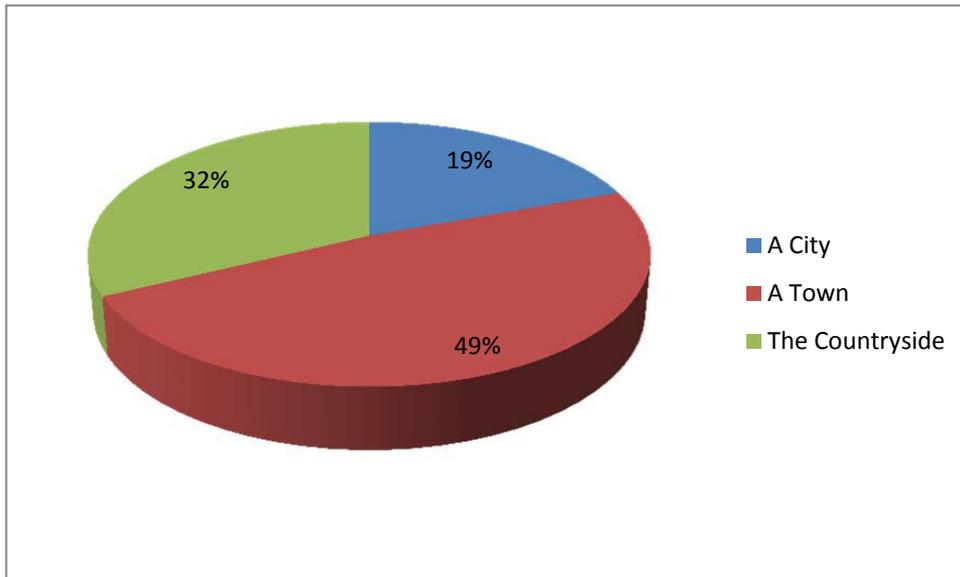


Figure 8.16 Area where Gaisce Gold Participants lived

Eleven (n=11) of the Control Group lived in a town while the remaining twenty participants were evenly divided between the city (n=10) and the countryside (n=10) (Figure 8.17).

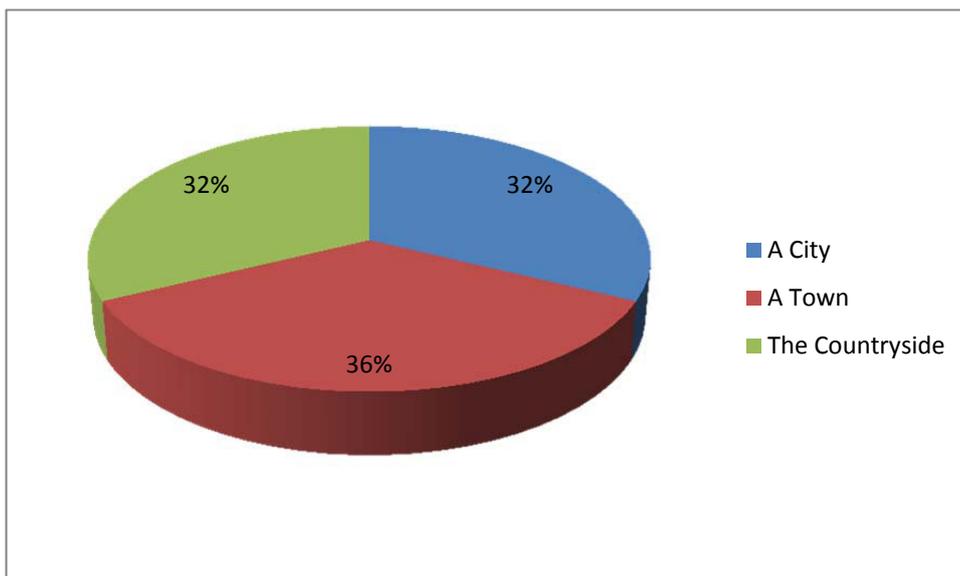


Figure 8.17 Area where Control Participants for Gaisce Gold Study lived.

8.09.04 Current occupation

The majority, 80.6 %, of the Gold Gaisce Participants reported that they were studying at the time of the research. With the exception of 1 participant who was unemployed, the remaining Gold Participants were working in Education and the Service Industry (Table 8.33)

Table 8.23 The Occupations of the Gaisce Gold Participant

| Occupation | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------------|-----------|---------|
| Studying at Present | 25 | 80.6 |
| Education | 4 | 12.9 |
| Service Industry | 1 | 3.2 |
| Unemployed at Present | 1 | 3.2 |

Twelve (38.7%) of the Control Group reported that they were studying at the time of the research (Table 9.34). The second largest number of the Control Group were employed in the health industry (12.9 %), while the Legal and Education sectors both accounted for 9.7 % of the Control Group's occupations.

Table 8.24 The Occupations of the Control group for the Gaisce Gold research

| Occupation | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Studying at Present | 12 | 38.7 |
| Health | 4 | 12.9 |
| Legal | 3 | 9.7 |
| Education | 3 | 9.7 |
| Clerical / Administration | 2 | 6.5 |
| Building and Construction | 2 | 6.5 |
| Manufacturing Industry | 1 | 3.2 |
| Commerce | 1 | 3.2 |
| Defence | 1 | 3.2 |
| Unemployed at Present | 1 | 3.2 |
| Other | 1 | 3.2 |

8.10 Results to the research question:

- Does participation in Gaisce—The President’s Gold Award improve an individual’s levels of hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness, and psychological well-being?

8.10.01 Results of the Gaisce Gold Participants’ scores on the Adult Hope Scale, the General Self Efficacy Scale, the Self Esteem Scale, the Happiness Scale and the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well Being

This section describes and compares the scores of Gaisce Gold Award Participants with a Control Group on the Adult Hope Scale, the General Self Efficacy Scale, the Self Esteem Scale, the Happiness Scale and the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well Being.

A two by two (2x2) ANOVA was used to compare the scores obtained by the respective groups (Table 8.35).

Table 8.25 2x2 ANOVAs for Gold and Control Participants

| Variable | Gold Gaisce (N = 31) | | Control (N= 31) | | ANOVA | | | Interpretation |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|--------------------|--------|-------|------|-----------------|---|
| | Time 1 | Time 2 | Time 1 | Time 2 | Group | Time | Group x Time | |
| Hope | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 39.32 | 40.19 | 37.90 | 37.29 | .091 | 3.42 | 1.32 | No participation related change |
| Standard Deviation | 5.51 | 5.26 | 5.49 | 6.34 | | | | |
| Hope Agency | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 19.71 | 20.03 | 19.13 | 18.74 | 2.94 | .127 | 2.03 | No participation related change |
| Standard Deviation | 3.08 | 2.77 | 2.74 | 3.05 | | | | |
| Hope Pathways | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 18.35 | 20.12 | 18.61 | 18.48 | 1.05 | 3.76 | 5.04* | Significant difference between groups at Time 2 |
| Standard Deviation | 2.58 | 3.52 | 2.97 | 3.43 | | | | Significant increase for Gaisce Group over time |
| Self Efficacy | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 31.77 | 33.61 | 31.45 | 31.00 | 3.84 | 1.87 | 5.10* | Significant difference between groups at Time 2 |
| Standard Deviation | 3.54 | 3.56 | 3.47 | 3.68 | | | | Significant increase for Gaisce Group over time |
| Self Esteem | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 21.84 | 22.58 | 22.00 | 21.90 | .051 | .420 | .709 | No participation related change |
| Standard Deviation | 4.75 | 4.84 | 4.93 | 5.07 | | | | |
| Happiness | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 22.00 | 22.41 | 22.25 | 22.51 | .035 | .538 | .030 | No participation related change |
| Standard Deviation | 4.32 | 3.96 | 4.18 | 4.17 | | | | |
| Psychological Well Being | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 404.39 | 413.32 | 390.94 | 389.42 | 3.01 | .802 | 1.59 | No participation related change |
| Standard Deviation | 45.49 | 43.37 | 46.62 | 46.05 | | | | |

Note: F Values are from 2x2 group (Gold Gaisce, Control) x Time (Time 1, Time 2) ANOVAs

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

8.10.01.01 Scores on the Adult State Hope Scale

The following variables failed to find significant effects: Hope, Hope Agency, Self-esteem, happiness and Psychological Well-being (see Table 8.7). Two variables detected interactions between group and time: Hope Pathways and Self Efficacy. Tests of simple effects for these variables are presented below.

8.10.01.02 Scores on the Hope Pathways Subscale

A significant interaction effect emerged between Group and Time, $F(1, 60) = 5.04$, $p = .029$. The effect size was moderate, $\eta^2 = .077$.

A test of simple effects (Table 8.36) indicated a significant difference between the Gaisce and Control groups at Time 2.

A significant increase occurred for the Gaisce participants' from Time 1 to Time 2 (Figure 8.18)

Table 8.26 ANOVA for Gold Participants on Pathways Subscale (Including Tests of Simple Effects)

| <i>Source</i> | <i>SS</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>MS</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>Sig.</i> | <i>F_{cv}</i> |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Group</i> | 14.911 | 1 | 14.911 | 1.05 | .311 | - |
| Group at Time 1 | 1.03 | 1 | 1.03 | 0.18 | - | 5.58 |
| Group at Time 2 | 41.95 | 1 | 41.95 | 7.53 | - | 5.58 |
| <i>Time</i> | 20.976 | 1 | 20.976 | 3.76 | .057 | - |
| Gaisce Participant | 48.79 | 1 | 48.79 | 8.76 | - | 5.58 |
| Control | 0.25 | 1 | 0.25 | 0.04 | - | 5.58 |
| Time X Group | 28.073 | 1 | 28.073 | 5.04 | .029 | - |
| Error | 334.452 | 60 | 5.574 | | | |

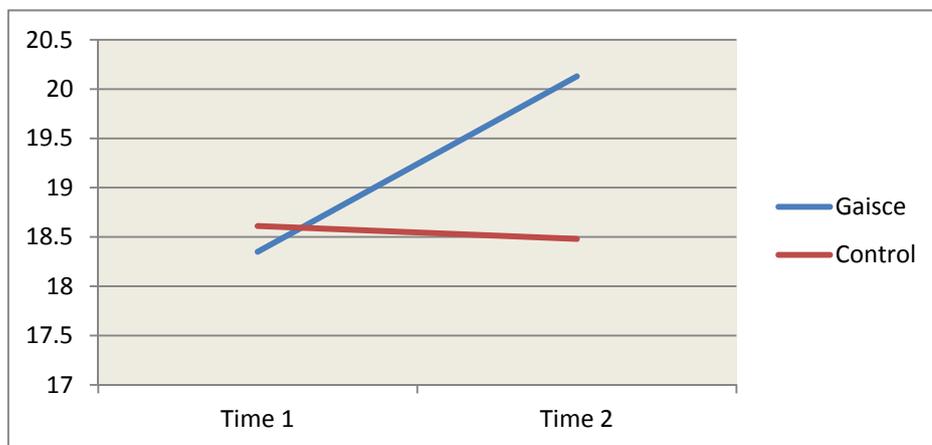


Figure 8.18 Estimated Marginal Means for Gold Participants on the Pathways Subtest of the Hope Scale

8.10.02 Scores on the Self-Efficacy Scale

A significant interaction effect occurred between the Group and Time, $F(1, 60) = 5.10$, $p = .028$. The interaction effect was moderate, $\eta^2 = .078$.

Table 8.27 ANOVA for Matched Participants on the Self-efficacy Scale (Including Tests of Simple Effects)

| Source | SS | df | MS | F | Sig. | Fcv |
|--------------------|---------|----|--------|-------|------|------|
| Group | 66.782 | 1 | 66.782 | 3.84 | .055 | - |
| Group at Time 1 | 1.61 | 1 | 1.61 | 0.20 | - | 5.58 |
| Group at Time 2 | 105.82 | 1 | 105.82 | 13.29 | - | 5.58 |
| Time | 14.91 | 1 | 14.91 | 1.87 | .176 | - |
| Gaisce Participant | 52.40 | 1 | 52.40 | 6.58 | - | 5.58 |
| Control | 3.16 | 1 | 3.16 | 0.39 | - | 5.58 |
| Time X Group | 40.653 | 1 | 40.653 | 5.10 | .028 | - |
| Error | 477.935 | 60 | 17.409 | | | |

A subsequent test of simple effects (Table 8.38) indicated a significant difference between the Gaisce and Control groups at Time 2 and a significant in the Gaisce participants' scores between Time 1 and Time 2 (Figure 8.19).

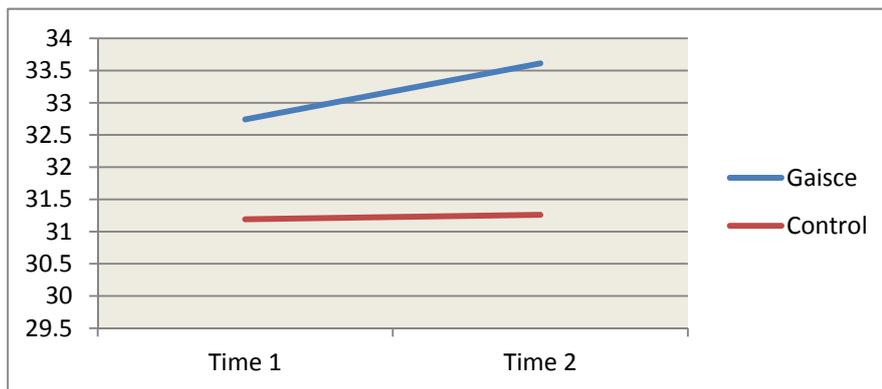


Figure 8.19: Estimated marginal means for Gold Participants on the Self-efficacy Scale

No significant main effects were present for either Group, $F(1, 60) = 3.84$, $p = .055$, or Time, $F(1, 60) = 1.87$, $p = .176$.

8.11 Summary of Findings for Gold Award Quantitative Study

A summary of key findings pertaining to the results from the analysis of the Gold Award Participants and Control Participants' scores on the Hope, Self-efficacy, Self-esteem, Happiness and Psychological Well-being scales are presented in Table 8.28.

Table 8.28: Key findings in relation to the positive effects of participation in the Gaisce Gold Award

Research Question:

- Does participation in the Gaisce Gold Award improve levels of Hope, Self-efficacy, Self-esteem, Happiness and Psychological Well-being.

Addressed by:

- 2 x 2 ANOVAs were utilised to compare Gaisce Gold Award Participants' pre and post participation scores on the on the Hope, Self-efficacy, Self-esteem, Happiness and Psychological Well-being scales, with a Control Group

Key Findings:

- A significant interaction effect emerged between Group and Time on the Hope Pathways Subscale, $F(1, 60) = 5.04$, $p = .029$. The effect size was moderate, $\eta^2 = .077$. A significant difference was present between the Gaisce and Control groups at Time 2. A significant increase occurred for the Gaisce participants' scores from Time 1 to Time 2.
- No significant interaction effect was evident for Group x Time on either the Total Hope score, $F(1,60) = 1.32$, $p = .25$, or Hope Agency score, $F(1, 60) = 2.03$, $p = .159$.

- A significant interaction effect occurred between Group and Time on the Self-efficacy Scale, $F(1, 60) = 5.10$, $p = .028$, which emerged as a moderate effect, $\eta^2 = .078$. A significant difference between the Gaisce and Control groups' scores was present at Time 2 and a significant increase was present for the Gaisce Gold Participants over time.
 - No significant interaction effect was present between Group and Time on the Self-esteem Scale, $F(1, 60) = .709$, $p = .403$.
 - The interaction effect for Group x Time on the Happiness Scale did not reach statistical significance, $F(1, 60) = 0.30$, $p = .862$,
 - No significant interaction effect was evident for Group x Time on the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-being, $F(1, 60) = 3.01$, $p = .088$.
-

Chapter 9 Results of Qualitative Study

9.01 Introduction

The qualitative component of this research aimed to obtain an understanding of participants' personal experiences of taking part in Gaisce—The President's Award programme. In particular this component sought to ascertain if participation in the Award programme acted as a catalyst for the development of psychological attributes and personal strengths in the individual.

To obtain information necessary to answer the above question, Bronze and Gold Gaisce participants took part in focus groups and individual interviews. Information on participants is available in the Methodology section (Chapter 7). Some of the questions elicited a factual response; others were exploratory in nature and designed to allow participants to be open and forth-coming with their responses.

Following examination of the interview data, the data was analysed using thematic analysis procedures (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The analysis revealed a number of sub-themes which combined to give a number of overall, or main, themes relevant to the participants' experience of taking part in Gaisce—The President's Award.

This chapter first analyses the responses to the factual questions asked of participants, followed by the responses to the more probing questions. All responses were then drawn together and examined, and a number of main themes and sub-themes emerged pertinent to the question if Gaisce acts as a catalyst to the development of psychological attributes and personal strengths in the participants.

The Bronze qualitative results will be presented first, followed by the Gold qualitative results. To protect the anonymity of the participants, only group numbers are provided for each quotation.

9.02 Bronze qualitative results

While the focus groups incorporated structured sequences to obtain specific information, the majority of the questions were general and open-ended to allow participants full reign to discuss their experience of their participation in the Award. In this section, responses to the specific questions will be reviewed first, followed by the open-ended questions. Sixty-four participants took part in the focus groups. Participants came from six counties. There were 39 females (61% of the total group) and 25 males (39% of the total group).

9.02.01 Questions

How did you hear about Gaisce the President's Award?

The majority (55%) of the Bronze participants were introduced to the President's Award by their secondary school teacher, who in most cases was also their respective Transition Year Co-ordinator. The second highest means of gaining knowledge of the Gaisce programme was via a family member. (See Figure 9.1)

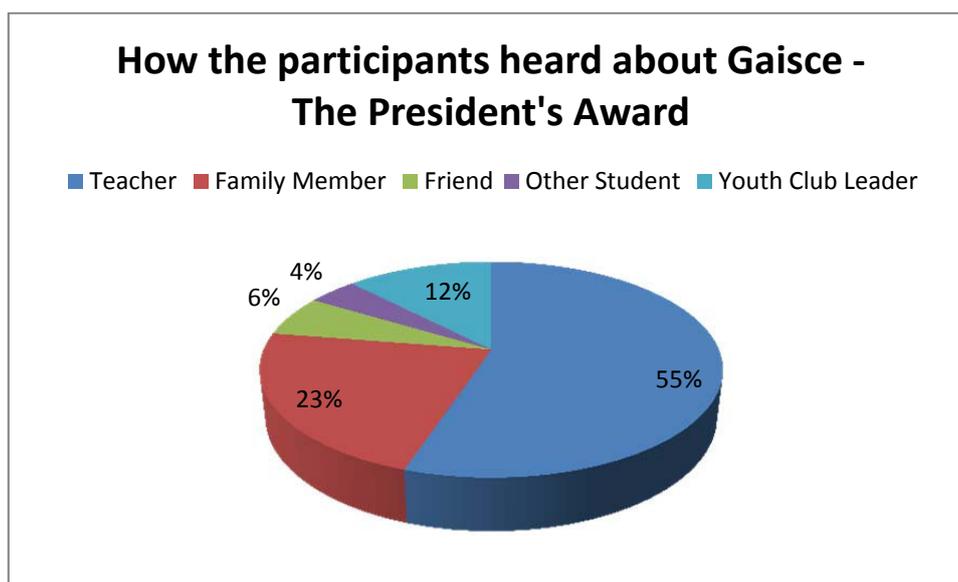


Figure 9.1 How Participants Heard about Gaisce – The President's Award.

What did you select as your four challenges for your Gaisce Bronze Award?

While some of the interviewees chose similar activities for the Physical, Personal and Community components, there was a large variation in the type of activities undertaken (Tables 9.1 – 9.8). The Physical component included a variety of sporting activities, such as Gaelic, Soccer, Swimming, Gymnastics, Dancing and Boxing. Personal Skills chosen included Kayaking, Coaching, Volunteering, Debating and Baking. Community

Involvement varied from a group activity such as the Crossing Bridges Programme in Belfast, to individual choices such as working in a charity shop, coaching a local team, student council, or volunteering in a nursing home or animal shelter. In most cases, the adventure component was organised by the respective youth leaders or Transition Year Co-ordinators of the participating students. As such this component of the Award is completed as a group and typically involves an overnight trip away. The majority of the respective Adventures involved physical activities which comprised long walks or hikes.

Table 9.1 Samples of the challenges undertaken by the Bronze Participants who participated in the Bronze Qualitative Study

| Number of Participants | Physical Component | Personal Skill | Community Involvement | Adventure |
|------------------------|--------------------|------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 64 | Gaelic Football | Musical | Coaching Sports | Mountain Hike |
| | Soccer | Debating | Working in Charity Shop | Rock and Mountain Climbing |
| | Boxing | ECDL | Working with individuals with intellectual disabilities | Hill Walk |
| | Dancing | Guitar | Assisting in Senior Citizens' Home | Adventure Centre |
| | Swimming | Computers | Working within Youth Club | Long distance walk |
| | Gym | Violin | Working within Parish Group | |
| | Running | Horse Riding | Restoring Old Building | |
| | Basketball | Cooking | Helping the visually impaired | |
| | Irish Dancing | Childcare | | |
| | Hurling | First Aid | | |
| | Rugby | Piano | | |
| | Tennis | Clarinet | | |
| | Life Saving | Creative Writing | | |
| | Cycling | Theatre | | |
| | Badminton | Drums | | |
| Walking | Acting | | | |

Tell me about your experience of taking part in Gaisce.

Twenty-four individual sub-themes emerged from the Bronze participants’ responses relating to their experience of taking part in Gaisce. The majority of the participants highlighted that they gained confidence from their participation in the programme. Other highlights for participants included a sense of achievement, being part of a team, and the opportunity to make friends. Some participants stressed the emotional effects of their participation, using words like “happy”, “patient”, “helping” and “fun” and “enjoyment”. (See Table 9.2)

Table 9.2 Experience of taking part in Gaisce – Responses from Bronze participants

| <i>Experience of taking part in Gaisce – Responses from Bronze participants</i> |
|---|
| Enhanced confidence |
| Sense of achievement |
| Team membership |
| Commitment |
| Friendships |
| Opportunity to help |
| Happy, happiness |
| Camaraderie |
| Greater patience |
| Increased self-esteem |
| Improved fitness |
| Motivation |
| Practice |
| Job opportunities |
| Challenge |
| Understand others |
| Greater maturity |
| Brilliant experience |
| Increased self-worth |
| Enhanced skill(s) |
| Goal opportunities |
| Craic |
| Fun |
| Enjoyment |

What did you like best about Gaisce—The President’s Award?

In responding to what aspect of Gaisce they liked best, eighteen sub-themes emerged from the Bronze participants’ responses. While ‘fun’ appeared as the most frequent theme, other motifs such as Friendships, Confidence, Coaching, Helping and Enjoyment also figured highly amongst the respective responses (see Table 9.3).

Table 9.3 Most Liked Aspects of Gaisce Experience -Responses from Bronze participants

| <i>Most Liked Aspects of Gaisce Experience -Responses from Bronze participants</i> |
|--|
| Fun |
| Enjoyable |
| Opportunity to help |
| Chance to coach |
| Enhanced confidence |
| Friendships |
| Achievement |
| To meet people |
| Team membership |
| Chance to teach |
| Commitment |
| Enhanced skill(s) |
| Craic |
| Can Do It |
| Brilliant experience |
| Improved fitness |
| Challenge |
| Greater patience |

What aspect of the award has been most helpful for you?

This question sought to ascertain which of the four challenges the Bronze participants believed was most helpful to them. The majority of the participants indicated that they found the Community Involvement component most helpful, while the Physical Recreation component emerged as the least helpful (see Figure 9.2).

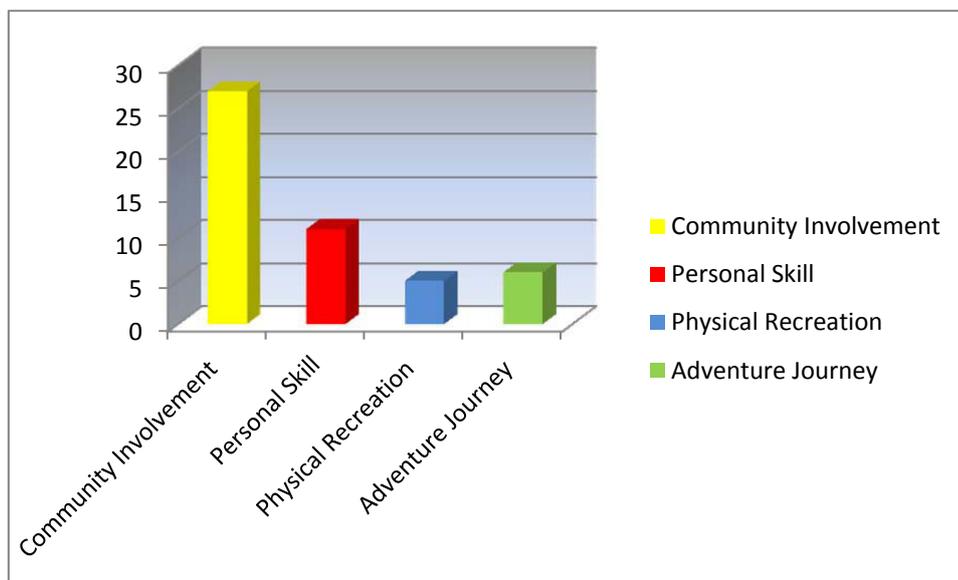


Figure 9.2 Aspects of the Award most helpful to Bronze participants

Was there any aspect of the award that was less helpful for you?

The majority of the Bronze participants did not perceive any aspect as unhelpful and believed that all aspects of the Award were interesting and worthwhile. However, it should be acknowledged that four Bronze participants reported that they had encountered difficulties with the Community Involvement component of the Award. Some of the organisations they had selected for their Community component had asked for Garda clearance, which takes time and thus was not a viable option for them. Another two participants indicated that they could not undertake their initial choice for the Community component as they were required to be aged over 16 for insurance purposes.

In addition a further three Bronze participants suggested that it would have been beneficial to them if either their President's Award Leader (PAL) or Gaisce Regional Development Officers had kept more in contact with them in order to keep them on track and/or motivated.

Would you recommend Gaisce—The President’s Award to a friend?

More than 90% of the participants interviewed indicated that they would recommend Gaisce—The President’s Award to a friend, while the remaining 10% were unsure if they would (Figure 9.3). No participant indicated that they would not recommend the Award to a friend.

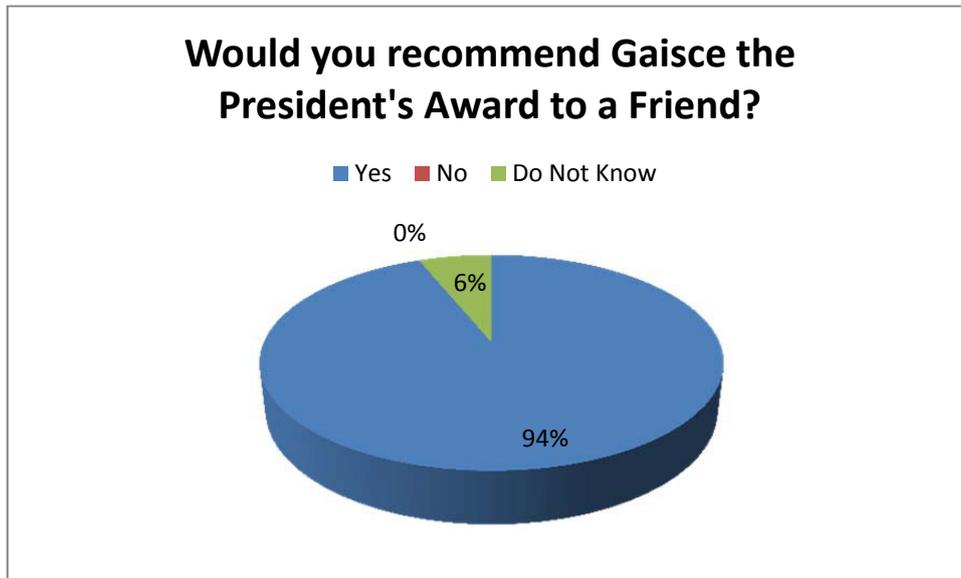


Figure 9.3 Bronze participants’ responses to the question: Would you recommend Gaisce to a friend?

In the addition to simply indicating whether they would recommend Gaisce—The President’s Award to a friend, a number of the interviewees provided reasons for their answers. The most frequent response was the benefits of developing new friendships. Participants also noted that their friends would need to realise the extent of the challenge involved in completing the programme.

| |
|---|
| What skills did you gain from the award? |
|---|

The main skill identified by the Bronze participants in response to this question was the improved ability to help others and the opportunity to develop relationships. In addition to highlighting particular skills and competencies, a number of the interviewees provided additional information relating to their experience of the President's Award. Some of the respondents re-iterated an improved sense of self-worth and the opportunity to have fun as something they had gained from the Award. All responses are listed in Table 9.4.

Table 9.4 What Skills did you gain from the award?

| <i>What Skills did you gain from the award?</i> |
|---|
| Opportunity to help |
| Relationships |
| Sense of achievement |
| Increased self-worth |
| Can Do It |
| Commitment |
| Craic |
| Fun |
| Do It |
| Self-discipline |
| Team membership |
| Opportunity to teach |
| Chance to coach |
| Volunteering |
| Friendships |

What was the most memorable aspect of Gaisce—The President’s Award for you?

The two most frequent responses to the questions relating to the participants’ most memorable aspect of the programme (see Table 9.5) were the interviewees’ sense of personal achievement and the opportunity provided to them to help others through participation in the Award. The third most commonly cited memorable experience was their involvement with others as part of a team.

Table 9.5 Most Memorable Aspect of the Gaisce Award

| <i>Most Memorable Aspect of the Gaisce Award</i> |
|--|
| Sense of achievement |
| Opportunity to help |
| Team membership |
| Effort |
| Can Do It |
| Happy, happiness |
| Do It |
| Proud |
| Volunteer |
| Craic |
| Job opportunities |
| Enjoy |
| Opportunity (in general) |
| Friendships |
| Enhanced confidence |
| Push Oneself |
| Test Oneself |
| Improved fitness |
| Chance to coach |
| Opportunity to teach |
| Fun |
| Goal opportunities |
| Meet People |

Have you changed in any way as a result of completing your Gaisce award?

This question generated the largest number of sub-themes from all the questions asked of the interviewees. In total, thirty-two topics emerged from the participants' responses. The most frequent response was a sense of improved confidence as a result of participating in the President's Award (Table 9.6). The next two most frequently mentioned aspects related to the building of friendships and recognition of their enhanced commitment.

Table 9.6 Changes Perceived As a Result of Participation in the Gaisce Programme

| <i>Changes Perceived As a Result of Participation in the Gaisce Programme</i> |
|---|
| Enhanced confidence |
| Friendships |
| Commitment |
| Greater patience |
| Happy, happiness |
| Not Shy |
| Improved fitness |
| Greater maturity |
| Goal opportunities |
| Improved relationships |
| Opportunity to meet people |
| Sense of achievement |
| opportunities to learn new things |
| Enhanced skill(s) |
| Enjoyment |
| Self-belief |
| Increased self-worth |
| Team membership |
| Push Oneself |
| Can Do It |
| Became more open |
| Greater discipline |
| Fun |
| Increased self-esteem |
| Opportunity to teach |
| Chance to coach |
| Self-growth |
| Volunteering |
| Opportunity to help |
| Proud |
| Do It |

9.02.02 Sub-themes from Bronze participants' Focus Groups

In total, forty-five sub-themes emerged from the responses of the Bronze participants from the focus groups (See Table 9.7). The most frequent theme related to the confidence that they had gained from participating in the President's Award. The second and third most frequent themes related to developing friendships and helping others.

Table 9.7 Summary of Sub-Themes from Bronze participants' Focus Group

| <i>Sub-Theme</i> | <i>Frequency of Each Theme</i> |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Enhanced confidence | 39 |
| Friendships | 33 |
| Opportunity to help | 31 |
| Sense of achievement | 29 |
| Commitment | 20 |
| Team membership | 18 |
| Fun | 16 |
| Enjoyment | 13 |
| Can Do It | 12 |
| Opportunity to meet people | 11 |
| Improved fitness | 10 |
| Happy, happiness | |
| Greater patience | |
| Enhanced skill(s) | 9 |
| Challenge | 8 |
| Chance to coach | |
| Volunteering | |
| Goal opportunities | 7 |
| Opportunity to learn | |
| Opportunity to teach | |
| Craic | 6 |
| Push oneself | |
| Do It | 5 |
| Effort | |
| Job | 4 |
| Greater maturity | |
| Relationships | |
| Self-esteem | |
| Self-worth | |
| Brilliant experience | 3 |
| Camaraderie | |
| Proud | |
| Self-growth | |
| Motivate | 2 |

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Not Shy | |
| Opportunity | |
| Self-belief | |
| Discipline | 1 |
| Become more open | |
| Practice | |
| Self-discipline | |
| Test oneself | |
| Greater trust | |
| Try | |
| Understand others | |

9.02.03 Main Themes from Bronze participants' Focus Groups

Using the guideline stipulated by Braun and Clarke (2006) the qualitative data from the focus groups and individual interviews was scanned for themes across the entire dataset, collecting data relevant to each potential theme. If these themes captured a common, recurring pattern, which was measured in terms of frequency of utterance, these 'sub-themes' were grouped together under an over-arching main theme. This focus on utterance frequency was based on a large body of discursive work which argues that in order to identify salient focuses in the minds of the participants; one should concentrate on the actual words that they are using to capture their experience (d'Andrade, 1991). The sub-theme, therefore, shares the same central organising concept as the main theme but focuses on only one aspect of the main theme (d'Andrade, 1991). Therefore, the main theme is an umbrella term which encompasses the sub-themes (d'Andrade, 1991) (see Table 9.8).

A thematic analysis of the forty-five sub-themes of the Bronze participants' responses produced eleven main themes (see Table 9.8). The overall theme that emerged most frequently related to the development of positive relationships, with previous friends or with new acquaintances. The second most common main theme that the participants developed as a result of participating in the programme was empathy-altruism. The third and fourth most prominent main themes related to positive thoughts and positive emotions respectively.

Table 9.8 Main Themes from Bronze participants' Focus Groups

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Theme Total</i> |
|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Positive Relationships | Friendships | 33 | 69 |
| | Team membership | 18 | |
| | Opportunity to meet people | 11 | |
| | Enhanced relationships | 4 | |
| | Camaraderie | 3 | |
| Empathy-Altruism | Opportunity to help | 31 | 50 |
| | Greater patience | 10 | |
| | Volunteering | 8 | |
| | Understand others | 1 | |
| Positive Thoughts | Enhanced confidence | 39 | 49 |
| | Increased self-esteem | 4 | |
| | Increased self-worth | 4 | |
| | Enhanced self-belief | 2 | |
| Positive Emotions | Enjoyment | 13 | 45 |
| | Fun | 16 | |
| | Happy, happiness | 10 | |
| | Craic | 6 | |
| Mental Fortitude | Commitment | 20 | 41 |
| | Challenge | 8 | |
| | Push oneself | 6 | |
| | Effort | 5 | |
| | Motivation | 2 | |
| Self-efficacy | Achievement | 29 | 41 |
| | Can Do It | 12 | |
| Mentoring | Chance to coach | 8 | 15 |
| | Opportunity to teach | 7 | |
| Personal Growth | Opportunity to learn | 7 | 14 |
| | Greater maturity | 4 | |
| | Self-growth | 3 | |
| Fitness | Improved fitness | 10 | 10 |
| Skills | Enhanced skill(s) | 9 | 9 |
| Goals | Goal opportunities | 7 | 7 |

9.02.03.01 Main Theme: Positive Relationships

Table 9.9: Positive Relationships as a Main Theme

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Positive Relationships | Friendship |
| | Team membership |
| | Opportunity to meet people |
| | Enhanced relationship |
| | Camaraderie |

Analysis of the interviews with the Gaisce Bronze participants highlighted the development of positive relationships as the main theme for those who participated in the President’s Award (see Table 9.9). Five different sub-themes relating to positive relationships emerged; friendships, team membership, opportunity to meet people, enhanced relationships, and camaraderie.

Friendships

The responses from the Bronze participants suggested that they learnt more about their friends than they had previously been aware of:

“You know each other’s like strengths and weaknesses at doing things and because you have got to know your friends better.”

Participant 3, Group 4

“We got to know each other better like, she whinges a lot but that’s ok she is still my friend (Laughs).”

Participant 2, Group 5

The Bronze participants also acknowledged that this greater knowledge of individuals’ personalities helped improve relationships with acquaintances:

“We had to share tents with a load of people you normally wouldn’t be that close to ... people you would know, but not that well, now are better friends.”

Participant 2, Group 2

“I made like a load of new friends [short pause] from- doing it like. And I really like did grow in my confidence and everything like.”

Participant 1, Group 7

Team Membership

A number of the Bronze participants highlighted the relationships that they developed as a result of becoming part of a team through participation in the President’s Award:

“I really enjoyed- just- coming into contact with all kinds of people. I have made so many new friends I feel I got to know lots more people on the team.”

Participant 3, Group 6

“It’s great just to be able to kinda get on with all-all of them it was great to be one big team.”

Participant 5, Group 2

“But it was that sense of [short pause] being together with people that are [short pause] ten years older than you in some sense, but kind of being united, as a team.”

Participant 5, Group 7

In addition to highlighting their new friendships within teams, the Bronze participants also described some of the benefits associated with being part of a team. In particular the Bronze participants emphasised the support they obtained from other members of their teams and the importance of working as a unit:

“So we all just kind of-we were saying [short pause] ‘right, we’ll do it’, and [short pause] we all just kind of-we were dr -we drove ourselves to do it, like, and we all pulled together, and we pulled it off like. Everyone enjoyed it-and everyone thought it- we were so strong as a group.”

Participant 4, Group 8

“Em when it’s in a group you’re [short pause] they kind of pull you along- if you’re struggling. [Pause] You’ve someone else to tell you [short pause] like give ya kick up the arse-arse or whatever and like--get you to keep doing it ... you know if you get stuck or if you’re just struggling.”

Participant 3, Group 2

Opportunity to meet people

It was apparent that participation in Gaisce provided some of the Bronze participants with opportunities to meet people and subsequently generate new relationships.

“Eh you meet loads of new people as well like if you’re going to a different course you’ll have to like make friends with people and [short pause] I’ve made loads of new friends through it all. That’s nice so. Friendships that you can bring into the future.”

Participant 3, Group 3

While it was apparent that participation in the President’s Award enabled the Bronze participants to meet new people, it also emerged that the President’s Award allowed the participants to meet and develop relationships with individuals whom they would not typically associate with:

“During the community part [short pause] eh-when in the club you get to like [short pause] meet new people, new coaches in the club, which you probably wouldn’t have met before.”

Participant 2, Group 6

Enhanced relationships

In addition to discussing friendships, the participants also made reference to the enhancement of old relationships and the development of new relationships as a consequence of participation in the President’ Award:

“I bonded with loads- of them. I didn’t know them before Gaisce before my Community Skill. I really loved them and they’re just so nice to be

around- I don't know. It was really rewarding and [short pause] -really good."

Participant 2, Group 7

"We all started getting on with people you might not have known as well before hand."

Participant 7, Group 8

"Having positive relationships- between Catholics and Protestants as well like [short pause] us and like [short pause] the Protestants like so it did [short pause] cause it - I get like show trust as well within like - carrying helped bring - build positive relationships between - the two groups. like us and Cat[holic]—Prot[estant]—"

Participant 4, Group 1

Camaraderie

In addition to becoming part of a team and developing both old and new relationships, the analysis of the Bronze participants' interviews revealed that those who participated in the President's Award also became more cognisant of the companionship and camaraderie generated by their respective relationships:

"Everybody was getting on-we were all -we-there-there wasn't groups, everybody was together and [short pause] you felt like you could just go up and talk to any of them like they were your friends."

Participant 5, Group 2

"We used to not go into town but we go into like-we go into the city centre now and [short pause] and like we're actually with each other and we'll actually go in- We even go there Protestant areas. We now are each other friends, it is not just about religion anymore."

Participant 5, Group 1

“It helped that your friends were there, they encouraged you, and they said you can do it. The camaraderie and the friendship that was fantastic about the Award.”

Participant 3, Group 8

9.02.03.02 Main Theme: Empathy-Altruism

Table 9.10 Empathy-Altruism as a Main Theme

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Empathy-Altruism | Opportunity to help |
| | Greater patience |
| | Volunteering |
| | Understand others |

The second most common theme which emerged from the interviews with the Bronze participants was the increased compassion which some of the interviewees developed as a result of participating in The President’s Award. It appears that the participants increased their capacity to help others and become more patient. In addition, the interviewees reported that they were more likely to volunteer and cultivated a greater understanding of others as a result of their participation in Gaisce (see Table 9.10).

Opportunity to help

Some of the participants reported that they believed they got to help others as a result of their participation in the President’s Award. In particular, the Bronze participants underlined how they helped others by teaching them new skills:

“There was a girl in First Year who couldn’t [short pause] couldn’t do a lay-up [short pause] so she couldn’t dribble it- But she couldn’t dribble it into the basket and shoot and em I taught her-I spent a bit of time - teaching her that and she got it in the end. I felt really good.”

Individual 3, Group 3

“Yeah I was working with little children aged 8 and 9 years old just helping them mount and just telling how to [short pause] hold the reins and stuff - they loved it-yeah and I loved helping them.”

Participant 1, Group 8

“I enjoyed s-then-training the little kids-the camogie-because I got to pass on a skill. I had-that skill I had to [short pause] train the little kids so. And I loved watching them learn like. And I really enjoyed watching it as they grew.”

Participant 3, Group 5

While some of the participants imparted knowledge and skills to others, a number of the participants provided help to people by simply assisting them in their daily activities:

“I helped in a nursing home-the local nursing, I’d clean, and I’d give soup and I’d-kind of help them up and [short pause] that-but I wouldn’t have to bring them to the bathroom and stuff. I did help in lots of ways-cause I’d never really had contact with the elderly-did before, so it was a new experience for me.”

Participant 1, Group 8

“I was [short pause] helping out at my local-em [pause] residential home? Eh [short pause] and em oh- old people. And em [short pause] I was helping them to their dinner and [pause] -eh helping play games with them-and stuff like that. Keep chatting to them and-talking to them generally keeping them company they were delighted to see us.”

Participant 4, Group 6

“You just learned a lot and you felt you were doing good because you were keeping [short pause] people who didn’t -usually have visitors [short pause] company and they were delighted : A lot of them didn’t really [short pause] -they just kind of relied on the nurses to [short pause] keep them company.”

Participant 1, Group 3

Greater patience

It emerged from the interviews with the Bronze participants that some of them realised that they have become more patient as a result of participating in the President's Award:

“Yeah-you have to be patient, so patient I am a different person because of my volunteering with young people.”

Participant 4, Group 8

“For me it was probably my community-involvement-cause [short pause] it was just-it was really rewarding but [short pause] you had to be really patient--and just, kind of, stick with it, while you're doing it. And [short pause] I don't know, I just [short pause] feel I can [short pause] handle-I can like [short pause] what's the word? I'm a lot more patient and- I'm better able to adjust.”

Participant 1, Group 7

In a number of cases, the Bronze interviewees reported surprise with this newly developed virtue:

“You don't think you've that [short pause] amount of patience, but really -you have more patience-than you think. It was great to get a chance to work on skills like patience that I didn't know I had.”

Participant 5, Group 8

“I'd be a lot more forgiving [short pause]-of people. A lot more patient with people -and I [short pause] wasn't very patient person (laughs).”

Participant 1, Group 6

Volunteering

The theme of increased compassion was evident in the fact that a number of the participants reported that they had volunteered for charities and community activities.

“I volunteered in COPE ... it’s for mentally handicappedadults .. Just talking to people- kept them company.”

Participant 2, Group 6

For one of the participants the increased compassion was evident in her volunteering for an animal organisation:

“I volunteered once a week in [short pause] dog-the dog shop-the ‘Dog Action Welfare Group’ shop in Midleton and I’m still doing that now even though my thirteen weeks is up.”

Participant 5, Group 4

Understanding others

The analysis of the Bronze participants’ interviews highlighted that a proportion of those who took part in the President’s Award learnt to become more understanding of other people.

“You-you would, you’d know people’s sort of faults [short pause] -if they had any-like-on the hike then. You’d sorta [short pause] more forgiving of each other after the hike.”

Participant 3, Group 6

“I’m a lot calmer. Yeah-and it takes people a long time sometimes to do things. I understand that better now.”

Participant 1, Group 2

It also emerged that the participants were open to listening to others’ stories and in doing so gained a greater understanding of people’s lives:

“I think [short pause] was the most [short pause] m-maturing [short pause] -if that’s a word. -eh, thing that we d-we’re doing. [Short Pause] Eh [short pause] eh-I was working with [short pause] older people-uh [short pause] and insight into the lives of older people.”

Participant 3, Group 3

“You get to chat with old people and [short pause] get-insight so [short pause] their past -and stuff. [Short Pause] And I really found them and what they had to say really interesting.”

Participant 4, Group 4

“I f-f-I think that-um [short pause] that really helped me [short pause] understand [short pause] other people and sit-uh-situations that I’m not [short pause] in. Seeing things from other-other perspectives.”

Participant 3, Group 6

9.02.03.03 Main Theme: Positive Thoughts

Table 9.11 Positive Thoughts as a Main Theme

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Positive Thoughts | Enhanced confidence |
| | Increased self-esteem |
| | Increased self-worth |
| | Enhanced self-belief |

The ability to think positively about themselves emerged as a main theme for the Bronze participants. A number of participants interviewed reported that they had become more confident as a result of their participation in The President’s Award (see Table 10.11). In addition, the participants indicated that they had noticed improvements in their self-esteem, self-worth and self-belief.

Enhanced confidence

One of the most common themes to emerge from the Bronze participants’ responses was the concept of greater confidence. It was apparent from many of the Bronze participants’ responses that participating in the Award had increased their overall level of confidence:

“Gaining confidence and stuff like that so to me that was the most [short pause] like beneficial part and the thing I learned most from about myself.”

Participant 2, Group 3

“It did-and t-[short pause] in the end it was a [short pause] really good boost of confidence for everyone, I think.”

Participant 5, Group 6

“Like my confidence came up loads I think just from the whole Gaisce experience.”

Participant 3, Group 2

Increased self-esteem

The generation of positive thoughts was also evident in the expression of an improvement in levels of self-esteem reported by some of those who participated in Gaisce – The President’s Award:

“Yeah [short pause] because [short pause] it like-it t-[short pause] taught me to-it looked like-I looked at parts of [short pause] my personality that I would never even have thought of like. And I’ve become a-I became very -more like [short pause] I’ve become a different person since I done the Gaisce and everything, so. Because of Gaisce my self-esteem is way up.”

Participant 2, Group 8

“The achievement is huge. And it does increase your self-esteem.”

Participant 1, Group 5

“So if you have kinda-if you’re doing something like Gaisce and you’re thinking okay I’m going to be committed and like your self-esteem is going, like higher and your confidence and everything-you’re going to feel like so much better.”

Participant 2, Group 3

Increased self-worth

A number of the participants emphasised that the opportunity provided by Gaisce to achieve certain goals had increased their sense of self-worth:

“You had so many little achievements along the way of Gaisce did ye have a b-b-you kind of said it already you had a great sense of self-worth-would that encourage you to go and do other things and put your name forward and volunteer and do things.”

Participant 2, Group 3

“It’s just-just the achievement is-is a lot..... It’s the one that you’re-you’re-you’re like- you did something ... it adds to your self-worth.”

Participant 3, Group 1

Enhanced self-belief

In addition to becoming more self-assured, a number of the Gaisce participants interviewed also reported a greater sense of self-belief in their ability to try new things:

“I can go like different places and try like new things like. I -well-wouldn’t really be like [short pause] I’d be kind of too scared of trying something new- -like before this. But like I’m (quietly) just like [short pause] bring it on, you know.”

Participant 2, Group 7

The participants also expressed a greater self-belief in relation to setting and achieving new tasks or goals:

“I-i-it adds to your self-worth. Like it made you feel [short pause] like you had self-worth. Your body, you’re good, finding there’s something good about you- something you worked for.”

Participant 3, Group 1

“I was not able to like, stay away from home for that long with no-one I knew. But this year after our Adventure trip I was like, ‘I can do that there is nothing to it.’”

Participant 3, Group 8

9.02.03.04 Main Theme: Positive Emotions

Table 9.12 Positive Emotion as a Main Theme

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Positive Emotions | Enjoyment |
| | Fun |
| | Happy, happiness |
| | Craic |

In addition to positive thoughts, participation in Gaisce also appeared to have generated positive emotions for a number of the Bronze participants (see Table 10.12). In alluding to this theme, some of the Bronze participants expressed feelings of enjoyment, fun and craic, which led to an enhancement of positive emotions.

Enjoyment

One of the themes to emerge from the focus groups was that the participants appeared to enjoy their participation in Gaisce.

“I did my work experience [short pause] in the primary school and I really enjoyed that - I mean [short pause] cherished it I loved it so much - it was enjoyable though, I really enjoyed it.”

Participant 3, Group 8

“I enjoyed the community involvement which was training the [short pause] under-twelve’s soccer team.”

Participant 5, Group 6

Happy, happiness

In addition to expressing contentment, various participants highlighted that they felt a sense of happiness as a result of participating in the programme:

“I think overall this year, I’ve become more positive and [short pause] - happier and-just everything’s sunny or something (laughs)- just seem much –better as a person-feel like really good like: So like you do, yeah. I would say happiness is a good thing to symbolise Gaisce.”

Participant 3, Group 7

“I just felt like really [short pause] I always felt really happy doing it.”

Participant 2, Group 1

“It was like a relief but then you’re like [short pause] thank God I did it like you were kind of happy that you did it, so.”

Participant 1, Group 2

Craic

Some of the participants referred to the ‘craic’ generated by participation in Gaisce:

“It was great craic working on something with your friends, working together made you feel good.”

Participant 6, Group 2

“We had great craic doing the Award, particularly the adventure bit – that was mighty fun!”

Participant 2, Group 4

9.02.03.05 Main Theme: Mental Fortitude

Table 9.13 Mental Fortitude as a Main Theme

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Mental Fortitude | Commitment |
| | Challenge |
| | Push oneself |
| | Effort |
| | Motivation |

The analysis of the interviews undertaken with the Bronze participants indicated that a number of those who participated in the Bronze President’s Award developed greater mental fortitude as a consequence of their participation in the programme (see Table

9.13). It emerged that some of the participants developed a greater sense of commitment, and an enhanced capacity to challenge themselves. The Bronze participants also reported that they now realised how far they could motivate and push themselves.

Commitment

A number of the Bronze participant interviewees highlighted the commitment required to complete the President's Award:

"You need a lot of commitment -to do the Gaisce because we started off with em [short pause] most of my class-doing the Gaisce and it ended up to be around three or something that completed."

Participant 1, Group 4

In addition to underlining the dedication necessary to partake in such a programme, the respondents also emphasised that this had improved their ability to remain committed to other pursuits:

"Yeah commitment-my commitment skills [short pause] like really improved."

Participant 3, Group 3

"Ah it's great to have some commitment Gaisce helps you commit especially for matches like it's very [short pause] I don't think I missed a match all year I didn't want to let the team down."

Participant 4, Group 4

Challenge

Some of the Bronze participants highlighted the challenges which they had to overcome in order to complete their Bronze Gaisce Award.

"If they're up for the challenge, like. They have to be like, you know [short pause] want- to do it like. They can't just be like oh . you know, I'll do it every once in a while."

Participant 2, Group 8

“It’s a lifetime achievement.....To challenge yourself to see how far you could push yourself to your limits and where your limits are.”

Participant 3, Group 1

Push Oneself

The answers provided by some of the Bronze participants suggested that a number of those involved in the President’s Award challenged themselves to a greater degree than they would normally have done:

“Ah-it was good I had the time and the opportunity so I wanted to try and push myself set a goal of grade VI.”

Participant 4, Group 6

“Because you’re in a team you push yourself more cause you wanna [short pause] show your team that you can do it.”

Participant 2, Group 1

As well as attempting to complete specific challenges, it became apparent that some of the Bronze participants who took part in the programme sought to ascertain just how far they could challenge or ‘push’ themselves:

“I just thought that [short pause] test myself and see how well I could do.”

Participant 1, Group 4

“To challenge yourself to see how far you could push yourself to your limits and where your limits are.”

Participant 3, Group 8

Effort

Various Bronze participants reported that they felt that their participation in the President's Award had resulted in increased efforts in their respective challenge activities:

"I kind of nearly found that you were trying harder - in a way and putting more effort into it 'cause you knew you were getting a lot more at the end of it (You were getting an award at the end of it)."

Participant 5, Group 2

In addition to admitting that they put greater effort into their respective activities as a result of their participation in the President's Award, a number of those interviewed also acknowledged the benefits of their greater effort.

"Up until now ehh [blows out] I wouldn't have gone for any other team-I wouldn't have gone for a county team like that before but when I tried this year with the extra- effort because of the award Gaisce -when I put in the extra effort and I almost made it too. So-I'll go again next year."

Participant 2, Group 6

Motivation

Some of the Bronze participants emphasised the motivation required to complete the Gaisce Award:

"You really had to take your initiative like.: Yeah. N-not many-like, and no one really told you- you know, you have to go out and do your Gaisce. I-It was fairly self-motivated."

Participant 3, Group 8

While other Bronze participants suggested that without such motivation one may not successfully complete the Award programme.

"It was very much like you know [short pause] you have to do everything-your half. You had to be-yeah, you had to. That's, I'd say, one

of the reasons people d-pull out because they forget about it, they get bored, they just [short pause] don't bother, you know. But I think it has to be a self-motivated thing like. Unless you're willing to grow [pause] you know, you're not- going to."

Participant 3, Group 7

9.02.03.06 Main Theme: Self-efficacy

Table 9.14 Self-efficacy as a Main Theme

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Self-efficacy | Achievement |
| | Can Do It |

The responses from the adolescents who participated in the Bronze Award of Gaisce, suggested that a number of them believed that they had accomplished things as a result of participating in the scheme (see Table 9.14). It emerged that the Bronze participants gained a sense of achievement and a belief that they ‘can do it’.

Achievement

Some of those interviewed expressed a sense of achievement by simply finishing the President’s Award:

“Em, I liked looking back at the year and saying that I actually achieved something new.”

Participant 1, Group 3

“It was a challenge even for me. It was just, I don't know [short pause] it was worth-w-wit was all worth it at the end-towards the end when you're just -sitting back; it was just a great sense of achievement.”

Participant 4, Group 5

“Em, as well as-‘achievement’, because you do feel like you achieved something, and- -em [short pause] ‘fulfilment’ because-you think that you’ve actually done something with the year.”

Participant 4, Group 6

“Yeah-just the end of the whole thing it just kind of all came together then and it was like one huge achievement [short pause] like after really accomplishing something massive.”

Participant 4, Group 2

While some of the participants expressed a sense of overall achievement in relation to completing the Award itself, a number of those interviewed expressed their sense of achievement in completing specific tasks which they undertook as part of the Bronze President’s Award:

“Aye I know I can walk for six hours. Yeah and cook. It’s a brilliant thing to do.”

Participant 3, Group 4

“We all won award for it as well-we won the Prince’s Trust Award for the disco-for taking so much people off the street and [short pause] like it was an achievement award [short pause] for young people.”

Participant 3, Group 1

“Doing the walking alone massive ‘cause it’d nearly kill me to walk to the shop (laughs). It just shows you what you can do , if you want to. like even there going on the trip and stuff, all the walks and everything-like I’d never ever do that -in my whole life - Like never I-could I have imagined that I would do it.”

Participant 2, Group 5

“When we got to the hostel-or when we had s-uh-gotten to the top of a hill in the-in the walk [pause] I think that’s where a lot of us felt, eh, we had really achieved something.”

Participant 1, Group 6

“I started crying because when we made it up I couldn’t believe I had achieved that: -one thousand five hundred feet.”

Participant 6, Group 5

Can Do It

A number of the Bronze participants highlighted the fact that they now believed that they ‘can do it’, indicating that by participating in the Gaisce programme they now had the self-belief that they could do things.

“Yeah, you can always say like, oh we can do that now again like - cause we done it. Cause before like we-we could never ever say that like cause we never done anything like that.”

Participant 1, Group 5

“The independence is brilliant there is no feeling like it, knowing that you can pull something off.”

Participant 3, Group 8

“Just knowing you can do it.”

Participant 6, Group 1

9.02.03.07 Main Theme: Mentoring

Table 9.15 Mentoring as a Main Theme

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| Mentoring | Chance to coach |
| | Opportunity to teach |

The responses from the Bronze participants indicated that a number of those involved in Gaisce gained the opportunity to mentor younger people and impart knowledge through coaching and teaching (see Table 9.15).

Chance to Coach

In addition to teaching certain skills, some of the participants also enjoyed coaching underage teams.

“I [short pause] helped coach the school under-fourteen gaelic team and I did a bit with Ballymahon under-seven, eights and nines [short pause] soccer team.”

Participant 7, Group 3

“I loved being able to coach the camogie team, watching the young ones learn skills and become more confident.”

Participant 5, Group 5

Opportunity to Teach

A number of the Bronze participants expressed the satisfaction they gained from teaching skills to others.

“You got a se-feeling of satisfaction when you seen them bringing the stuff that you were teaching them in training into matches.”

Participant 5, Group 2

“Watching her finally get a basket – she had finally learnt the skill and she was delighted, and so was I.”

Participant 2, Group 3

9.02.03.08 Main Theme: Personal Growth

Table 9.16 Personal Growth as a Main Theme

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| Personal Growth | Opportunity to learn |
| | Greater maturity |
| | Self-growth |

Analysis of the qualitative data from the Bronze participants revealed personal growth as a positive outcome for a number of the participants. Some of the interviewees reported that they changed as a result of their experience. It also emerged that they felt they had matured and also learnt more about themselves (see Table 9.16).

Opportunity to Learn

The responses from the Bronze interviewees suggested that a number of the President's Award participants gained a greater understanding, and learnt more about themselves as a person as result of their experience with Gaisce:

“The community care-cause eh [short pause] you have to put yourself in a new situation which kind of be uncomfortable at first but you’ve got to get used to it [short pause] and yeah I think just [short pause] builds up your character.”

Participant 1, Group 2

“It’s just-it’s really rewarding like what- you get out of it [short pause]1: Like eh .. I think it’s kind of like you [short pause] learn more about yourself [short pause] and you learn more about like maybe what career you might want to go into -from it. It’s just a really good learning experience overall because you learn so much about yourself and you learn-: To grow.”

Participant 1, Group 3

Greater Maturity

In addition to recognising changes in themselves as a result of participating in Gaisce, various Bronze participants also reported a greater maturity:

“Umm, well [short pause] I thought it was a [short pause] rather maturing experience [short pause] for a lot of us.”

Participant 3, Group 4

“I think I’ve matured from doing the award - that I’m maturing but also because [short pause] I’m like taking responsibility for what I’m doing and organising it myself so in that way I think I’ve matured as a – person.”

Participant 1, Group 3

Self-growth

A number of the participants indicated that they had grown as result of participation in Gaisce. They felt that this growth was acquired from completing tasks or challenges that they would not have done previously.

“Yeah, self-growth and belief - I’d say if I got that army thing last year, I’d have [short pause] doubts about would I able to get through it and-would I able to like, stay away from home for that long with no-one I knew. But this year, I was like, ‘ah sure, I did Lilliput.”

Participant 1, Group 8

“The musical because [pause] like your kinda talking to people [short pause] that you wouldn’t talk to before and mixing more in with the group and you get more confidence out of it cause like you’re on a big stage in front of everybody so [short pause] you grow from that.”

Participant 1, Group 2

9.02.03.09 Main Theme: Fitness

Table 9.17 Fitness as a Main Theme

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Fitness | Improved fitness |

A smaller number of the Bronze participants indicated that their fitness levels had increased as a result of participating in the President’s Award:

“It got me-me way fitter anyway, from all the running in the evenings.”

Participant 5, Group 2

“The hill walking em I’m much fitter because of that too--because you have to be-like I leave the house at eight and we’re back at eleven at night .. I was doing it with my friend, who’s also doing Gaisce.”

Participant 4, Group 4

9.02.03.10 Main Theme: Skills

Table 9.18 Skills as a Main Theme

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Skills | Enhanced skill(s) |

A study of the responses provided by the Bronze participants indicated that some of the them noted improvements in their existing skills and some indicated that they had acquired new skills.

“My personal skill was learning the piano. [Short Pause] Yeah-so eh, that was good, it was [pause] Em, I had done it a long time ago -but I’d forgotten a lot of it. So it was just-it was good to eh, get back into it [short pause] -just learn some of the stuff-yeah and then pass my exams.”

Participant 3, Group 6

“Computers in the school. At the start of the year we were looking for modules to do and I picked that cause [short pause] I like computers anyway so I thought I’d learn more by doing it.”

Participant 1, Group 4

While some of the Bronze participants improved in familiar areas of expertise, others chose to learn new competencies in domains that were previously uncharted by them:

“I went to a Youth club and I just ran the shop there for a [short pause] good while I never worked in a shop before it was great I learned a lot.”

Participant 6, Group 3

“I found my personal skill part of it really helpful because I took up debating and it think that it, like, it helped me in relation to like public speaking.”

Participant 2, Group 8

“Just helping set everything up organisational skills [short pause] if- before mass and all that. And then I was with the same thing for the skill which was public speaking hard to do but I am much better at it now.”

Participant 7, Group 4

9.02.03.11 Main Theme: Goals

Table 9.19 Goals as a Main Theme

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Goals | Goal opportunities |

In addition to expressing a sense of achievement, the Bronze participants highlighted a sense of accomplishment by mastering the ability to set and complete certain goals:

“I think my fa-eh-defining moment was when I mastered a-a [short pause] eh [short pause] a umm-a song onn-guit-the g-g-the guitar. Just [short pause] sitting down and then eh [short pause] thinking [short pause] ‘oh that was [short pause]’ ‘that was tough’. But it-it was-a great feeling-once you’d finished it.”

Participant 2, Group 6

“I set myself new goals in it and because I had more time in Fourth Year I could--I could really like focus on it and I think I got the most rewards out of that.”

Participant 5, Group 3

“I had a goal in mind - that I wanted to get these times- And I got my time. And I remember just like [short pause] when I got that time, I actually –I remember I was in the water, and I was just like (laughing) clapping my hands, it was like so-[short pause] -it was so funny. But I actually-I got out of the water and I was the happiest.”

Participant 2, Group 7

9.03 Gold qualitative results

As for the Bronze qualitative results, this section begins with exploring the responses to the factual questions first, followed by the open-ended questions which allowed for more in-depth discussion. Eleven participants took part in the interviews. Participants came from eight counties. There were seven females and four males. The questions followed the same sequence as was used with the Bronze qualitative results.

For the most part, the sub-themes are listed in each table in the order of the frequency they were cited by the interviewees.

9.03.01 Questions

What did you select as your four challenges for your Gold Gaisce Award?

The physical component chosen by the Gold interviewees focused primarily on sports, such as swimming or archery. Fifty per-cent of the Gold participants interviewed chose a musical instrument, such as clarinet, piano or tin whistle, as their personal skill. Half of the Gold participants worked in charitable organisations, including St Vincent de Paul, Oxfam and Special Olympics Ireland, as part of their Community Involvement. While the majority of Gold participants interviewed chose to complete their Adventure component within Ireland, a number of others had an international aspect to their Adventure component: one cycled in the Alps, another completed a section of the Camino Way in France, and a third took part in a Global Youth Forum hosted in the U.S (see Table 9.20).

Table 9.20 Choices of challenges for Gold participants

| <i>Participant</i> | <i>Physical Component</i> | <i>Personal Skill</i> | <i>Community Involvement</i> | <i>Adventure</i> |
|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Tennis | Clarinet | Charity Shop | Hike |
| 2 | Archery | Sewing | School for Children with Disabilities | Cinnaire in the Gaeltacht |
| 3 | Running | Piano | Saint Vincent de Paul Charity - Dublin City Centre Soup Run | Camino Walk – France |
| 4 | Archery | Dress making | Order of Malta | Wicklow Way Walk |
| 5 | Swimming | Piano | Oxfam Charity Shop | Global Youth Forum, USA |
| 6 | Swimming | Dog Showing | Saint Vincent de Paul – Meals on Wheels | Tipperary Mountains – Hike |
| 7 | Hurling | Scouting | Saint Vincent de Paul – Meals on Wheels | Tipperary Mountains - Hike |
| 8 | Irish Dancing | Traditional Irish Music | Special Olympics | Tipperary Mountains - Hike |
| 9 | Gaelic Football | Tin Whistle | Reserve Defence Force | Cycle – Ring of Kerry |
| 10 | Gym | European Commuter Course | Library | Cycle for Fighting Blindness – Alps, Italy |
| 11 | Cycling | Order of Malta | Garda Reserve Force | 450km Cycle – Dublin to Galway return |

Tell me about your experience of taking part in Gaisce.

Twenty-three individual sub-themes emerged from Gold participants' responses relation to their experience of taking part in the President's Award. The Gold interviewees highlighted the importance of setting and obtaining goals. This emerged as the most frequently cited theme in conjunction with the development of new skills and a capacity to motivate oneself (see Table 9.21)

Table 9.21 Experience of taking part in Gaisce – responses from Gold participants

| <i>Experience of taking part in Gaisce – responses from Gold participants</i> |
|---|
| Goal opportunities |
| Motivation |
| Enhanced skill(s) |
| Enhanced friendships |
| Sense of achievement |
| Commitment |
| Enjoyment |
| Opportunity to help |
| Job opportunities |
| Enhanced confidence |
| Difficult |
| Do it / things |
| Improved fitness |
| Self-growth |
| Happy, happiness |
| Opportunity to meet people |
| Mix with people |
| Out of shell |
| Positive |
| Practice |
| Enhanced sense of self |
| Talk to people |
| Opportunity to try things |

What did you like best about participation in Gaisce—The President’s Award?

In discussing the aspect of the award that Gold participants liked best, they referenced 22 separate sub-themes (see Table 9.22). The most frequent themes referred to the commitment required to complete the programme and the fact that Gaisce forces you out of your ‘comfort zone’. In addition, the interviewees also reported that they like that the programme enabled them to develop both skills and friendships.

Table 9.22 Most liked aspects of Gaisce experience – responses from Gold participants

| <i>Most liked aspects of Gaisce experience – responses from Gold participants</i> |
|---|
| Comfort Zone |
| Commitment |
| Enhanced friendships |
| Enhanced skill(s) |
| Challenge |
| Communication |
| Opportunity to help others |
| President’s Award Leader |
| Talk to people |
| Sense of achievement |
| Enhanced confidence |
| Determination |
| Improved fitness |
| Fun |
| Happy, happiness |
| Enhanced hope |
| Job opportunities |
| Mix with people |
| Open mind |
| Outside of box |
| Team membership |
| Volunteering |

What aspect of the Award has been the most helpful for you?

In contrast to the Bronze interviewees, who responded to this question the most helpful component of the award, the Gold participants responded to the question by highlighting 26 sub-themes (see Table 9.23). The most frequent subject matters concerned the sense of happiness, the opportunity to help others, self-motivation and the role of the President’s Award Leader.

Table 9.23 Most helpful aspects of the Award for Gold participants

| <i>Most helpful aspects of the Award for Gold participants</i> |
|--|
| Happy, happiness |
| Opportunity to help others |
| Motivation |
| President’s Award Leader |
| Can Do It |
| Challenge |
| Fun |
| Commitment |
| Enhanced friendships |
| Goal opportunities |
| Self-growth |
| Enhanced hope |
| Achievement |
| Change |
| Development |
| Improved fitness |
| Job opportunities |
| Know Myself |
| Meet People |
| Open to People |
| Greater patience |
| Perseverance |
| Push yourself |
| Resilience |
| Opportunity to teach |

Would you recommend Gaisce – The President's Award to a friend?

In response to whether they would recommend Gaisce to a friend, one hundred per-cent of the interviewees indicated that they would (see Figure 9.4).

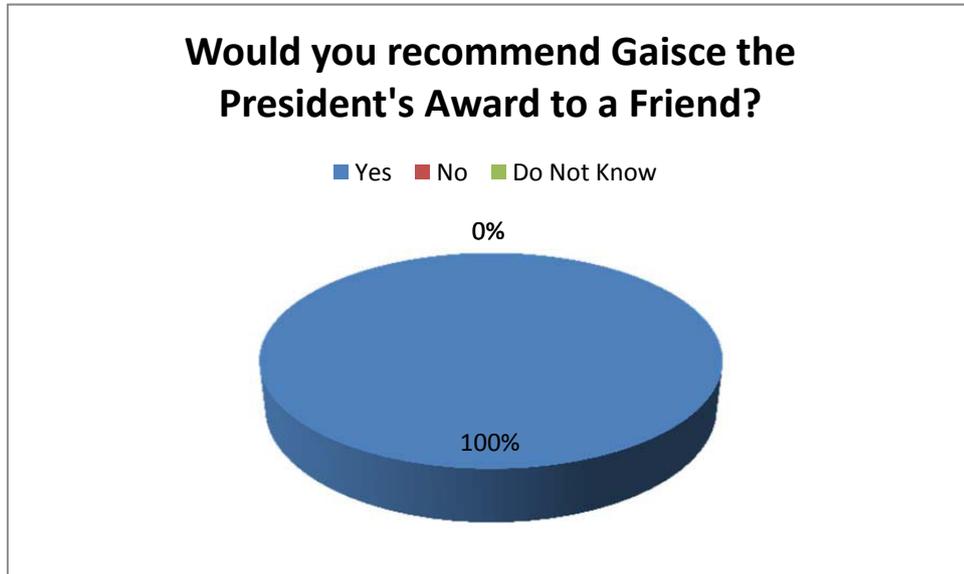


Figure 9.4 Gold participants response to the question: Would you recommend Gaisce to a friend?

| |
|---|
| What skills did you gain from participating in Gaisce? |
|---|

The Gold participants referenced thirty-five sub-themes in discussing the skills that they obtained from participating in Gaisce (see Table 9.24). Whilst improved patience emerged as an important skill, the most frequent theme related to the Gold interviewees' improved capacity to help others.

Table 9.24 What skills did you obtain from the Award?

| <i>What skills did you obtain from the Award?</i> |
|---|
| Opportunity to help |
| Greater patience |
| Enhanced confidence |
| Enhanced skill(s) (Physical) |
| Team membership |
| Improved fitness |
| Goal opportunities |
| Opportunity to meet people |
| Achievement |
| Enhanced skill(s) (Practical) |
| Opportunity to each |
| Communication |
| Enhanced friendships |
| Opportunity to learn |
| More Open |
| Practice |
| Proud |
| Talk to people |
| Trust |
| Opportunity to try things |
| Camaraderie |
| Challenge |
| Commitment |
| Craic |
| Discipline |
| Empathy |
| Enjoyment |
| Fun |
| Go Back (to volunteering activity) |
| Happy, happiness |
| Know People |
| Motivation |
| Perseverance |
| Increased self-esteem |
| Increased self-worth |

What was the most memorable aspect of Gaisce—The President’s Award for you?

A total of twenty-nine sub-themes were raised by Gold participants in describing their most memorable aspect of the President’s Award (see Table 9.25). While the importance of developing friendships was highlighted and deemed the second most memorable aspect of the Award, it was apparent that the craic (fun, enjoyment, brilliant experience) associated with participation was the most memorable feature cited by the Gold interviewees.

Table 9.25 Most memorable aspect of the Gaisce Award for Gold participants

| <i>Most memorable aspect of the Gaisce Award for Gold participants</i> |
|--|
| Craic |
| Enhanced friendship |
| Brilliant experience |
| Happy, happiness |
| Opportunity |
| Enhanced confidence |
| Fun |
| Opportunity to Meet People |
| Opportunity to teach |
| Team membership |
| Sense of achievement |
| Camaraderie |
| Challenge |
| Change |
| Enjoyment |
| Improved fitness |
| Self-growth |
| Keep Going (perseverance) |
| Get to know people |
| Being open |
| President’s Award Leader |
| Mixing with people |
| Proud |
| Responsibility |
| Enhanced skill(s) |
| Talk to people |
| Trust |
| Volunteering |
| Work Hard |

Have you changed in any way as a result of completing your Gaisce award?

Twenty-seven themes emerged from the answers provided by the Gold Participants in response to whether they changed after completing their Gold Gaisce Award (see Table 9.26). The most frequent theme focused on the participants' belief that they could now set and complete certain goals in their lives. In fact, a sense of achievement presented as the second most frequent theme along with the importance of team involvement.

Table 9.26 Changes perceived by Gold participants as a result of participation in the Gaisce programme

| <i>Changes perceived by Gold participants as a result of participation in the Gaisce programme</i> |
|--|
| Goal opportunities |
| Sense of achievement |
| Team membership |
| Can Do It |
| Greater maturity |
| Mix with people |
| Push Yourself |
| Trust |
| Career opportunities |
| Challenge |
| Empathy |
| Enhanced friendship |
| Craic |
| Determination |
| Fun |
| Go Back (to volunteering activity) |
| Self-growth |
| Happy, happiness |
| Get to know people |
| Opportunity to learn |
| More open |
| Greater patience |
| Enhanced self-belief |
| Mentally stronger |
| Support |
| Opportunity to teach |
| Volunteering |

9.03.02 Sub-themes from Gold participant interviews

The Gold participants made reference to a considerable number of topics in response to the questions asked during their interviews. In total, sixty-six sub-themes emerged from the interviews (see Table 9.27). The most frequent topic discussed was the need for the interviewees to generate paths to obtaining goals. The Gold participants highlighted the importance of attaining new skills, and also acknowledged the benefits gained from helping others.

Table 9.27 Summary of sub-themes from Gold participant interviews

| <i>Summary of sub-themes from Gold participant interviews</i> | <i>Frequency of Each Theme</i> |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Goal opportunities | 19 |
| Enhanced skill(s) | 18 |
| Opportunity to help | 16 |
| Sense of achievement | 14 |
| Enhanced friendships | |
| Team membership | 13 |
| Enhanced confidence | 10 |
| Improved fitness | |
| Happy, happiness | |
| Challenge | 9 |
| Opportunity to meet People | |
| Motivation | |
| Greater patience | |
| Commitment | 8 |
| Can Do It | 7 |
| Craic | |
| Fun | |
| President's Award Leader | |
| Opportunity to teach | |
| Talk to People | 6 |
| Trust | |
| Mix with People | 5 |
| More Open | |
| Communication | 4 |
| Enjoyment | |
| Self-growth | |
| Job opportunities | |
| Push yourself | |
| Brilliant experience | 3 |
| Comfort Zone | |
| Empathy | |

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Get to know People | |
| Opportunity to learn | |
| Greater maturity | |
| Opportunity | |
| Practice | |
| Proud | |
| Opportunity to try things | |
| Volunteering | |
| Camaraderie | |
| Career opportunities | |
| Change | |
| Determination | |
| Go Back (to volunteering activity) | |
| Increased hope | |
| Perseverance | |
| Personal Development | 1 |
| Difficult | |
| Discipline | |
| Do it / things | |
| Keep Going | |
| Know Myself | |
| Out of Shell | |
| Outside of box | |
| People | |
| Positive | |
| Resilient | |
| Responsibility | |
| Self enhancement | |
| Self-belief | |
| Self-esteem | |
| Self-worth | |
| Stronger | |
| Support | |
| Work Hard | |

9.03.03 Main Themes from Gold Participants' Interviews

As discussed previously, sixty-six sub-themes emerged from the interviews with the Gold Participants. A thematic analysis of the respective responses produced a total of fourteen main themes (see Table 9.28). The most common theme which emerged from the respective interviews was the theme of Positive Relationships. The second most frequent theme highlighted the Mental Fortitude developed by the Gold participants as a consequence of participating in the President's Award. Compassion for others and the Positive Emotions presented as the third and fourth most common theme respectively.

Table 9.28 Main Themes from Gold Participants' Interviews

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Theme Total</i> |
|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Positive Relationships | Friendship | 14 | 56 |
| | Team membership | 13 | |
| | Opportunity to meet People | 9 | |
| | Talk To People | 6 | |
| | Mix With People | 5 | |
| | Communicate | 4 | |
| | Know People | 3 | |
| | Camaraderie | 2 | |
| Mental Fortitude | Challenge | 9 | 37 |
| | Motivation | 9 | |
| | Commitment | 8 | |
| | Push Oneself | 4 | |
| | Out of Comfort Zone | 3 | |
| | Determination | 2 | |
| | Perseverance | 2 | |
| Empathy-Altruism | Opportunity to help | 16 | 31 |
| | Greater patience | 9 | |
| | Volunteering | 3 | |
| | Empathy | 3 | |
| Positive Emotion | Happy, happiness | 10 | 28 |
| | Fun | 7 | |
| | Craic | 7 | |
| | Enjoyment | 4 | |
| Self-efficacy | Achievement | 14 | 21 |
| | Can Do It | 7 | |
| Goals | Goals | 19 | 19 |
| Skills | Enhanced skill(s) | 18 | 18 |
| Personal Growth | Self Growth | 4 | 12 |
| | Greater maturity | 3 | |
| | Opportunity to learn | 3 | |
| | Change | 2 | |
| Positive Thoughts | Enhanced confidence | 10 | 10 |
| Fitness | Improved fitness | 10 | 10 |
| Mentoring | Opportunity to teach | 7 | 7 |

9.03.03.01 Main Theme: Positive Relationships

Table 9.29 Positive Relationships as a Main Theme

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Positive Relationships | Friendship |
| | Team membership |
| | Meet People |
| | Talk To People |
| | Mix With People |
| | Communicate |
| | Know People |
| | Camaraderie |

The main theme which emerged from the interviews with the Gold Participants was the positive relationships the interviewees developed as a result of their participation in Gaisce – The President’s Award. In describing the respective relationships, the Gold Participants spoke about friends, teams, camaraderie and communication. In addition, the participants emphasised the opportunity the programme provided for some of the respondents to meet, mix with, talk to, and get to know people (see Table 9.29).

Friendship

As a result of taking part in Gaisce – The President’s Award a number of the interviewees obtained the opportunity to enhance existing friendships and develop a greater understanding of older acquaintances.

“We were – we were all friends anyway, beforehand, but we got to know each other even more. And I think now, doing the ‘Gold’ one, going on again. And we all said we’d do the journey together.”

Participant 1

“On my [short pause] ‘Bronze’ one, I went with my cousin and uncle and [short pause] I ff-felt [short pause] you know, we really [short pause] just b - came closer on the trip, because it – we had never done something like that before.”

Participant 5

Team membership

As a result of participation in Gaisce, a number of the interviewees reported that they had enjoyed the opportunity to partake in activities that required teamwork. In addition, as a result of joining teams they developed new relationships with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

“Yeah, teamwork, and – em [short pause] I think working with other people – yeah the team definitely, because y – I’ve worked with people from all different ages, and all different abilities. So – em – teamwork is definitely important. Em – [tuts] and I suppose [pause] yeah, the – the trust and the – the teamwork, and maybe just being honest with yourself, I think.”

Participant 2

“I’m hoping to make it onto [short pause] the team again, and – em – we’re going to be doing a – eh – a two day long [short pause] u – shooting course in preparation for the competition, and hopefully we’ll go out and we’ll win something this time which I’m looki – really, really looking forward to.”

Participant 7

Opportunity to meet people

A proportion of the Gold Participants interviewed indicated that Gaisce provided the opportunity to meet new people and consequently develop new relationships.

“But when you actually have to be yourself, and – em [short pause] meet somebody new and hope that somebody new might like (laughing) you, and that you might get on with them, em – that – that was difficult. But it’s nice when you kind of think, ‘Well no I’ve done it before so I can do it again.’”

Participant 3

“You get to meet some characters, don’t you?”

Participant 6

“They’ve been just [short pause] you know – they’re just stuck into my mind and [pause] I really enjoyed them - especially the people that we’ve met there – you know f- even from different schools, just being together.”

Participant 1

Talk to people

It was apparent from the interviews that participation in Gaisce enabled some of the Gold participants to talk to people whom they would not normally speak to. It appears that such participants gained greater confidence in talking to people in new situations.

“I wouldn’t be much of a talker [pause] and I’d be afraid to approach anyone – you know. E-now, I think I’m more confident in myself and I talk to anyone – you know.”

Participant 4

“Even having to talk to new people and go places on your own and I – I think that’s been really helpful to me. I would have been really, really quiet, and not wanting to talk to anyone if I didn’t have to.”

Participant 3

Mix with people

Participation in Gaisce appears to have enabled some of the Gold participants to mix and engage with groups and as such develop relationships with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

“I definitely think that the way we do it in groups, especially with schools, is a good [short pause] is a good – em [short pause] kind of a mix and a way to do it, you know because it’s people from all walks of life come to do it and it definitely gets people talking.”

Participant 2

Communicate

Some of the Gold participants reported that their communication skills and subsequently their ability to develop relationships improved as a result of taking part in the President's Award.

"It was brilliant now, it was really, really good and you can [short pause] you learn to communicate – I think – better with people like, on – on different levels as well."

Participant 2

Know people

The President's Award provided the chance for some of the Gold interviewees to develop relationships by getting to know people with whom they would not normally socialise. A number of new friendships arose as a consequence of such opportunities.

"Rose was my friend, but – em – she passed away there, just before the Leaving Cert. But, like, I used to call down to her house and stuff. And like I wouldn't have known her only for I got involved with St. Vincent de Paul, and that's how we became friends."

Participant 7

"I think kind of social 'cause you kinda – you get to know more people through it, and like when you're with the people on the hike especially – like I remember when we were with the school like, everyone was helping each other."

Participant 6

Camaraderie

Some of the Gold Participants recognised the camaraderie and support from others that developed as a result of participating in Gaisce.

"Yeah, yeah and you're definitely there for supporting people as well, as well as them supporting you. And like you wouldn't know them very well,

but it's definitely very [short pause] there's a lot of camaraderie and type of thing."

Participant 2

9.03.03.02 Main Theme: Mental Fortitude

Table 9.30 Mental Fortitude as a Main Theme

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Mental Fortitude | Challenge |
| | Motivation |
| | Commitment |
| | Push Oneself |
| | Out of Comfort Zone |
| | Determination |
| | Perseverance |
| | |

The results from the interviews with the Gold participants indicated that a number of the participants developed a degree of mental fortitude as a consequence of participation in the Gaisce programme (see Table 9.30). It became apparent that the interviewees realised that as a result of completing aspects of The President's Award they could now face certain challenges in life. A number of those interviewed highlighted the motivation and commitment required to complete challenges while others acknowledged their capacity to push and place themselves out of their 'comfort zone'. In addition, the participants emphasised their new determination and capacity to persevere.

Challenge

The responses from some of the Gold participants suggest that they embraced the challenges they set for themselves by participating in Gaisce.

"So if - there is a lot of pressure on me as well but, sure I – I don't mind it, you know – it's – it's a challenge so [short pause] I, t – I take it on, yeah."

Participant 1

"I just think the challenge and the fact that if you set your mind to something you can do it, if you make yourself do it, really."

Participant 6

Motivation

A number of the Gold participants referenced Gaisce as a source of motivation to complete their respective challenges.

“This is my second year doing archery. I only started it this time two years ago [short pause] em – during – at the summer. And, em – I haven’t done many competitions, so that’s why I wanted to continue it and include in my ‘Gaisce’ so it would motivate me even further.”

Participant 2

It appears that Gaisce also provided a source of motivation particularly at times when it may have been easier not to do certain things:

“It’s given me a motivation [short pause] and it’s helping me be – helping me to be consistent – for example, there’d be nights when I’d say, ‘Oh’ – you know – ‘I don’t want to go training’, and you’re [short pause] tired, or I just want to sit down and watch telly or – you know – do something that [short pause] a bit – you know, just procrastinate – and I’d say, ‘No, I have to get up and do it because I’m doing it for my ‘Gaisce’’, and then I’d go and I’d do it and I’d feel much better then. It’s helped me to stay consistent more than doing it and to do it well.”

Participant 7

Commitment

The importance of the commitment required to complete a particular task was highlighted by some of the Gold participants. In addition, a number of the interviewees suggested that others would benefit from completing Gaisce once they acknowledged the commitment involved in completing the Award.

“I think we’ve lost a – as a society, I think we’ve [short pause] lost a lot of that commitment and that – em – [short pause] that commitment to doing something long-term. You know, everything is really short-term nowadays. It’s – you know – [short pause] everyone’s on their [short pause] smart phones or wanting a quick update – ‘I want the quick news’ – and everyone’s really focused on [short pause] doing things fast and

changing [short pause] em – whereas I think it's important to stay balanced and to stay focused on long-term [short pause] objectives as – as well. Em – although I do think that – u – I do know a lot of people who would [short pause] they could get a lot out of 'Gaisce', but it would take a lot for them to realise that because of [short pause] where they are in their lives. And maybe if there was a bit more of a push there to get them involved and to keep them involved, I definitely think they could do – naturally [short pause] – eh – benefit –yeah.”

Participant 7

Push oneself

For some of the Gold Participants, the President's Award provided a platform to establish how far they could push themselves.

“You definitely have to push yourself and just [short pause] you know, keep going and, even though I just said, you know, you have to know when to quit sort of thing, but there's a difference I think – being able to – to know what you're capable of doing and not making excuses for it.”

Participant 9

Out of comfort zone

In accordance with the sense that the Gold Participants were able to push themselves further than they normally would, some of the interviewees stated that the Award pushes one out of one's 'comfort zone'.

“Yeah, yeah, definitely – and it sort of makes you come out of your shell – it helps you come out of your shell as well, out of your comfort zone.”

Participant 2

“It's kind of bounced me out of my comfort zone. I'm n-n-n-n – I'm 'kinda' notorious for sitting in my comfort zone. Like I will sit in my comfort zone – it's just something I do. So it's kind of bounced me out of it.”

Participant 4

Determination

The mental fortitude of the participants was underlined by the determination described by some of the participants:

“I believe in myself – as corny as that sounds! (laughs) Sort of being able – like the – the – the harder the challenges, the more determined I am to fill – to finish them and to complete them, you know.”

Participant 2

Perseverance

The response from one of the participants suggested that the award programme taught the interviewee the importance of persevering even when it may be easier to stop.

“I think [short pause] perseverance probably, especially with ‘Gold’ because it’s so long and there’s some days that you just [short pause] you d – you know, it’s nine o’clock in Winter, and it’s dark, and it’s snowing, and you don’t want to get up and go to ‘Oxfam’.”

Participant 5

9.03.03.03 Main Theme: Empathy-Altruism

Table 9.31 Empathy-Altruism as a Main Theme

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Empathy-Altruism | Opportunity to help |
| | Greater patience |
| | Volunteering |
| | Empathy |

Participation in the President’s Award appears to have enabled the Gold Participants to become more compassionate towards others. Many of the interviewees reported that they are more likely to help, and are more patient with others as a consequence of their Gaisce experience. Some of the participants also highlighted a sense of empathy and are now more willing to volunteer to assist other people (see Table 9.31).

Opportunity to help

One of the ways in which the participants have become more compassionate was underlined by the help that they provide for others. Some of the interviewees stated that they began helping others as a result of their experience with Gaisce.

“I’ve become involved in an organisation called ‘No Limits Surfing’. I surf myself so I’m [short pause] you know, I really love the water and the sea and the whole [short pause] atmosphere of surfing, but [short pause] ‘No Limits’ is a surf club for children with autism, and they – I’m a water-based volunteer, so I go out in the water [short pause] with them, and help them surf - Yep, I think [short pause] um [short pause] even if the things themselves are only tiny thing – the [short pause] branches off of it were more helpful – like [short pause] piano with [short pause] that boy was the first time I got involved in autistic – with autistic children, but since then I’ve got [short pause] involved in more areas, and ‘Gaisce’ was kind of the start of that.”

Participant 6

Greater patience

Some of the Gold Participants interviewed expressed the need to be patient when dealing with others. They also reported that patience was a skill which they acquired whilst completing Gaisce.

“I now know how to do it in a way that I’m not just shouting at sm – all the time. You know I – I – I can now get my point across [short pause] without shouting. I think it’s patience really. Patience and then listening to them.”

Participant 2

“Like it’s the end goals – you have to be patient for the end goal [short pause] em- but I think patience was one of the main ones, you know – determination and patience.”

Participant 6

Volunteering

A number of those interviewed utilised their participation in The President's Award to volunteer in help others:

"I ended up volunteering in the library, which was a good choice because it means I get to meet people as well – and I am learning new skills in there – so that was a good choice for me."

Participant 8

"An 'Oxfam' had just opened in Tullamore, where I [short pause] um – I was looking for somewhere to volunteer. And I went into the shop and [short pause] I had a kind of training day, and [short pause] then I've been [short pause] volunteering since October."

Participant 5

After experiencing volunteering, some of the participants have continued to help others despite completing the programme.

"I think I have. [Pause] I've become more [short pause] like I said before – more open, I do talking and things and – I'm a bi- I'm a lot more confident, I think, now. [Pause] You know and – I – I [short pause] jump into doing things [short pause] you know – more. I'd volunteer, maybe - for anything."

Participant 1

Empathy

Increased compassion amongst the participants was also evident in the fact that some of those interviewed realised that they had become more empathetic as a result of completing the Award.

"I did know how to – how to deal with it and what they were feeling, so I think – em – empathy was another thing as well so. As well as showing the maturity, you also had to show them that you understood."

Participant 3

9.03.03.04 Main Theme: Positive Emotions

Table 9.32 Positive Emotions as a Main Theme

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Positive Emotion | Happy, happiness |
| | Fun |
| | Craic |
| | Enjoyment |

Participation in Gaisce—The President’s Award appears to have generated positive emotions for a number of the Gold interviewees. The participants described many aspects of the programme as fun and reported that they felt happy participating. A number of those interviewed spoke about the enjoyment and ‘craic’ associated with taking part in Gaisce (see Table 9.32).

Happy, happiness

A proportion of the Gold Participants emphasised that they felt happy as a result of participating in Gaisce. Some of those interviewed reported being happy with their new skills and the achievement of completing the programme.

“I was very happy that I actually went to the tennis club cause I admired te- I used to watch tennis anyway, and I’d always admired tennis so I [short pause] said ‘oh, why not’, so.”

Participant 1

“I suppose [short pause] you (laughs) starting off, you’d hope to be able to finish it. But em – the happiness comes when you do finish it. But em – yeah, no I do definitely think that there’s – there’s hope in it, and you give each other hope as well, especially when you do it with a group.”

Participant 2

Others emphasised the happiness that they experienced from helping others:

“I’m really happy with this. Em – what I’ve been doing all year is going – em – with the Trinity St. Vincent de Paul. Once a week we go to a soup run in the middle of Dublin. And you go there and we make all the sandwiches and you pack up the boxes and then you go out on the street

and y – you know, give out the sandwiches and tea and soup and whatever to whoever is sleeping on the streets.”

Participant 6

Fun

Some of the participants highlighted the fun they obtained from participating in the programme. In particular, they emphasised the fun they shared with others as part of their adventure component.

“And I think it was – it was just, there was – first of all, it was just a – such a good weekend – we had so much fun.”

Participant 7

“I did the last ten kilometres of my walk in this thing called ‘The Turf Challenge’. So we were like [short pause] running through rivers and [short pause] u – pools, and bogs, and [short pause] it was just – it was really [short pause] fun.”

Participant 5

Craic

A number of the participants referred to the ‘craic’* that they experienced from their participation in the award.

“And I think it was – it was just, there was – first of all, it was just a – such a good weekend – we had so much fun. And it was great to just [short pause] have so much fun through Irish [short pause] em – and to see everything done through Irish – and just [short pause] the spirit and the fun and just the craic of the weekend was absolutely brilliant – absolutely brilliant.”

Participant 4

“With the archery because it’s quite a physical sport. Emm – and I suppose tied into that as well is - because it is quite male-dominated -

you do have to go out and talk to them and – even though they’re men – y-you still have the craic with them as well.”

Participant 2

Enjoyment

The positive emotions experienced by the Gold Participants was further emphasised by the enjoyment that the interviewees obtained from Gaisce. Some of the participants highlighted the enjoyment they experienced with other people:

“They’ve been just [short pause] you know – they’re just stuck into my mind and [pause] I really enjoyed them - especially the people that we’ve met there – you know f- even from different schools.”

Participant 1

While others expressed enjoyment of all aspects of Gaisce;

“You see it because I enjoy all the things I’m doing with ‘Gaisce’, it kind of – it’s encouraging me not to stress so much. I mean I have repeats this year [short pause] because of illness – but it’s kind of encouraged me that you can take time out from study or from work or [short pause] and do something that [short pause] okay, you’re not ‘gonna’ – you’re probably not ‘gonna’ get paid for it, but you can still feel like an internal reward.”

Participant 4

9.03.03.05 Main Theme: Self-efficacy

Table 9.33 Self-efficacy as a Main Theme

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Self-efficacy | Achievement |
| | Can Do It |

One of main themes which emerged from the interviews with the Gold Participants was the sense of accomplishment that they attained from participating in Gaisce – The President’s Award. The interviews reference both a sense of achievement and the belief that one ‘can do it’ (see Table 9.33).

Achievement

One of the participants highlighted the satisfaction they derived from looking back and recognising the achievements they attained through their Gaisce experience:

“I like [short pause] even the aw - I like – uh – what I love is [short pause] putting the work in, achieving something, and looking back and saying – you know – ‘Look at that. Look at how good I did.’, or – you know – ‘How good the team did’, or ‘I was a part of something’. I think everyone likes that, but, for me, I [short pause] I have a real focus on that, and I have a real focus on – you know – ‘Let’s go out and achieve something here!’”

Participant 8

Whilst another recognised that they enjoy achieving and that Gaisce was an integral part of the process.

“I think I’m on a [short pause] for myself, I [short pause] I’m on a passage – I have various, different goals and things I want to achieve and [short pause] and reaching a stage at – reaching a point of complete happiness in life is what we’re all after. I think I’m getting there slowly, and I think – definitely I think – ‘Gaisce’ has been a part of that too.”

Participant 7

Can Do It

Participation in the President’s Award appears to have instilled a belief in a number of the interviewees that they can do things. After achieving once through Gaisce they believe they can do it again.

“But when you actually have to be yourself, and – em [short pause] meet somebody new and hope that somebody new might like (laughing) you, and that you might get on with them, em – that – that was difficult. But it’s nice when you kind of think, ‘Well no I’ve done it before so I can do it again.’”

Participant 3

“I just think the challenge and the fact that if you set your mind to something, you can do it, if you make yourself do it, really.”

Participant 6

9.03.03.06 Main Theme: Goals

Table 9.34 Goals as a Main Theme

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Goals | Goal opportunities |

The importance of goal setting was emphasised by a proportion of the Gold Participants (see Table 9.34). It appears that participation in Gaisce has encouraged a number of the participants to set long term goals and allowed them to develop strategies to completing the same goals.

“And also had to break down a long-term goal - because a long-term goal is very vague. [Short Pause] Like being top three in women’s – I mean, how do I get there? Like, do I just train? No, I do boxing. I do my core work. I do – like actually you can see, I’m kind of moving kind of stiff ‘cause I’ve been boxing. I work mm – mm – the strength in my shoulders. I visit a ‘physio’. I work on my core a huge amount. [Short Pause] It’s kind of breaking down the goal and realising that [short pause] you need to kind of [short pause] plan your goal, in that [short pause] you can’t just go and [short pause] become brilliant at something.”

Participant 4

“Maybe, because [short pause] I feel, I feel [short pause] you do get stronger when you set yourself goals and you – and you achieve them. [Short Pause] I do think it gives you – it encourages you to set more goals and achieve them. Yes, yeah. Rather than, prior to this, I might have set a goal and not worked so hard to achieve it.”

Participant 8

9.03.03.07 Main Theme: Skills

Table 9.35 Skills as a Main Theme

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Skills | Enhanced skill(s) |

Participation in Gaisce appears to have enabled a number of the interviewees to develop certain skills. While some indicated that they developed completely new skills, others advanced previous skills to much higher levels (see Table 9.35).

“I gained – eh – tennis skills ‘cause I haven’t played a proper sport before you know – I think I’d go back though, to be honest. I’d think I’d love to go back and maybe [short pause] actually teach other kids then.”

Participant 1

“There would be some nice practical skills I’ve learned – eh – through the Reserve Defence Forces – I’ve [short pause] done courses, and I’ve just recently, through the Reserve Defence Forces, I passed my full driving test – through them [short pause] and I qualified on ‘Off-road Driving’, ‘Advanced Driving’ and ‘Driving with a Trailer’ - so I was delighted with that – to have that skill [short pause] em – and to be recognised and qualified for it which was – which was brilliant – which is – which is a really big skill, you know, to have.”

Participant 7

“I think [short pause] well, piano has been my [short pause] um – ‘Personal Skill’ for ‘Silver’ and ‘Gold’, and I think those skills have [short pause] gone up a lot. Eyy [short pause] I was ‘Grade II’ when I started ‘Gaisce’ first and [short pause] next May I should be doing my ‘Grade VI’ piano exam [short pause] which is a huge leap for two years. [Short Pause] Um – I do music in school as well, so it’s [short pause] helped me academically as well. [Short Pause] Um [short pause] I think [short pause] I’ve become [short pause] more involved in [short pause] my community and with different people because of ‘Gaisce’, and [short pause] I suppose I learned the skills of running a shop in [short pause] ‘Oxfam’.”

Participant 5

9.03.03.08 Main Theme: Personal Growth

Table 9.36 Personal Growth as a Main Theme

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| Personal Growth | Self-Growth |
| | Greater maturity |
| | Opportunity to learn |
| | Change |

A theme of personal growth emerged from the responses of a number of the Gold Participants. The respective participants indicated that they were aware of self growth and an increased maturity. In addition, some of the participants reported that they had learned new things and changed as a consequence of their participation in the programme (see Table 9.36).

Self-Growth

A number of the participants indicated that they had grown as a person due to their involvement with Gaisce.

“I think [short pause] I did and [short pause] I think it helped me kind of grow as a person [short pause] because I realised that I could if I set my mind to keep going.”

Participant 5

“I suppose it’s hard to tell because I’ve also grown, grown up since I did my first award, but I think it definitely [short pause] I have changed from things I’ve tried [short pause] out because of the ‘Gaisce’.”

Participant 3

Greater maturity

Other Gold Participants emphasised that they had matured as since participating in the President’s Award.

“You become more mature, yeah I think more mature.”

Participant 6

“I’ve changed [short pause] as a direct result of ‘Gaisce’ cause I think there’s [short pause] influences on everything from [short pause] – eh –

u – a huge range of sources, including – ‘Gaisce’ being one of them. Em [short pause] but I think since I have – I think, since I’ve started, looking back, I have kind of matured. I’ve definitely matured.”

Participant 7

Opportunity to learn

Gaisce appears to have provided some of the Gold Participants with the opportunity to learn. In many cases, the participants learned new skills:

“You Learn more skills - Yeah – you improve your skills you have and you learn new skills, you know.”

Participant 1

In addition to learning new skills, some of the participants learnt something new about both life and themselves as individuals.

“Well I’ve definitely learned a lot about [short pause] doing different things and the skills and things and – about myself even, as well.”

Participant 1

“I’m learning, and I’m expanding and [short pause] I’m realising that sometimes to get to goals, you have to put in the blood, sweat and tears. [Short Pause] And it can be blood, sweat and tears.”

Participant 4

“So [short pause] the only person who’s discouraging you to change is you, and you need to [short pause] it’s a real skill to learn for life that if things aren’t working, you need to move one - like it’s a skill to work in jobs, in relationships, in everything – and I think if you can learn that through the ‘Gaisce’, you’re not ‘gonna’ end up in an unhealthy relationship quite so easy because you’re ‘gonna’ have that experience of, ‘Wait, I’m not happy – why am I here?’”

Participant 8

Change

Through the experience of Gaisce, a number of the interviewees highlighted a change in themselves:

“And even though [short pause] I don’t have that anymore – you know like: I don’t work there anymore, I’ve grown up, we’ve went our separate ways – I still really [short pause] I’m so glad that I got that and that I got to do it, and think you’re – you’re still – you’ve still changed because of it.”

Participant 3

“I spent a lot of my younger years, when I was in my teens, [short pause] being unhappy doing things. I did dancing and stuff that I didn’t enjoy doing to keep other people happy. And I think that [short pause] there is no point in trying the ‘Gaisce’ for somebody else. [Short Pause] Take a breath and decide what you want to do inside. I mean I left the [short pause] em – ‘Red Cross’. I wasn’t very comfortable. They were all so much more experienced than me that I felt like an idiot. I was always playing the patient. [Short Pause] I always felt like an outsider and – I mean I changed because [short pause] I mean, I don’t want to be dealing with that. I wanted to learn. I wanted to be encouraged, and [short pause] I mean they were lovely people – don’t get me wrong – but I just wasn’t getting (pauses) –.”

Participant 4

9.03.03.09 Main Theme: Positive Thoughts

Table 9.37 Positive Thoughts as a Main Theme

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Positive Thoughts | Enhanced confidence |

A feeling of greater confidence emerged as a theme from a number of the Gold Participants as a consequence of their participation in Gaisce. The respective participants emphasised greater inner confidence or self-esteem. In addition, they also reported improved confidence both with regards to talking to others and attempting new things (see Table 9.37).

“I w - [short pause] ehh-before I wouldn't be much of a talker [pause] and I'd be afraid to approach anyone – you know. E-now, I think I'm more confident in myself and I talk to anyone – you know.”

Participant 1

“I wouldn't say I was always outgoing and I wouldn't say that I'm hugely outgoing, but [short pause] I think my confidence probably has grown since I've started 'Gaisce' [short pause] just because of [short pause] the different things I've learned, the different people I've met and [short pause] different things I've [short pause] learned to do – or had to do.”

Participant 5

“I – I did - I do, yes. It's made me a lot more confident in myself as well – given me a lot of self-esteem, so.”

Participant 6

“I think I have. [Pause] I've become more [short pause] like I said before – more open, I do talking and things and – I'm a bi- I'm a lot more confident, I think, now. [Pause] You know and – I – I [short pause] jump into doing things [short pause] you—.”

Participant 8

“– I think the biggest skill is the - actually having the confidence to try something new and to get out there. Like the first day I went to the – the soup run, I was going on my own. Kind of everyone else in the class kind of had something on, or they backed out, and I thought, 'No. Okay right, I'll wait 'till next week and somebody will go with me.' And eventually I kind of copped myself on. I said, 'No, if I don't go this week, I won't go and I just have to.”

Participant 3

“– you’d get more confident, you do things you wouldn’t have done before.”

Participant 7

9.03.03.10 Main Theme: Fitness

Table 9.38 Fitness as a Main Theme

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Fitness | Improved fitness |

Some of the Gold Participants underlined the physical benefits that they obtained from participating in Gaisce. They believed that their levels of fitness as a result of their physical component of the award (see Table 9.38).

“I just need more practice. Em – the football – er – has – has been about fitness – em – and it’s also been about kind of – eh – doing – being out of [short pause] you know, k – one of them I’ve been working at at the moment is being able to score forty-five – em – so – with that – I’m still kind of – I’m okay at but I’d like to get better at – em – just simple that I like to set out, like.”

Participant 7

“Dancing – you know – if you were a week without the dancing, you’d be unfit nearly – ‘cause you have to kind of keep on your fitness the whole time with it. Like we train twice a week and it’s [short pause] two hours on a Tuesday and it’s about four or five hours on a Saturday. So, it’s tough going. You wouldn’t stick it if you [short pause] didn’t love it.”

Participant 2

“When I first joined the gym, I was to train for one of these cycles, but since then I’ve stayed at the gym in-between, I’ve just say varied the programme to a general keep-fit rather than a totally cycling base or whatever.”

Participant 8

9.03.03.11 Main Theme: Mentoring

Table 9.39 Mentoring as a Main Theme

| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Sub-Theme</i> |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| Mentoring | Opportunity to teach |

Some of the Gold Participants discussed the opportunity they were given to coach or teach young people on route to gaining their award (see Table 9.39).

“I took on tennis for my Gaisce award. The instructors were very helpful to me. Now I would like to go back and teach other kids tennis.”

Participant 1

“I did swimming with [a special school]. It was a really brilliant experience. I got a chance to teach the children to not be afraid of the water. I was helping to build up their confidence.”

Participant 2

“I coached and mentored the hurling team. I continued to volunteer and coach even after the award. I am thinking of it as a career now.”

Participant 5

9.04 Summary of Main Themes from Qualitative Research

Overall, the results from both the Bronze and Gold qualitative interviews showed remarkable consistency with regard to main themes and their frequency of reference by the participants, with the same eleven main themes occurring with the most frequency in both groups (see Table 9.40).

Table 9.40 Main Themes in order of Frequency for Bronze and Gold Participants

| <i>Bronze – Frequency of Occurrence</i> | | <i>Gold – Frequency of Occurrence</i> | |
|---|--------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Theme Total</i> | <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Theme Total</i> |
| Positive Relationships | 69 | Positive Relationships | 56 |
| Empathy-Altruism | 50 | Mental Fortitude | 37 |
| Positive Thoughts | 49 | Empathy-Altruism | 31 |
| Positive Emotions | 45 | Positive Emotion | 28 |
| Mental Fortitude | 41 | Self-efficacy | 21 |
| Self-efficacy | 41 | Goals | 19 |
| Mentoring | 15 | Skills | 18 |
| Personal Growth | 14 | Personal Growth | 12 |
| Fitness | 10 | Positive Thoughts | 10 |
| Skills | 9 | Fitness | 10 |
| Goals | 7 | Mentoring | 7 |

When the Bronze and Gold theme frequencies were combined, positive relationships emerged as the most frequently cited theme, followed by empathy-altruism, mental fortitude, positive emotions, self-efficacy and positive thoughts. Completing the eleven main themes were personal growth, goals, skills, mentoring and fitness (see Table 9.41).

Table 9.41 Combined Bronze and Gold Frequency of Occurrence of Main Themes

| <i>Combined Bronze and Gold Frequency of Occurrence of Main Themes</i> | |
|--|------------------------------|
| <i>Main Theme</i> | <i>Theme Frequency Total</i> |
| Positive Relationships | 125 |
| Empathy-Altruism | 81 |
| Mental Fortitude | 78 |
| Positive Emotions | 73 |
| Self-efficacy | 62 |
| Positive Thoughts | 59 |
| Personal Growth | 26 |
| Goals | 26 |
| Skills | 27 |
| Mentoring | 22 |
| Fitness | 20 |

Chapter 10 Discussion

10.01 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the current research within the context of existing literature. The main strengths of this study are outlined, as are the limitations. The implications of the research for policy development and recommendations for further research are also considered.

10.02 Background and rationale for the current research

To date, there has been no formal research to examine the psychological effects of Gaisce–The President’s Award programme on participants. The aim of this research, therefore, was to investigate if participation in Gaisce–The President’s Award programme acts as a catalyst in the development of the specific positive psychological attributes of self-efficacy, hope, self-esteem, happiness and psychological well-being in its participants. In investigating this aim, the research also examined whether Gaisce–The President’s Award programme meets the inclusion criteria to be called a Positive Youth Development programme.

This research has used mixed methods to, as described by Creswell, Plano, Clark, Gutman and Hason (2003) confirm, cross-validate and corroborate findings. The findings from the quantitative, questionnaire-based component of the research has, as Robson (2002) suggested, been supported and enhanced by the qualitative component, in which Bronze and Gold participants were given the opportunity to provide their own personal account of their experience of participation in Gaisce–The President’s Award. In this research, the findings of one method did not take priority over the other (Ulin, Robinson and Tolley, 2004). The integration of data from both methods endeavoured to provide a more complete understanding of the topic. As Johnson and Onwuegbizie (2004) suggested, it is hoped that the mixed methodology approach offers more than the sum of the two component parts. Furthermore, the use of this mixed methods approached with controlled procedures overcomes many of the critiques associated with previous evaluation studies of positive youth development programmes, that mainly pertain to concerns regarding the methodology of these studies and the generalisability and nature of their findings.

For many decades, psychology had focused its attention on pathology and on the diagnosis of psychological disorders. An alternative way of viewing an individual has emerged from the field of positive psychology, which views an individual as more than the sum of their deficits. Positive psychology seeks to uncover and develop an individual's personal attributes and strengths, helping them to realise their true potential and enhance their well-being.

Fry, Guivernau, Mi-sook, Gano-Overway and Magyar (2009) recommended that society should actively work to steer young people's lives in the best positive direction. All young people, as Seligman and Csikzentmihalyi (2000) stated, need help and assistance to become healthy, thriving individuals. The science of positive psychology advocates, according to Lopez and Snyder (2009), that in order to promote their well-being, individuals need support and assistance from three main sources, positive relationships, positive institutions and programmes and positive attributes.

The promotion of such positive attributes have been identified as goals in many youth development programmes, although they are hardly ever measured directly as indicators of programme achievement, or incorporated into research on Positive Youth Development. On that basis, it becomes important, when examining outcomes of youth development programmes, to incorporate variables that assess personal attributes and strengths and well-being. According to Epstein and Sharma (1998), such a strengths-based approach is defined as the measurement of the skills, competencies, and characteristics that create a sense of personal accomplishment and contribute to satisfying relationships with peers and adults.

10.03 Summary of key findings

This section returns to answering the overarching questions of this research.

The aim of this research was to examine if participation in Gaisce–The President's Award programme acts as a catalyst in the enhancement of the positive psychological attributes of hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness and psychological well-being. The quantitative component of the research measured the levels of those attributes in Gaisce and control participants pre- and post-participation in the programme. The qualitative component of the research examined the participants' personal experiences of participation in the programme.

Quantitative evidence was found to support the hypothesis that participation in the Gaisce–The President’s Award programme acts as a catalyst in the enhancement of the positive psychological attributes of hope pathways thinking and self-efficacy in Bronze and Gold participants. Further quantitative evidence was found to endorse the hypothesis that participation in Gaisce–The President’s Award programme acts as a catalyst for Bronze Gaisce participants who scored in the lowest quartile pre-participation in the positive psychological attributes of hope pathways thinking, self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness and psychological well-being. The qualitative results cross-validated the quantitative results, and provided corroborative evidence from participants’ experience of participation that psychological attributes and positive personal strengths were enhanced.

The discussion also considered whether Gaisce–The President’s Award programme meets the inclusion criteria for a Positive Youth Development programme. This question was investigated by comparing the Gaisce programme to agreed frameworks for defining a Positive Youth Development programme. There was sufficient evidence to confirm that Gaisce–The President’s Award programme meets the criteria for inclusion as a Positive Youth Development Programme.

Specifically, the key findings from the quantitative component indicate that:

- Scores in hope (pathways) and self-efficacy levels were significantly improved over time for participants in the Bronze Gaisce Award programme when compared with their control counterparts;
- Scores in levels of hope (pathways), self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness and psychological well-being were significantly improved over time for Bronze Award participants who had scored in the lowest quartile of the group in pre-testing against their control counterparts;
- Scores in hope (pathways) and self-efficacy levels were also significantly improved over time for participants in the Gold Gaisce Award programme when compared with their control counterparts.

The findings of the qualitative focus groups and interviews with a number of Bronze and Gold participants indicated:

- Improvements reported by Bronze and Gold Gaisce participants in levels of hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness and psychological well-being post-participation;

- Bronze and Gold Award participants reported increased and enhanced psychological attributes and personal strengths as a result of the relationships, challenges, opportunities and skill-building that formed part of the overall experience of participating in the Gaisce Award programme.

In conclusion, the research presents a comprehensive overview of the effects of participation in Gaisce–The President’s Award on Bronze and Gold participants. It also confirms Gaisce–The President’s Award as an example of a Positive Youth Development programme.

10.04 Integration of findings

This section of the chapter explores the key research findings within the context of previous empirical and theoretical literature. The discussion is an examination of the effects of participation in Gaisce—The President’s Award programme on the five key psychological attributes of hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness and psychological well-being.

10.04.01 Hope

The first objective was to determine if participation in Gaisce–The President’s Award increases levels of hope in Bronze and Gold participants, as measured by the Children’s Hope Scale and the Adult State Hope Scale. Results from the quantitative component indicate that there was a significant improvement in both Bronze and Gold participants’ scores on the Hope Pathways Subscale post-participation, indicating that they now have the ability to plan and execute routes to achieving their goals. Bronze participants who scored within the lowest quartile on the Pathways Subscale at Time 1 experienced a moderate positive effect at Time 2 when compared with their control counterparts. No significant improvement was found in the overall Hope Score and in the Agency Subscale Score for Bronze and Gold participants. The findings of the qualitative component found increases in hopeful thinking in both Gaisce groups.

As the poet Oliver Goldsmith (1730-1774) wrote, ‘hope, like the gleaming taper’s light, adorns and cheers our way; and still, as darker grows the night, emits a brighter ray.’ Hopeful thinking provides inner strength and energy that radiates steadily, particularly during challenging times. Hope is an important psychological attribute, required throughout the lifespan (Snyder, 2000; Mahoney, 1991).

Hope is an entirely learnt process that produces many valuable outcomes: hopeful thinkers cope better with stressful situations, experience better general health, and have greater achievement, increased determination, and lower rates of depression (Seligman, 2000; Valle, Huebner and Suldo, 2004). Hope has also been positively associated with academic performance, positive thinking, and adaptive coping methods (Snyder, Simpson, Michael and Cheavens, 2001).

The concept of hope is linked to self-confidence. Many of the Gaisce Bronze and Gold participants spoke of their enhanced positive outlook as a result of participation. Some participants attributed this positive attitude to having set and achieved personal goals. It further emerged from the Bronze participants interviewed that they were now more confident in their ability to overcome difficulties and were able to generate workable routes towards achieving their goals.

Jamieson et al. (2007) and Dent and Cameron (2003) linked improved problem-solving skills as fundamental to the development of hope and resilience. Nurturing the ability in young people to negotiate paths towards personal goals is an essential skill for life. Both Bronze and Gold participants interviewed reported that participation in Gaisce–The President’s Award programme had fostered in them the belief that there are always alternative solutions or paths to their difficulties and problems. Gold participants noted that they were more competent at breaking down large complex situations and tasks into more manageable components, and as a result of their improved ability to problem-solve, they believed that they had become more hopeful and confident.

The adventure component of the Award required, according to the Gaisce participants interviewed, perseverance and determination to complete. They participants described what they called their ‘self-talk’ and what is known as a positive mind-set. Bronze participants recalled saying to themselves, ‘I can do this and I am not going to give up,’ and how this ‘self-talk’ enabled them to continue and complete the challenge. The Gold participants spoke of having to call on their hopeful thinking in order to complete the Award.

Brown, Kirschman, Roberts, Shadlow and Pelley (2010) found that participation in summer camps enhanced personal levels of hope and increased friendships for participants. A number of Bronze participants noted that the other Bronze participants

gave them hope through encouragement and support, which helped them to complete the Award, and in the process, to make new friends and strengthen existing friendships.

In life, everyone has to manage disappointments and setbacks to achieving their desired outcomes. Gaisce requires all participants to set themselves challenging and demanding goals in four areas. The Gaisce Bronze and Gold participants interviewed spoke of having encountered obstacles that required them to review and re-evaluate their original plans to reach their various goals. Having successfully managed to overcome these challenges, they now had enhanced hope and belief that they could draw upon these experiences in the future, when facing new challenges. A number of Bronze participants who took part in the focus groups spoke of their enhanced hopeful thinking as a result of having overcome personal challenges, such as working in a shop, public speaking or working in a nursing home.

Young peoples' levels of hope are of significant concern, as adolescence and young adulthood can be a challenging period during which many young people can feel vulnerable, isolated and lonely (Ilardi, 2009). Finding ways to help young Irish people to increase their levels of hopeful pathways thinking has become urgent, as the reported rates of suicide among the age group 16-24 years are increasing and likely to remain the leading cause of death in this age group during the next decade according to Malone et al. in the Irish Medical Journal (2012). According to recent research, Ireland has the fourth highest male youth suicide rates in the expanded E.U. (Richardson, Clarke and Fowler, 2013). This worrying picture suggests that all too often young people are unable to see a path through their difficulties and are unable to generate alternate solutions to their problems.

Given this evidence that some young Irish people manifest high levels of despair and hopelessness, it is therefore very important to find methods to strengthen young peoples' levels of hope. Participation in Positive Youth Development programmes can provide vital access to positive opportunities and supportive relationships. Positive Youth Development programmes are known to expand and develop participants' levels of hope (Lakin and Mahoney, 2006).

While Gaisce is not a panacea for all youth problems, there is evidence to suggest that participation in the Gaisce programme provides opportunities for young people to develop their ability to find a way through personal challenges. Results from the

quantitative component of this research indicate that levels of hope pathways thinking improved significantly for both Bronze and Gold Gaisce participants as a result of participation in the Award. The results also verify that Bronze participants who scored in the lowest quartile pre-participation, made significant gains in their hopeful thinking pathways.

According to Rutter (1994), building hope is akin to a psychological immunisation process which protects the individual by enhancing their resilience levels. When the positive psychological attributes of hope and self-efficacy are combined, what results is a resilient young person who not only believes that he or she is capable of generating pathways to bring about change, but who believes he or she can make change happen. The results from both the quantitative and qualitative findings of this research confirm that Gaisce—The President’s Award programme is significantly increasing young people’s hopeful pathways thinking.

10.04.02 Self-efficacy

The second objective of this research was to discover if participation in Gaisce—The President’s Award programme enhanced participants’ levels of self-efficacy. The General Self-efficacy Scale was administered to measure pre- and post-participation levels of self-efficacy in Bronze and Gold participants in the Award programme.

Both Bronze and Gold participants experienced significant increases in their levels of self-efficacy as a result of taking part in the programme. Their post-participation scores indicated higher scores for both Bronze and Gold groups over their control groups, reflecting a decrease over time in the scores of the control group and an increase over time in the scores of the Bronze and Gold participants. While participation in Gaisce had a moderate effect on self-efficacy levels for the overall Bronze and Gold groupings, a large effect was evident for the Bronze participants who scored within the lowest quartile pre-participation. The findings of the qualitative component found increases in self-efficacy levels for Bronze and Gold participants.

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) highlighted in an address to his followers the importance of self-efficacy: ‘...if I have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it even if I may not have it at the beginning.’ This belief that one has the inner strength to achieve one’s desired aims is termed one’s self-efficacy. Self-efficacy has been identified as one of the key attributes of positive psychology as a protective factor

and an important component of well-being. Many theorists suggest that self-efficacy affects every domain of human endeavour. Carr (2011) called self-efficacy the belief that an individual holds concerning his or her personal power to affect situations.

According to Bandura (1997), people with high self-efficacy believe that they are in control of their own lives and that their own actions and decisions will shape their own lives. Many theorists such as Bandura (1997) and Locke and Latham (1990) believe that individuals with high self-efficacy make greater efforts to complete tasks, and will persist longer in those efforts than those with low self-efficacy. Obstacles are seen as opportunities to conquer (Rutter, 1985). Individuals with high levels of self-efficacy are known to approach tasks in a holistic and logical manner, often taking time to view the task from a number of perspectives before embarking on a chosen plan (Corsini, 2004).

Self-efficacy is of immense importance to the personal growth of young people. During the adolescent and early adult years, young people are faced with difficult and complex challenges. They can face particularly challenging and pressurised choices concerning drinking, smoking, drug-taking, sexual practices and relationships (UNICEF, 2011b; 2011c). Research by Luszczynska, Gutierrez-Dona and Schwarzer (2005) proposed that individuals with higher levels of self-efficacy can manage these difficult choices better than those with lower levels. Given the serious problems in Ireland around these difficult issues, any programme that can help adolescents to develop greater levels of self-efficacy is of importance. The Gaisce programme affords young people opportunities for decision-making in structured and supportive environments. This learning experience helps them to develop their levels of self-efficacy and what Benson et al. (1997) called their social competency, an internal asset which is an important and invaluable attribute for life.

Studies by Ormrod (2008) have shown that those with high self-efficacy show greater mental strength and enhanced commitment. One of the main themes to emerge from interviews with both Bronze and Gold participants was what can be termed mental fortitude. The Bronze participants spoke of their 'enhanced capacity to challenge themselves', and their ability to 'motivate themselves' and 'push themselves'. They referred to their increased sense of self-belief and self-worth. Gold participants spoke of their increased ability to achieve and of having a 'can-do' attitude towards life and its challenges. Taking part in the Gaisce programme had fostered in them a belief that they could achieve and that, having been successful in the Gaisce programme, they could go on to be successful again. Both groups took pride in knowing that they had pushed

themselves, had stayed motivated and calm in the face of adversity, and had emerged triumphant from the challenges.

According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy and goal-setting are intrinsically linked. An individual's sense of self-efficacy has a central role on how he or she approaches goals, tasks, and challenges (Locke and Latham, 1990). Self-efficacy strongly impacts on both the power a person has to face difficulties and in the choices they are likely to make. Goals are aspirations and become a significant part of a person's life story and identity. During the adolescent and young adult period, young people select the values and goals which will help form their identity and direct them through life. Children have many of their goals selected for them; it is only in adolescence that a person is in a position to begin to set goals for themselves that meet their psychological needs for pleasure, for relationships, and for skill-building. Goals are seen by theorists as fuelled by self-efficacy and as spurs to ignite action in an individual, and this was borne out by the current research. The Gold participants in the Gaisce programme indicated that participation had motivated and spurred them to set long- and short-term goals in order to achieve the Award. The Bronze participants spoke about their sense of achievement after mastering a skill in their journey towards obtaining the Award, using terms like 'defining moment', 'great feeling' and 'immense happiness'.

Theorists such as Sheldon and Elliot (1999) suggested that goals that match and express our core sense of self, or 'self-concordant' goals, provide a strong sense of self-efficacy and life purpose. As suggested by Gaffney (2011), goals become personal projects with greater self-efficacy and motivation when there is a strong personal value, and ultimately increasing their commitment to learning, a crucial developmental internal asset, according to the Search Institute (1997). Bronze and Gold Gaisce participants interviewed appreciated that they were allowed to select and set their own personal goals in each of the four components of the Award. They were thereby providing themselves with their own self-concordant goals, and thus increasing their levels of personal motivation and self-efficacy.

Seligman (2011) has suggested that individuals who freely select goals with high personal value have increased chances of achieving these goals, which in turn enhances their sense of self-efficacy. Many of the Gaisce participants interviewed spoke of their sense of achievement, with Gold participants highlighting the satisfaction they had attained through their experience of the programme. Gold participants also recognised

that because they had successfully achieved their goals in the Award, they were more likely to be successful again in other circumstances.

Snyder and Lopez (2006) saw self-efficacy as an evolving process learned through experience and through mastering tasks and acquiring new skills. Thus self-efficacy has the potential to be influenced by people and programmes. Participation in Positive Youth Development programmes offers young people access to supportive relationships and opportunities to develop their sense of self-efficacy through acquiring skills and building strengths and attributes, ultimately positively affecting their own trajectory through life.

Positive Youth Development programmes aim to help young people to enhance and develop their levels of self-efficacy by allowing them to assert their independence in a safe and supportive environment. A number of the Bronze and Gold Gaisce participants interviewed highlighted the fact that taking part in the Gaisce Award programme had allowed them to become more independent and self-confident.

Ultimately, the research findings support the hypothesis that the Gaisce Award programme facilitates the development of self-efficacy in its Bronze and Gold participants.

10.04.03 Self-esteem

The third objective of this research was to discover if participation in Gaisce–The President’s Award programme enhanced participants’ levels of self-esteem. Self-esteem levels were measured quantitatively pre- and post-participation using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

The quantitative results found that participation in Gaisce had a large effect on the self-esteem levels of the Bronze Award participants who had scored in lowest quartile of the group at pre-test when compared with their control counterparts. While the lowest quartile for both the Gaisce and control groups experienced increases, the Gaisce group experienced the greater increase from Time 1 to Time 2. The qualitative findings ascertained from the focus groups and interviews, confirmed enhanced levels of self-esteem for both Bronze and Gold interviewees.

Self-esteem is literally the worth people place on themselves. It is the evaluative component of self-knowledge. High self-esteem, according to Rosenberg (1965), refers to a positive appraisal of the self and is linked to enhanced well-being, while low self-

esteem refers to a disparaging definition of the self and is linked to depression and may be a risk factor for a psychological disorder. Research has identified high self-esteem as correlating with high levels of happiness, and has been positively associated with successful social skills, improved relationships and enhanced well-being (Leary, 1999; Durlak et al., 1997).

The concept of self-esteem has received much attention over the past few decades, particularly in North America, which adopted the notion that high self-esteem is not only desirable in its own right, but is also the central psychological source from which many positive behaviours and outcomes originate (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger and Vohs, 2003). Theorists such as Branden (1994) claimed that self-esteem had profound consequences for every aspect of human existence.

Many current theorists would not credit self-esteem with such profound properties. However, self-esteem has been attributed with affecting a number of aspects of positive emotion and behaviours. Lyubomirsky, King and Diener (2005) stated that high self-esteem contributes to making people feel happy. Pavot and Diener (2008) showed that self-esteem was positively associated with improvements in an individual's levels of well-being, energy, social skills, and mental health.

Self-esteem has also been examined for its effects on behaviours. Baumeister et al. (2003) found that high self-esteem enhanced an individual's ability to persist in the face of failure, and their willingness to devise their own plans and select their own approaches to completing tasks and goals. People with high self-esteem were also found to be more adaptive, knowing when to persist in a course of action and when to seek a more promising alternative.

The theme of persistence and determination was raised by Gold Gaisce participants during their interviews. They noticed in particular that, as a result of their experiences during the Gaisce programme, they were more enthusiastic about setting challenges for themselves and more able to persist in the face of adversity. They also reported increased motivation and increased self-belief. Bronze participants noted that they were more able to work on their own initiative, and understood that facing challenges was part of the maturing process.

Benson (1997) identified twenty internal assets, personal characteristics and behaviours that stimulate the positive development of a young person, and can act as a buffer to help

them cope with stress and difficult times. In particular, they listed a number of assets which as a group comprised “positive identity”: personal power, self-esteem, sense of purpose and positive view of the future. All four of these assets were cited by both Bronze and Gold interviewees as personal outcomes from their participation in Gaisce—The President’s Award. A number of the Gold participants interviewed spoke of their enhanced self-esteem in terms of their increased capability to bring about personal change. They cited themselves as being ‘pro-active’ and believed that they were responsible for bringing about change in their own lives. Bronze participants reported how they had learned to be reflective as a result of participating in the programme. The programme had, they said, enabled them to come to know themselves more fully and honestly, which in turn had led to increased levels of self-esteem.

Many participants interviewed linked personal achievement to enhanced self-esteem. Gold participants noted that their self-esteem had increased as a result of their commitment to, and their success in, achieving their personal goals and challenges. Bronze participants reported that the Award had added to their sense of self-worth and confidence, which again in turn had increased their levels of self-esteem.

High self-esteem has been acknowledged as a protective factor in the face of failure or stress (Durlak and DuPre, 2009). People with high self-esteem are generally able to bounce back better than those with low self-esteem. Both Gold and Bronze interviewees spoke of how they were now more determined and more able to take a new course of action if their current strategy wasn’t working.

Similar to other core attributes, self-esteem requires supportive relationships and a supportive environment in which to grow and develop. Durlak et al. (2010) stated that young people’s self-esteem was enhanced when they actively participated in programmes that afforded opportunities to learn new skills, enhance their personal strengths and meet with peers. A Gold participant interviewed reported that their President’s Award Leader (PAL) had become a person to whom she turned for advice. Another Gold participant said her PAL had been a source of encouragement to her, and had inspired her to believe in herself and her ability. A number of the Bronze participants gave credit to their Transition Year Co-ordinators/teachers and coaches for nurturing their self-esteem and in doing so, helping them to achieve their Award.

Praise and encouragement which acknowledges a successful performance or presentation, or a worthwhile job or achievement, can help to increase an individual's self-esteem, which in turn can lead to improved future learning and achievement (Leary, 1999). A number of both Bronze and Gold participants believed that the feedback they had received from parents, teachers, peers and other supportive adults in recognition of their achievements had enhanced their self-belief and self-esteem. The quantitative results also indicate that Bronze participants who had scored in the lowest quartile pre-participation reported significantly increased levels of self-esteem, suggesting that young people with low levels of self-esteem benefit significantly from participation in Gaisce—The President's Award programme.

It is evident that enhanced self-esteem is one of the core factors to promote positive outcomes in young people, especially when it emerges from ethical behaviour or worthwhile achievements, such as acquiring new skills and strengths, or doing community service. The findings from the qualitative component of this research support the premise that participation in Gaisce—The President's Award enhances levels of self-esteem by imbuing participants with a sense of power and purpose, determination and persistence.

10.04.04 Happiness

The fourth objective of this research was to discover if participation in Gaisce—The President's Award programme enhanced participants' levels of happiness. The happiness levels of Bronze and Gold participants in the programme were measured pre- and post-participation.

The quantitative results found that Gaisce had a moderate effect on those Gaisce Bronze participants who scored within the lowest quartile at Time 1. The latter experienced significantly improved levels of happiness over time, and also when compared with their control group counterparts at Time 2. No significant increase in levels of happiness was found for the Bronze and Gold group participants post-participation when compared with their control groups. The Gaisce participants, both Bronze and Gold, who took part in this research, demonstrated high levels of happiness at pre-participation testing. Results from the qualitative component confirmed that participation in the programme had contributed to the levels of happiness for the both Bronze and Gold participants interviewed.

Adolescence is viewed by Erikson (1963) as the period during which a young person searches for their own identity as they separate emotionally and psychologically from their parents (Furman and Buhrmester, 1992). During this period, they have a powerful need for companionship, with peers playing an important role, providing support, affirmation, knowledge and companionship (La Fontana and Ollessen, 2009; Boyd and Bee, 2005). According to Griffin (2002), one of the most powerful predictive factors of young people's well-being is peer relationships. This is supported by the qualitative findings of this study, in which an overwhelming proportion of both Bronze and Gold participants viewed positive peer relationship as the single most valuable aspect of their participation in Gaisce—The President's Award programme.

Participation in Positive Youth Development programmes provides access to what Benson and the Search Institute (1997) termed essential nutrients or 'developmental assets' for young people, seen as necessary to build protective factors and promote positive development. These essential nutrients include mixing with positive peers and positive adults within a safe and supportive environment. Snyder and Lopez (2006) agreed that having access to support from positive caring peers and others and the ability to use time constructively in programmes like Gaisce, were primary contributors to personal thriving.

Lack of access to supportive peers can lead to loneliness, isolation, anxiety and depression (Griffiths, 1995; Hodges, Boivin, Viraro and Bokowski, 1999). Gaffney (2011) made the point that having more friends decreases the likelihood of experiencing loneliness. Chaplin (2009) and Holder and Coleman (2009) stated that a major source of happiness for young people is their relationship with others, particularly parents, friends and supportive adults. Diener and Seligman (2002) noted that the happiest people identified in their research all had one thing of significant importance in common, 'spending time with friends and family'. This was confirmed repeatedly in the interviews with the Gaisce participants, who indicated that they really valued the opportunities that the Gaisce programme afforded them to become part of a team, to meet people, to make new friends and to enhance existing friendships.

Both groups interviewed described how taking part in Gaisce had encouraged and facilitated their interaction with others. Both groups stated that taking part in Gaisce had provided them with opportunities to meet new people and to enhance existing relationships. Both groups spoke of getting opportunities to spend time with friends, and

how happy that made them. Gold participants interviewed noted that a major benefit for them of the Gaisce experience was the opportunity to make new friends with similar outlooks, with whom they believed they would remain friends into the future. Bronze participants described getting to know friends better, of getting to understand their strengths and weaknesses. Both groups confirmed that through working together to complete Gaisce tasks, they now had stronger friendships. Both groups also talked about the importance of the opportunity to be a member of a team as they worked toward completing their challenges, and how they found this form of group affiliation rewarding and supportive.

The importance of supportive relationships has been highlighted by Duck (1991) and Rutter (1999) as a key contributor to well-being. Bronze participants spoke of how they felt supported by peers. They stated that there was much less segregation or clique formation among participants than they had experienced prior to joining the Gaisce programme. Bronze participants from Northern Ireland noted with enthusiasm that, for once, religious affiliation was not an issue for them. Participants generally confirmed that camaraderie and friendship were among the highlights of the programme.

Results from the interviews indicate increased levels of both hedonic and eudaimonic happiness for both Bronze and Gold participants as a result of taking part in the programme. The Bronze participants spoke of the pleasure, fun and enjoyment they experienced from participation. They described the great fun and ‘craic’ they had while participating, particularly in the community involvement and the adventure trips.

A number of the Gold participants reported experiencing a deeper level of happiness from contributing to a worthwhile activity. They spoke of their happiness when volunteering, and of the deep satisfaction they felt when assisting others. A number of Bronze participants indicated increased levels of eudaimonic happiness achieved from using their skills, or from mentoring teams of younger children. Both groups of participants described how engaging in meaningful activities brought them immense satisfaction in their lives and improved their own mood and well-being. The participants spoke of their absorption in completing tasks and while working with others. It appears that these participants may have experienced ‘flow’ as described by Peterson and Seligman (2004).

Adolescence and young adulthood is a pivotal period offering both opportunities for, and constraints on, individual development. During this important time, young people decide

upon and commit to the values, goals, and activities which will help form their identity and guide them throughout their lifespan. Positive psychology theorists acknowledge that most people, adolescents and young adults included, strive to be happy and seek to find positive activities with the aim increasing their happiness. Carr (2011) and Watson (2002) proposed that engaging in regular physical exercise, making and maintaining strong friendships, socialising with friends and working towards personally valued goals increases one's levels of happiness.

Research by Lyubomirsky (2007) confirms that forty per cent of an individual's overall level of happiness is within their own control. The current research has found that the least happy Bronze participants pre-participation (the bottom 25% of the overall Bronze group) achieved significantly higher levels of happiness post-participation, confirming that engaging in meaningful positive activities can assist an individual to directly raise their own level of happiness and well-being. Folkman and Moskowitz (2000; 2004) suggested that engaging in positive activities can foster positive emotions which can serve as a buffer and protective factor against psychological difficulties.

It has been found that people who choose their own positive activities are more likely to adhere to those activities and to show greater increases in well-being. If the positive activity is enjoyed and fosters positive emotion, this will increase levels of happiness (Sheldon, 2002, and Lyubomirsky, 2007. Positive Activity Interventions (PAIs) are, according to Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009), activities designed to increase levels of happiness and well-being. While Gaisce–The President's Award does not name their challenges as PAIs, the Gaisce activities appear to meet the criteria of a PAI in that all participants are requested to self-select the activities and challenges that best meet their individual needs, abilities and circumstances.

In addition, Lyubomirsky, Sheldon et al. (2005) noted that timing and duration were important factors in the success of PAIs. They recommended doing an activity once a week rather than daily, and for a period of time that would enable long-term effects to be realised. This would seem to be supported by the significantly increased scores in happiness achieved by the Bronze Award participants who had scored in the bottom 25% of happiness levels pre-participation.

This research confirms the evidence from the empirical literature that positive relationships and positive activities are the key to happiness. The Gaisce participants have

indicated that taking part in the programme afforded them opportunities to engage in positive relationship and positive activities, which they cited as contributing to their overall levels of happiness.

10.04.05 Psychological well-being

The fifth objective of this research was to discover if participation in Gaisce–The President’s Award programme enhanced participants’ psychological well-being. The psychological well-being levels of Bronze and Gold participants in the programme were measured pre- and post-participation, using the Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale.

The Scale lists six measureable dimensions of psychological well-being: self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, and positive relations with others, which all contribute to overall psychological well-being. While these dimensions were measured using the Scale, the results of the exploratory factor analysis indicated that the Scale in its six-dimension structure was ‘not a good fit’ for measuring psychological well-being in Irish adolescents and young adults. This result supports the postulation by a number of theorists (Kafta and Kozma, 2002; Von Dierendock, 2004; Springer and Hauser, 2005; Burns and Machin, 2010) that the Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale does not measure six distinct dimensions of psychological well-being.

The findings from the quantitative component of this research, in particular the exploratory factor analysis, do not support the premise that the Scale measures six dimensions of psychological well-being. Therefore, the quantitative results reported on psychological well-being as a global construct, encompassing all six dimensions. The qualitative component of the research did endeavour to explore Ryff’s six dimensions of psychological well-being.

Participation in Gaisce had a moderate effect for the Bronze participants who scored within the lowest quartile on the Ryff scale at Time 1. The quantitative results found significant improvements over time in levels of psychological well-being for these participants, and when compared against their control counterparts at Time 2. While there was no significant increase found in levels of overall psychological well-being for the Gold participants, the Bronze Group experienced an increase in well-being over time whilst the control group decreased significantly. In the qualitative component, all six dimensions of psychological well-being were mentioned by Bronze and/or Gold

interviewees. The six dimensions of psychological well-being will be discussed based on the definitions constructed by Ryff and Keyes (1995).

Self-acceptance is a positive attitude towards the self. Bronze participants interviewed discussed how they had come to know and appreciate themselves better. Some Gold participants believed that they had “grown as a person” and were able to accept themselves for who they were.

Personal growth is defined as having feelings of continued development and potential, being open to new experiences, and feeling increasingly knowledgeable and effective. As already noted, both Bronze and Gold participants stated that they had grown as a result of participation in the programme. Personal growth emerged as a theme for the Gold participants interviewed, who stated that they had grown through the opportunities afforded by the programme requirements to learn new skills and encounter new experiences. Bronze participants reported that they had grown through completing tasks that they would not have previously attempted. All participants interviewed believed that the Gaisce programme had provided them with increased opportunities to experience new things.

Having a purpose in life, having goals and having a sense of direction in life are also important to psychological well-being. This concept is very similar to self-efficacy which was described in detail earlier. Having a purpose in life was evident in the interviews with the Gold participants. They reported on the opportunities afforded them by the programme to set long-term goals and the satisfaction they gained from reaching them, and while Bronze participants also highlighted setting and meeting goals, they focussed on more immediate aims.

Environmental mastery can be summarised as feeling competent and able to manage complex environments. Gaisce–The President’s Award programme requires all participants to set and achieve demanding challenges in four diverse domains – acquiring a new skill, engaging in community involvement, becoming more physically fit, and planning and taking part in an adventure journey. A number of participants described how the award had made them venture into environments that they would not have done previously. A Gold participant described taking up tennis, having never played any sport previously and a Bronze participant set himself the goal of running a marathon. In the

area of community service, another Gold participant worked late in the evening feeding homeless men in an inner city setting.

Autonomy is about being able to think and act independently. A number of the participants interviewed stated that they had matured and had grown while participating in the Award, and had become more independent as a result. Bronze participants viewed themselves as becoming more independent and more able to think independently, as demonstrated by their enhanced confidence and greater self-belief. Gold participants identified enhanced mental fortitude in terms of motivation, commitment, determination and perseverance, as an indicator of their ability to act more independently.

Having positive relations with others is defined as experiencing warm, trusting relationships, feeling concern about others' welfare, and having the capability for empathy, affection and intimacy. The importance of such relationships has been examined earlier in this chapter.

Altruism, or empathic concern for others, is a particularly important attribute for enhanced positive relationships. Empathy, as suggested by Eisenberg (2000), Erikson (1968), Hoffman (2000) and Singer (2006), is vital for fostering and widening social interactions. Erikson (1968) described empathy as the cornerstone of responsive relationships. Individuals with high levels of altruism display behaviours that make it easier for others to relate to them, such as showing understanding or demonstrating concern about how the other feels and what they may think. People with high empathy-altruism can be seen as sending out "positive invitations" to others that others in turn find easy to respond to in equally positive and enjoyable ways. Greater exposure to social interactions may also foster and improve empathic competency, which can lead to reciprocal reinforcement.

The idea of concern for others and altruism emerged as a significant theme from the interviews with the Bronze and Gold participants. Both groups spoke about how participating in the programme had developed their levels of empathy and compassion, directly contributing to greater satisfaction and contentment with their lives. It emerged from the interviews that the Gaisce participants liked and enjoyed helping others.

Acts of altruism have been associated with life satisfaction, happiness and self-esteem, according to Wheeler, Gorey and Greenblatt (1988), Ellison (1991), and Gecas and Burke (1995). The personal benefits of altruism can go beyond the immediate rewards of being

thanked or feeling good. For centuries altruism has been linked to self-actualisation, that is, the realisation of one's full potential (Weinstein and Ryan, 2010). The Greek philosopher Aristotle (350BC in Irwin, 1985) claimed that 'eudaimonia', or true existential happiness, or self-actualisation, could be achieved only through loving and caring for others. Maslow's (1968) theory of self-actualisation and the hierarchy of needs, suggests that the human connection resulting from helping behaviours is an essential key to true well-being

The component of the Award that evoked the most altruistic behaviours was the community service component, which both Bronze and Gold participants interviewed ranked as the most helpful component for their personal growth. This bears out the findings of Schwartz, Meisenhelder, Yusheng and Reed (2003) who noted that giving help to others correlated with higher levels of mental health.

Gaisce participants interviewed spoke of feeling better about themselves emotionally, and liking themselves more, as a result of assisting or helping others. Gold participants reported that participation in the President's Award enabled them to become more compassionate towards others. A number of Bronze participants stated that they had become more patient and more forgiving of others as a result of volunteering. Bronze participants were more surprised by their newly acquired virtue of altruism than the Gold participants, stating that they had been rarely asked to help others before taking part in the Award.

Having discussed Ryff's six dimensions of psychological well-being separately, it can be seen that there is considerable overlap between the six dimensions. It is therefore helpful to examine psychological well-being as a global construct that contributes to a more meaningful and fulfilled life. In this context, the findings of this research support the premise that participation in Gaisce—The President's Award enhances psychological well-being in participants by providing them with the opportunity to experience and develop the three essential components of positive psychology, a positive programme or institution, positive relationships and positive attributes.

10.05 Positive Youth Development programmes

As part of the overall investigation into the operational structures of Gaisce—The President's Award programme, this research investigated whether Gaisce meets the criteria necessary to be termed a Positive Youth Development programme.

The empirical review of literature suggests that there is no single framework to define a Positive Youth Development programme. The three main frameworks that have emerged from the literature for evaluating a Positive Youth Development programme are the structural features, the operational features, and the outcome goals. Gaisce will be examined under these three main frameworks for Positive Youth Development programmes discussed previously and will draw from the review of the literature in the chapter on the Gaisce programme, and from the findings of the qualitative and quantitative components of this research.

10.05.01 Structural features of Positive Youth Development programmes

The Gaisce programme, through its structure, provides opportunities that facilitate the interaction of young people with their environment and their society. The structural framework proposed by Benson (2003) highlights the importance of providing opportunities for mutually beneficial and supportive relationships, and of encouraging and rewarding young people who contribute to society. All four components of the Gaisce programme require and encourage participants to work collaboratively with others to achieve their personal goals. Gaisce supports Benson's aim of facilitating the active involvement of young people in their community by dedicating a component of the Award to encouraging participants to become involved in their community and to actively contribute to it.

Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003a) listed three key structural components necessary for a Positive Youth Development programme. Such a programme should have goals that promote and nurture positive development, and that young people can endorse and aspire to reach. It should have an atmosphere characterised by hope. Its activities should provide opportunities for participants to enhance their interests and talents. The Gaisce programme meets these three key structural components. Gaisce facilitates an ambience of hopeful thinking by requiring participants to set and meet their own achievable, worthwhile goals. Participants gain confidence and a sense of achievement as they develop their skills and interests in a safe and supportive environment.

A further three essential structural "ingredients" of Positive Youth Development programmes were highlighted by Lerner (2004). According to Lerner, a Positive Youth Development programme should provide opportunities for commitment, should endorse adult-youth relationships, and should encourage and provide opportunities for skill-

building activities. Through its structure and timeframe, the Gaisce programme affords young people with adequate opportunities to develop their skills, and to demonstrate their commitment to achieving their goals. Participants have opportunities to work collaboratively with adults, initially with the President's Award Leaders (PALs), and subsequently as they engage in programme components such as community service.

10.05.02 Operational features of Positive Youth Development programmes

The "Active Ingredients" model developed by the U.S. National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine's Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth (2002) contains a list of eight features that should be present in Positive Youth Development programmes. These include physical and psychological safety, appropriate structure, supportive relationships, opportunities to belong, promotion of positive social norms, support for enhanced efficacy, opportunities for skill building, and integration of family, school and community. As far as can be determined, all eight "Active Ingredients" are featured in the Gaisce programme. All President's Award Leaders (PALs) are Garda-vetted and receive appropriate training. Clear written guidelines are provided to all participants. Gaisce endeavours to provide supportive relationships and opportunities to commit to a programme that endorses a holistic, inclusive and universal ethos. Gaisce also provides opportunities for skill-building, through which participants enhance their sense of self-efficacy. Gaisce acknowledges and values the importance of family, school and community. The programme is primarily delivered through schools, at Bronze level, and other local institutions, including the Gardai, the Army, the Irish universities, for Silver and Gold Awards.

The Fifteen Objectives is a second operational features model for a Positive Youth Development programme devised by Catalano et al. (2002). The fifteen objectives in this model include promoting bonding, social competence, emotional competence, cognitive competence, behavioural competence, and moral competence; and fostering resilience, self-determination, spirituality, self-efficacy, identity, belief in the future, and pro-social norms. All these objectives further provide opportunities for pro-social involvement and recognition for positive behaviour. As indicated in the quantitative findings of this research, Gaisce promotes self-efficacy, belief in the future (hope), and clear and positive identity (self-esteem) in its participants. During the qualitative interviews, the participants spoke of their enhanced social and emotional competencies and increased self-determination. They believed that their capacity to be adaptive and resilient had increased

as a result of participating in the Gaisce programme. Gaisce in its literature claims, as one of its objectives, to reinforce and acknowledge positive behaviour by providing opportunities for pro-social involvement.

The Fifteen Objectives model also suggests that a Positive Youth Development programme should promote moral competence and foster spirituality. While the Gaisce programme does not have affiliation to any particular religious ethos, or list fostering spirituality as one of its objectives, a number of Gaisce participants interviewed spoke about how the programme has taught them to appreciate fairness and honesty and to respect the dignity and rights of others.

10.05.03 Outcome goals of Positive Youth Development programmes

Successful Positive Youth Development programmes, according to Lerner (2004), should promote five key “latent constructs”, or outcomes, which he named the “Five Cs”. These are Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, and Caring and compassion. If Positive Youth Development programmes are successful in promoting these “Five Cs”, a sixth “C”, that of Contribution, should also emerge. Lerner (2004) and Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003) proposed that possession of the “Five Cs” was consistent with the definition of a growing and flourishing, or thriving, individual.

The qualitative component of this research featured interviews and focus groups with Gaisce participants, in which they discussed their personal experience of the Award programme. This process allowed participants to speak about the aspects of the programme that they considered most important. The interviewees spoke of what they saw as the benefits, or outcomes, of participation in the programme. This material allowed comparison to be drawn between Gaisce participants’ outcomes and those indicated as outcomes for Positive Youth Development programmes.

During the interviews with the Gold and Bronze participants, it was reported by several that their personal **competence** or skills had significantly developed and improved. They reported increased commitment, determination and perseverance suggesting that their mental fortitude was enhanced. They also reported gains in interpersonal skills, including better ability to mix with people and to communicate with others. Both sets of participants spoke of their greater maturity and self-growth. All respondents reported greatly increased **confidence** and enhanced positive thoughts, including greater feelings of self-worth and self-efficacy. In fact, enhanced confidence was identified as a central

theme for the Bronze participants interviewed. Improvements in the third “C”, that of **connection**, i.e., positive relationships, was the main overall theme for both Bronze and Gold participants, with all participants interviewed valuing and embracing the opportunities provided through the programme to improve existing friendships, to meet and make new friends and to be part of a team. Many of the respondents reported a greater understanding of right and wrong and enhanced respect and appreciation for the dignity and rights of others. They believed that their personal **character** had strengthened and matured through their interpersonal relationships, which were developed through such programme activities as mentoring, volunteering and coaching. Significantly increased **caring and compassion** were also reported by both Gold and Bronze interviewees. It was the second most frequently cited theme for Bronze participants and the third for Gold participants. All participants interviewed appreciated the opportunities provided to **contribute**, to help and to understand others in a more compassionate, patient and empathic manner.

Peterson and Seligman (2004) developed a classification system of human strengths in order to determine if a Positive Youth Development programme had succeeded in meeting its goals. They proposed that a successful Positive Youth Development programme should promote and develop positive human strengths and attributes in its participants as a key route to a good life – encompassing happiness, good relationships and meaningful activities (Seligman, 2002). They devised the Values in Action (VIA) Inventory of Virtues and Strengths, which included six overarching virtues, Wisdom and Knowledge, Courage, Humanity, Justice, Temperance and Transcendence, and these were comprised of twenty-four character strengths known as “psychological ingredients” that defined those virtues.

The first of the virtues is the cognitive strength of **Wisdom and Knowledge** which involves the acquisition of knowledge. Many of the Gaisce participants spoke of both the enhancement of their existing skills and the development of new skills and abilities. A number of participants noted their enhanced ability to “think outside the box” and to “look at the bigger picture”. Gold participants interviewed also felt that they had acquired the ability to evaluate situations critically and to make better-informed decisions. Both Bronze and Gold participants interviewed confirmed that the programme provided them with opportunities to discover and try new things, to be creative, and to work

independently. They also noted that their new creativity had given them a sense of empowerment and fulfilment.

The second of the virtues refers to the emotional strengths encompassed under the term **Courage**. The Gaisce participants interviewed reported being better able to take on and conquer challenges, despite inevitable setbacks. Both groups of participants referred to their increased determination, commitment, and perseverance, and noted the importance of these strengths for skills acquisition and completion of tasks. The findings in the quantitative component of this research confirm that participation in the Gaisce Award programme significantly enhance participants' levels of self-efficacy. Some interviewees reported that they felt braver about speaking the truth and taking responsibility for their own actions. The Gold interviewees in particular spoke of how they had come to know themselves in a more honest and open way.

The third virtue of **Humanity** encompasses interpersonal strengths, which includes caring for and befriending others. The Gaisce participants interviewed cited the importance of close relationships. Both Bronze and Gold participants reported that the Gaisce experience had allowed them to form closer relationships with others, and that they had greater knowledge and enhanced awareness of the feelings and motives of themselves and other people. They also highlighted the increased positive affect of making of new friends and of being part of a team, and they spoke of enjoying the camaraderie and companionship. Participants interviewed spoke of their increased levels of kindness and compassion which they attributed to taking part in the Award. Many interviewees stated that they would be more likely to come to the assistance of others as a result of their experiences on the programme. They believed that they had become more compassionate and patient, especially with those who most needed it.

The fourth virtue of **Justice** includes teamwork, fairness and leadership. The Gaisce participants interviewed reported they joy they felt from being involved in activities that required teamwork. They relished being able to contribute to group activities. Some Gold participants stated that Gaisce had provided them with a platform to advance and develop their leadership skills, which gave them a sense of empowerment.

The fifth virtue of **Temperance** refers to self-regulation, self-discipline and accepting the shortcomings of others. Several participants from both groups interviewed reported that

they were more ready to forgive and accept others for who they were, and were less likely to be judgmental.

The last virtue of **Transcendence** includes, among others, hope, gratitude and humour. All interviewees reported having fun and enjoying participating in the programme. A number of participants spoke of their enhanced hopefulness and their belief that things would work out in life; they reported that they felt more secure in their ability and power to manage their future. The results from the quantitative component of this research also confirm that hopeful thinking was significantly enhanced in Bronze and Gold participants as a result of taking part in the Award. All interviewees believed that they had matured and developed over the period of participation, and valued the opportunity to take part in the award programme.

10.05.04 Gaisce as an example of a Positive Youth Development programme

Positive Youth Development programmes are services and supports organised for young people, aimed at assisting them to acquire skills and competencies and to enhance their personal strengths and attributes. These programmes adopt a universal strengths-based approach (Durlak, 2008) with the aim of empowering young people to reach their potential by providing a supportive forum for positive relationships and positive opportunities to develop skills and acquire independence. Albee (1996), Cowen (1994), Durak (1997) and Elias (1995) found that Positive Youth Development programmes help to build protective factors in participants that have the potential to act as buffers against psychological distress.

Hammond (2012) stated that successful youth programmes that adopt underlying values, principles and philosophy that follow a strength-based approach and promote resilience and increase protective factors in participants are relatively uncommon. Gaisce–The President’s Award was designed from the beginning to contribute to the development of all young Irish people through building their skills, attributes and strengths for the betterment of themselves and their communities. From the beginning, the Gaisce programme has been based on Kurt Hahn’s innovative philosophy that “each of us has more courage, more strength and more compassion than we realise.” As discussed, building personal strengths in young people is central to all the inclusion criteria (structural, operational and outcomes) for a programme to be classified as a Positive Youth Development programme. It is apparent from the findings of this research that

Gaisce—The President’s Award programme has successfully met the inclusion criteria to be classified as a Positive Youth Development programme.

10.06 Limitations of the current study

There are a number of limitations to consider when interpreting the findings of this current study.

Consistent with the identified limitations of the guiding theory of positive psychology, this study examined only positive psychological outcomes in isolation from clinical defective variables. Although this study aimed to focus on positive attributes, perhaps greater insight would have been gained by examining both perspectives. This perhaps an area which should be explored in future research.

Although all the questions in the questionnaires were deemed suitable and appropriate for the participants’ age group, the quantitative component was completed online without direct guidance and hence it cannot be assumed that all participants were able to fully understand all questions.

Problems arose with the pre-printed identification (ID) numbers on consent and assent letters. A number of Bronze participants lost their numbers, which made it impossible to match their pre- and post-participation data. A large proportion of post-questionnaire may be deemed ineligible because of this. Perhaps a direction for future research would be to allow participants to select their own identifying details.

The Gaisce organisation presented a number of limitations to data collection for this research. They did not allow the completion of the online questionnaires to be included as requisites for completing the award. Furthermore, they were exclusively responsible for the forwarding of the information about the research to their school database. However, due to communication difficulties, it is believed that not all schools received information regarding this research. Therefore, the target sample was unduly limited by this recruitment procedure on behalf of the organisation.

The sample size was further impacted by variations in technical advancement between schools. The sophisticated firewall programming of many schools meant that these facilities were unable to download the questionnaire, meaning that responsibility fell completely with the individual student to complete the online questionnaire on their own

time. Future studies should give schools an option to use hard copies of the questionnaires.

It should be noted that the scores for the control and Gaisce participants differed at Time 1, which could impose a limitation in drawing conclusions as to the efficacy of Gaisce—The President's Award as an intervention. However, in 16 of the 21 variables measured at Time 1 in the quantitative study, the control participants scored higher than the Gaisce participants. Therefore, this is not considered a significant limitation.

There was quite a large attrition rate from pre- to post-participation for a number of reasons. The main reason cited was the loss of ID numbers. Post-participation questionnaires coincided with the end of the school year meaning that teachers were time limited and often omitted to remind students to complete the post-measures. Change in teaching staff also meant a failure in the reminding of students to complete the questionnaires. Furthermore, no analyses were indicated to compare students lost to attrition to students who remained in the study, meaning that discrepancies in demographics were not identified.

The general ideology of the Gaisce organisation is to empower people to pursue their individual goals. This meant that they were very reluctant to become involved in the research or to pursue the target population to participate in the analyses. This had a significant impact on many facets of the study, and particularly in the data collection which is reflected in the large attrition rate in the Gaisce schools as opposed to the control schools. Further problems arose due to the top-down nature of approval for the investigative research with the Gaisce council approving and recommending the research. The Gaisce staff were recipients of a directive and it is unclear how much they bought into the aims of the research, with a number of the staff seemingly ambivalent towards the progression of the research. The research in general would have significantly benefitted from more cohesive endorsement from the organisation.

While the qualitative component of this research provided a rich source of information concerning participants' personal experience of taking part in the Bronze and Gold Awards, it must be noted that not all participants contributed equally to the group discussion. It cannot be assumed that the information provided by the most talkative was the opinion of the less vocal members. While all participants appeared to be relaxed and to provide genuine answers to the questions, it is possible that the participants gave

answers that they believed the researcher wanted to hear. In particular, as the Bronze participants were interviewed in their schools, where they completed the Award, it is possible that the participants believed they were representing the school as well as themselves and gave more positive answers in order to show the school and themselves in a favourable light.

Given that the number of Gold Gaisce participants was relatively small, there were fewer opportunities for focus group discussion, which could have generated additional information.

While the Gold participants were adults, they may have found it difficult to say anything negative about the Award to the researcher during the taped interviews. It would be important to interpret with caution the fact that there were relatively few negative comments.

Finally, this research focused only on the Bronze and Gold Award participants. Due to time constraints, no information was gathered on the Silver Award participants. The inclusion of data on Silver Award participants would have allowed for a more complete picture of the Award programme and its structure.

10.07 Strengths of the current research

Gaisce–The President’s Award is well-publicised in the Irish press anecdotally, but to date there has been no scientific evidence on how participation in the Award programme affects positive psychological attributes of its participants. This research was the first scientific study to investigate the effects of participating in Gaisce–The President’s Award programme. It stands as a pioneer study into positive psychology phenomena in an Irish cultural context, and hopefully signals a change in the way we examine young people who partake in positive youth development programmes.

A major strength of this study is its comprehensive methodology and extensive review of literature. The use of a mixed methods approach allowed for the capturing more fully and therefore more comprehensively of the participants’ experience of taking part in the Award. It also addresses previous limitations identified with the evaluative methodology of positive youth development programmes. The current research possibly stands as the first objective and empirically strenuous examination of the positive attributes of a positive youth development programme.

A further strength of this research is that it is a real-world study. With the exception of assent and consent, no exclusion criteria were enforced.

The inclusion of two control groups, one for the Bronze Award and another for the Gold Award, was a valuable, important and necessary part of this research, and reinforced the robustness of the findings.

The psychological well-being of the control groups was taken into account. The researcher offered and delivered talks and facilitated discussion forums and workshops for control participants, their teachers and their parents, on the topics of positive psychology and positive strengths and attributes.

The quantitative aspect allowed for well-known positive questionnaires to be validated for an Irish adolescent sample population. The large number of pre-participation questionnaires that were completed allowed for a snapshot indication of the mental health of Irish adolescents in 2011-2012.

The researcher liaised with the CEO of the Irish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC) who agreed to allow the ISPCC contact details and logo to be inserted at the bottom of the questionnaire, which was completed online by all participants, including the control groups. This may have allowed some young people access to the ISPCC at a needful time.

10.08 Implications for policy and practice

The Positive Youth Development perspective does not attempt to ignore the many problems and difficulties facing young people. Rather, it attempts to identify and develop the positive strengths and attributes of young people which with support and recognition can become personal assets and protective factors for the young person in difficult times. For too long, young people have been viewed collectively as difficult, challenging, and needing to be managed. Intervention programmes based on this ethos, that only address risky or negative behaviours, have met with limited success (Ellickson and Bell, 1990; Catalano, 2002).

A Positive Youth Development approach offers a genuine basis for assisting young people to take control of their own lives in a meaningful and pro-active way. As Gaisce–The President’s Award programme has been shown to be a successful Positive Youth

Development programme, consideration should be given to ensuring that all young people be afforded the opportunity to participate in this programme.

This research has confirmed that levels of self-efficacy and hope (pathways) were significantly improved for all Bronze and Gold Award participants as a result of participation in Gaisce–The President’s Award programme. Given the prevalence in Ireland of psychological problems in its young people (Malone et al., 2012; Carr, 2006; Dooley & Fitzgerald, 2012; Patel, Flisher, Hetrick, & McGorry, 2007), any programme that can significantly improve the psychological attributes of its participants has positive implications for the psychological health of the nation’s young people and should be considered in national policy-making.

The findings have also shown that scores in levels of self-efficacy, hope (pathways), happiness, self-esteem and psychological well-being had significantly improved over time for Bronze Award participants who had scored in the lowest quartile of the group in pre-testing against their control counterparts. This suggests that those with greater psychological needs benefitted most from participation in the Gaisce programme, which has important clinical implications.

The stated primary objective of Gaisce is to provide an award programme for all young Irish people. Additionally, its Memorandum and Articles record that particular emphasis is given to those most in need of opportunity and inspiration. More widespread participation in the Award programme should have positive implications for the psychological health of young Irish people and in turn have a positive effect on mental health services waiting lists.

While it is recommended that the Award programme be expanded nationally, it is of paramount importance that such expansion should proceed with caution and careful planning, so as to ensure the quality of the programme is not compromised in any way. O’Connor, Small and Cooney (2007) pointed out that adapting such programmes (e.g., reducing the length of components, lowering the level of participants’ engagement, or changing the theoretical approach) carries risk implications for their efficacy. Lee (2009) noted that the quality of programme implementation (process) has a high correlation with outcome goals. Close adherence to the programme’s guiding principles, therefore, is necessary and important.

The qualitative and quantitative data verified that all the Bronze and Gold participants in the Gaisce research acquired, to greater or lesser degrees, enhanced positive strengths and psychological attributes. According to Carr (2006), such enhanced positive strengths and attributes serve as protective factors against anxiety and depression. Accordingly, it may be hypothesised that the life trajectory of these young people will be more positive as a result of their participation in the Award programme.

10.09 Implications for future research

This was the first piece of research ever conducted to explore how participation in Gaisce–The President’s Award programme affects positive psychological attributes in its participants.

- Further research could examine other aspects of the Award, such the effects of participation on the participants’ relationships or other outcome goals, such as levels of empathy/altruism.
- Further research could track participant’s progress a year (or more) after completing the Award to ascertain if the gains made were sustained.
- As Gaisce–The President’s award is a national award programme with many thousands participating annually, the programme has the potential to be a unique forum for gathering future data on the psychological attributes of Ireland’s young people. This has been successfully done in the United States by Lerner et al. (2011) and the 4H national programme. However a caveat must be entered here. The quality of the research must be of the highest standard, completed under expert supervision and adhere to best practice guidelines. Furthermore, if Gaisce were to follow the U.S. example and add a research component to their Award admissions process, it would be essential that this was done under the direction and supervision of psychology professionals to monitor the ethical and sensitive nature of the data received and to interpret the findings accurately and appropriately.

10.10 Conclusion

This research was the first to study if Gaisce–The President’s Award acts as a catalyst in the enhancement of psychological attributes in its Bronze and Gold participants. To answer the question, the study examined the positive psychological attributes of hope, self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness and psychological well-being pre- and post-participation. In the process of answering the research question, this study also examined whether Gaisce–The President’s Award met the inclusion criteria for a Positive Youth Development programme.

A mixed methodology approach was employed to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive overview, from a participant’s perspective, of what participation in the award entails and yields. The findings from both the quantitative and qualitative components confirmed and corroborated each other, thus producing a more robust piece of research.

Four key findings emerged from this research. The quantitative results confirmed that participation in the Gaisce programme significantly enhanced levels of hope (pathways) thinking and self-efficacy for both Bronze and Gold Gaisce participants. The findings also confirmed that participation significantly improved levels of hope (pathways), self-efficacy, self-esteem, happiness and psychological well-being for Bronze participants who had scored in the lowest quartile of the group in pre-testing against their control counterparts. The qualitative results verified that participation in the Award enhanced participants’ personal strengths and psychological attributes.

The unique developmental period of adolescence and young adulthood is characterised by both vulnerability and potential. It has been demonstrated by the evidence that emerged from this research that the support and opportunities afforded to young people during this period by a Positive Youth Development programme can help to build their psychological attributes and positive personal strengths. This study has confirmed that Gaisce–The President’s Award programme meets the criteria necessary to be termed a Positive Youth Development programme.

Gaisce–The President's Award programme acts as a catalyst in the enhancement of psychological attributes in its participants. The development of these psychological attributes and personal strengths is helping Ireland’s young people to realise their potential and is thus enabling them to become thriving and contributing members of Irish society. As a programme that embraces the core tenets of positive psychology, those of

promoting and nurturing what is best in individuals, Gaisce–The President’s Award remains true to the precepts of Kurt Hahn, the originator of the award programmes on which its philosophy is founded:

“There is more in you than you think.”

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Appendix A: Main findings from empirical studies using the Children's Hope Scale (Snyder, Hoza, Pelham, Rapoff, Ware, Danovsky, Highberger, Ribinstein & Stahl, 1997)

| Study Number & Authors | Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Findings |
|---|---|-------------|---|---|--|
| [1] Snyder, Hoza, Pelham, Rapoff, Ware, Danovsky, Highberger, Ribinstein & Stahl (1997) | <p>Fourth to Sixth grade public school students from Edmund Oklahoma. The 197 boys and 175 girls ranged in age from 9 to 14 years. This sample was re-tested one month later using the Children's Hope Scale.</p> <p>In later examination of the construct validity, data collected from a sample of 170 boys who had attended a summer program run by the Western Psychiatric Clinic and Institute in Pittsburgh was included in for analyses purposes. These boys had all been previously diagnosed with ADHD. A sample of 74 boys who had attended a summer programme in Pittsburgh served as a control.</p> | n = 616 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Children's Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1997) 2. Parent-respondent version of the Children's Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1997) 3. Self-Perception Profile for Children (Harter, 1985) 4. Children's Perceived Physical Efficacy Scale (Hoza & Ryckman, 1989) 5. Children's Attributional Style Questionnaire (Kaslow, Tanenbaum & Seligman, 1978) 6. The Child Depression Inventory (CDI) (Kovacs, 1989) 7. The Hopelessness Scale for Children (Kazdin, French, Unis, Esveldt-Dawson & Sherick, 1983) 8. Iowa Test of Basic Skills (Hieronymous & Hoover, 1985) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Findings are not longitudinal in nature, 2. Measures were self-report. There were no objective markers. 3. The sample is limited by its geographical area. 4. A concept overlap was identified between the conceptualisation of 'Hope' on this scale and the conceptualisation of 'Self Esteem' in other widely used instruments. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'Agency' and 'Pathway' sub-scales of the Children's Hope Scale were factorially identifiable for this sample. • The 'Agency' and 'Pathway' factor structure accounted for a significant amount of the variance observed in the data. • Components of the 'Agency' and 'Pathway' sub-scales correlated with other measures in a pattern predicated by the underlying theory. • Due to the degree of inter-relatedness found between the two sub-scales, it was concluded that the two sub-scales should not be considered in isolation. • Overall, the Children's Hope Scale had acceptable internal consistency. The value of Cronbach's Alpha was similar to the value found for the Adult Hope Scale (Snyder, Harris, Anderson, Holleran, Irving, Sigmon, Yoshinobu, Gibb, Langelle & Harney, 1991). • Temporal stability for the Children's Hope Scale was found. • No gender differences were identified on the Children's Hope Scale. • There was a lack of racial difference in levels of hope on the Children's Hope Scale. • The high degree of concurrence between parent observation ratings and children's scoring patterns on the Hope Scale provided further validation for the Children's Hope Scale. • Convergent validity was found when comparing scores on the Children's Hope Scale and scores on the CDI. • No relationship was found between hope and levels of intelligence. • There was moderate predicative power found for the Children's Hope Scale with regard to cognitive achievements as measured by the Iowa test of Basic Skills. |

Main findings from empirical studies using the Children's Hope Scale (Snyder, Hoza, Pelham, Rapoff, Ware, Danovsky, Highberger, Ribinstein & Stahl, 1997)

| Study Number & Authors | Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Findings |
|--|---|---------------|---|--|---|
| <p>[2] Valle, Huebner & Suldo (2004)</p> | <p>This study combined the data from six different samples in analyses. The majority of the sample was African American.</p> <p>Sample 1: 194 boys and 175 girls from Oklahoma who ranged in age from 9 to 14 years. The sample was recruited through their school district.</p> <p>Sample 2: 48 boys and 43 girls ranging in age from 8 to 14 years who were diagnosed with either arthritis or sickle cell anaemia. They completed the scales both before and after their attendance of a summer camp.</p> <p>Sample 3: 170 boys ranging in age from 7 to 13 years who had been diagnosed with either ADD or ADHD. They completed the scales while attending a summer treatment programme.</p> <p>Sample 4: Control group to sample 3 consisting of 74 normative boys ranging from 7 to 13 years who attended a summer camp.</p> <p>Sample 5: 70 boys and 73 girls aged 8 to 16 years who had previously received cancer treatment.</p> <p>Sample 6: 154 boys and 168 girls with an age range of 9 to 13 years who were enrolled in public schools in Kansas.</p> | <p>n=1169</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Children's Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1997) 2. The Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS) (Huebner, 1991) 3. The Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale (CSSS) (Malecki, Demaray & Elliott, 2000) 4. Youth Self Report (YSR) (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1991) 5. Abbreviated Junior Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (JEPQR-A) (Francis, 1996) 6. Life Events Checklist (Johnston & McCutcheon, 1980). | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The sample was not nationally representative. 2. All measures used were self-report in nature. 3. Data was collected at only one time period for the majority of the samples. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings provide further validation for the empirical use of the Children's Hope Scale among early to late adolescents. • Adequate correlations were found between scores on the Children's Hope Scale and scores on the other measures. |

| Study Number & Authors | Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Findings |
|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| [3] Valle, Huebner & Suldo (2006) | <p>Students from three public middle schools and two public high schools in a rural school district participated in the study. The sample demographics were representative of the south-eastern state of the United States in which the school district was located. The largest demographic group was African American followed by Caucasians. The sample was re-tested after a one year period.</p> <p>Time 1: The mean age for the sample was 13.5 years with 40% of the sample identified as being of a low socio-economic status and the remaining participants of average socio-economic status or above.</p> <p>Time 2: The mean age of the sample was 14.7 years with 57% identified as being of a low socio-economic status. 64% of participants at re-test were female while 36% were male.</p> | <p>Time 1: n=860</p> <p>Time 2: n=697(Circa 81% of the Original Sample)</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Children's Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1997) 2. Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (Huebner, 1991) 3. Youth Self-Report of the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1991) 4. Life Events Checklist (Johnson & McCutcheon, 1980) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sample was not nationally representative. 2. Further research is needed to investigate the relationship between hope and life stressors and, in particular, the number of life stressors. 3. The study did not examine antecedents to the variations in hope scores. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Children's Hope Scale and sub-scales showed moderate test-retest reliability over a one year period. This finding is especially significant due to a lack of previous study of stability following a one month interval. • Predictive power was found for the students hope scores – e.g. high hope scores predicted high levels of global life satisfaction one year later even after controlling for initial levels of life satisfaction. • Hope scores predicted subsequent levels of internalising behaviours but not externalising behaviours. • High levels of hope acted as a buffer to multiple life stressors. |
| [4] Brown Kirschman, Roberts, Shadlow & Pelley (2010) | <p>Participants in the sample resided in either Kansas City, Missouri or Kansas City, Kansas. 314 participants in the sample were female while 94 were male. There was an age range of 11 to 14 years with a mean age of 12.13 years.</p> <p>The sample were tested immediately pre and post attending a summer camp devoted to dance and psychosocial competence for at-risk inner-city children. There was also a four month follow-up of the sample.</p> | n=406 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Children's Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1997) 2. Exposure to Community Violence (54-Item) (Richters & Saltzman, 1990) 3. A Skills Rating Item (Designed for this Study) 4. A Friendship Follow-Up Measure (Designed for this Study) 5. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (97-Item) (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2007) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No Comparison group. 2. Baseline scores may have been elevated due to positive feeling and anticipation of the camp experience. 3. The camp organisation was very involved in decisions over measures employed. 4. No access to attendance or grades of campers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases in scores on the Children's Hope Scale found for participants. • These increases in 'Hope' scores were maintained over a period of time. • This increase in 'Hope' scores was due to gains on the 'Agency' subscale rather than the 'Pathways' subscale. • Campers reported that they maintained contact with other campers on the summer programme. • There was no change post-camp on reported risk behaviour. |

Main findings from empirical studies using the Children's Hope Scale (Snyder, Hoza, Pelham, Rapoff, Ware, Danovsky, Highberger, Ribinstein & Stahl, 1997)

| Study Number & Authors | Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Findings | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|----|-----------------------|----|------------------------|----|------------------------|----|------------------------|----|---------|---|-------|---|--|--|
| [5] Gilman, Dooley & Florell (2006) | <p>The participants were recruited from two school districts in a South-Eastern American state. The mean age for the sample was 14.58 years with females accounting for 57% of the participants and males the remaining 43%. The main ethnic demographic of the group was Caucasian (87%). Only 4% of the participants were identified as being of a low socio-economic status. Participants per grade breakdown is presented below:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>6th Grade</td> <td>50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7th Grade</td> <td>47</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8th Grade</td> <td>49</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9th Grade</td> <td>52</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10th Grade</td> <td>47</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11th Grade</td> <td>50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12th Grade</td> <td>44</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unknown</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </table> | 6 th Grade | 50 | 7 th Grade | 47 | 8 th Grade | 49 | 9 th Grade | 52 | 10 th Grade | 47 | 11 th Grade | 50 | 12 th Grade | 44 | Unknown | 2 | n=341 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Children's Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1997). 2. Student Satisfaction with Life Scale (Huebner, 1991). 3. The Behavioral Assessment System for Children (BASC) (186-Item) (Reynolds & Kamphaus, 1992). 4. List of each Participant's Extra-Curricular Activities. 5. Grade Point Average. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All measures were self-report. 2. Use of cross-sectional limits the amount of causal inferences that can be drawn. 3. The small sample size limits the power of the analyses. 4. Sample is biased due to its unique geographical location. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent with previous studies among students and adults, the findings suggested that academic and interpersonal variables are related to 'Hope' scores on the Children's Hope Scale i.e. low hope correlates with lower scores on adaptive indicators and higher scores on maladaptive indicators. • Data was unbiased despite the small sample size as indicated by skewness and kurtosis values. |
| 6 th Grade | 50 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 th Grade | 47 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 th Grade | 49 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 th Grade | 52 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 th Grade | 47 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 th Grade | 50 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12 th Grade | 44 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Unknown | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Appendix B. Findings from empirical studies using the General Self-Efficacy Scale with young people (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1995).

| Study Number & Authors | Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Findings |
|---|--|-------------|--|---|--|
| [1] Schwarzer, Bäßler, Kwiatek, Schröder & Zhang (1997) | <p>Group 1 (Germany): 431 university students consisting of 250 women (M=23.1 years) and 181 men (M=24.2 years).</p> <p>Group 2 (Costa Rica): 909 university students including 605 women (M=21.3 years) and 354 men (M=21 years).</p> <p>Group 3 (China): 293 first year undergraduates taking an introductory psychology course, including 94 men (M=19.7 years) and 199 women (M=19.5 years).</p> | n=1633 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The General Self-Efficacy Scale (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1995). 2. Depression Scale (16-Item) (Zerssen, 1976). 3. State Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) (4-Item) (Spielberger, 1983). 4. Life Orientation Test (LOT) (8-Item) (Scheier & Carver, 1985). | 1. Over-representation of university students which constitute an elite population. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychometric properties of the General Self-Efficacy Scale were satisfactory in all three languages. • The reliability item total correlations and factor loadings for the General Self-Efficacy scale can be seen as homogenous and unidimensional. • Some gender bias observed for scores on the General Self-Efficacy Scale in favour of men. |
| [2] Luszczynska, Gutiérrez-Doña & Schwarzer (2005) | <p>Participants in the sample were recruited from five separate countries:</p> <p>Costa Rica: 1865 participants were recruited from Costa Rica. This sub-sample was a mix of factory workers and university students.</p> <p>Germany: 5106 German participants were included in the study. This was the most diverse sub-sample consisting of high school students, university students, workers and migrants.</p> <p>Poland: The Polish sub-sample consisted of 660 high school students.</p> <p>Turkey: The Turkish sub-sample consisted of 626 high school students.</p> <p>USA: The American sample consisted of 539 high school students.</p> <p>47.2% of the total sample was male.</p> | n = 8796 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The General Self-Efficacy Scale (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1995). 2. A set of measures designed for this study used to assess personality variables, positive and negative affect, quality of life, life satisfaction, stress appraisals and social relationships/achievements. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is a concept overlap between self-efficacy and hope. 2. Response patterns on the measures may have been affected by cultural factors. 3. Differences within cultures may be even broader than intercultural differences. This is a significant limitation in that the sub-samples used were not nationally representative. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across countries, general self-efficacy was related to the various constructs as hypothesised. • The relationship between general self-efficacy and social comparison orientation was negligible. • Higher self-efficacy scores positively correlated with positive affect, life satisfaction and quality of life and were also found to be negatively correlated to negative affect. • General self-efficacy was related to the appraisal of stressful situations as challenges. • Higher social satisfaction, job satisfaction and social achievement were correlated with higher general self-efficacy scores. • Migrants with high general self-efficacy scores were better integrated to the mainstream culture and also had higher employment rates than migrants with low general self-efficacy scores. • There were modest correlations between general self-efficacy and mental health. • There were some relations between general self-efficacy and school achievement but this remained low for most cases. |

| Study Number & Authors | Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Findings |
|------------------------------------|---|-------------|---|---|--|
| [3] Bancila & Mittelmark (2005) | 8 schools were chosen at random from the 307 public schools in Bucharest and within these schools, 6 classes of 7 th graders and 25 classes of 9 th to 11 th graders were also chosen at random. | n=630 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Health Behaviour Among School-Aged Children (HBSC) Symptom Checklist from a cross-sectional World Health Organisation Project (King, Wold, Tudor-Smith & Harel, 1996). 2. Bergen Social Relationships Scale (BSRS) (Mittelmark, Aaro, Henriksen, Sigveland & Torsheim, 2004). 3. Bergen Personal Worries Scale-Youth (BPWS-Y) (Bancila, Mittelmark & Hetland, 2006). 4. The General Self-Efficacy Scale (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1995). 5. Social Support Scale which was a composite of three items designed from this study and two items from the social support scale on a World Health Organisation Project (King et al., 1996). | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cross-sectional data – no causal relationships can be determined. 2. Many of the relationships studied between variables are reciprocal. 3. Only a single measure of depression was used. 4. A larger sample size would have been preferable. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neither social support nor self-efficacy has a direct or mediating role in predicting depression levels in girls. However, for boys, social support and self-efficacy are key coping supports. • For boys, high self-efficacy was correlated with high social support. • Among girls, daily worries were associated with depressed mood only for those with low self-efficacy scores, while interpersonal stress was associated with depressed mood only for girls with high self-efficacy scores. |
| [4] Skidmore, Dede & Moneta (2009) | <p>Group 1: Consisted of 30 males with a mean age of 13.6 years suffering from emotional and behavioural difficulties.</p> <p>Group 2: Mainstream sample consisting of 22 males and 19 females with a mean age of 15.6 years.</p> | n = 71 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approaches and Study Skills Inventory for Students (ASSIST) (Tait, Entwistle & McCune, 1998). 2. The General Self-Efficacy Scale (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1995). 3. Personal Role Models Tallies. 4. Semi-structured interviews. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Modest sample size. 2. There was an age difference between the groups. 3. There was a gender difference between the two groups. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scores on the General Self-Efficacy Scale were affected by the role models chosen for the emotional and behavioural difficulties group but not the mainstream sub-sample. |

| Study Number & Authors | Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Findings |
|--|--|-------------|--|--|--|
| [5] Johnson, Kim, Johnson-Pynn, Schulenberg, Balagaye & Lugumya (2012) | Participants were recruited from Tanzania (n=231), Uganda (n=242) and the United States of America (n=81). All participants were high school students who were members of local environmental clubs. | n = 554 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) (Phinney, 1992). 2. Diversity Attitudes (DA) scale of the Civic Attitudes and Skills Questionnaire (CASQ) (Moely, McFarland, Miron, Mercer & Ilustre, 2002). 3. The General Self-Efficacy Scale (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1995). 4. The Service Experiences Survey (SES) (Eyler & Giles, 1999). | <p>1. All participants were measure longitudinally over the length of their involvement with the environmental club – may have had a confounding effect on self-efficacy scores, and in particular the age effects on self-efficacy scores in the African context.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The General Self-Efficacy Scale showed respectable psychometric properties in the African populations. • There was positive correlation between age and self-efficacy in the African context. • Qualitative reports supported the quantitative findings. |

Appendix C. Findings from empirical studies using the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965).

| Study Number & Authors | Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Findings |
|------------------------------|---|-------------|--|--|---|
| [4] Ackerman & Wolman (2007) | 83 male and 59 female students of the Georgia Institute of Technology were recruited for the study through fliers. The sample ranged in age from 19 to 28 years with an average age of 20.66 years. | n=142 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personality Item Pool (Goldberg, 2005). 2. 48 Items from the 60-Item NEO 5-Factor Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1992). 3. The Typical Intellectual Engagement Measure (Goff & Ackerman, 1992). 4. Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974). 5. Numerical Preferences (Viswanathan, 1993). 6. Motivational Trait Questionnaire (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2000). 7. Motivational Strategies in Learning Questionnaire (Pintrich, Smith, Garcia & McKeachie, 1993). 8. Returns of the Unisex American College Testing Interest Inventory (Lamb & Prediger, 1981). 9. 55-Item Experience Measure. 10. Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). 11. Self Concept Scale (Ackerman, Bowen, Beier & Kanfer, 2001). 12. Self-Estimates of Skills (25-Items) 13. Ability Test Battery. | 1. All results correlational in nature – no causal conclusions can be drawn. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher correlation between global self esteem and self-efficacy with personal perceptions of verbal ability than with maths or spatial self-estimates. This relationship appears to be reciprocal in nature. • High self-efficacy and self esteem positively correlate with all positive estimates of ability. |

| Study Number & Authors | Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Findings |
|---|---|-------------|---|--|---|
| [5] Vasconcelos-Raposo, Fernandes, Teixeira & Bertelli (2012) | The sample included 731 males and 1032 females from a northern region Portugal. 47.1% of the sample were aged 15 to 17years with the remainder aged 18 to 20 years. This study was part of a larger project on drinking practices. | n =1763 | 1. The Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). | 1. Sample was not nationally representative. 2. Data taken from a larger study – may be some confounding effects. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cronbach’s Alpha was above the acceptable level. • The two factor and three factor model of the Self Esteem Scale revealed good and adequate fits to the data. • No effects were found for gender, age or level of physical activity. |

Appendix D. Findings from empirical studies using the Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky and Lepper, 1999).

| Study Number & Authors | Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Findings |
|---------------------------------|--|-------------|---|---|--|
| [1] Lyubomirsky & Lepper (1999) | <p>The sample consisted of 14 sub-samples collected at different times and locations. Nine of these samples were recruited from three college campuses and one sample from a high school campus in the US. These student participants had an age range of 14 to 28 years. Four community samples were also recruited in the United States – three of working adults and one of retired adults. These community samples had an age range of 20 to 94 years. Two final samples were recruited in Russia – one from a public university and one from a community of working adults. There were 1754 females and 962 males in the total sample with 16 participants failing to report their sex.</p> | n = 2732 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). 2. The Affective Balance Scale (Bradburn, 1969). 3. The Delighted-Terrible Scale (Andrews & Withey, 1976). 4. The Global Happiness Item (Bradburn, 1969). 5. Recent Happiness Item (Stewart, Ware Jr., Sherbourne & Wells, 1992). 6. Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985). 7. The Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). 8. The Life Orientation Test (Scheier & Carver, 1985). 9. Positive and negative emotionality sub-scales of the Differential Personality Scale (Tellegen, 1985). 10. Extroversion and Neuroticism Scales (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975). 11. The Beck Depression Inventory (Beck, 1967). 12. Verbal and Quantitative SAT scores. 13. Two Educational Testing Services Tests measuring verbal and mathematical ability. 14. GPA. 15. The Social Readjustment Rating Scale (Holmes & Rahe, 1967). | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cross methodological designs are needed in order to fully validate the Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were excellent psychometric properties found for the Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) despite its brevity • The SHS was found to have high internal consistency. • Results indicated that the SHS had a unitary structure. • There was a stability found for scores on the SHS over time across the 14 sub-samples. • The SHS was found to correlate highly with other measures of wellbeing. • The constructs of the SHS are highly theoretically correlated to happiness and wellbeing. • There were low correlations found between the SHS and theoretically unrelated constructs. • The findings suggest that the SHS might be beneficial in clinical settings. |

| Study Number & Authors | Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Findings |
|--------------------------------|--|-------------|--|---|---|
| [2] Tkach & Lyubomirsky (2006) | The sample included 157 male and 341 female undergraduate college students. Two participants did not report their sex. The sample ranged in age from 17 to 35 years with a mean age of 19.4 years. The sample was diverse and inclusive of multiple ethnicities. | n=500 | 1. The Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). 2. Happiness Increasing Strategies Scale (Designed for this Study Based on Open Ended Interviews). 3. Big Five Inventory (BFI) (John, Donahue & Kentle, 1991). | 1. No causal relationships can be identified. 2. Self-report bias. 3. Sampling issues – all participants were college students. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 happiness increasing strategies were identified: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Social Affiliation 2) Partying and Clubbing 3) Mental Control 4) Instrumental Goal Pursuit 5) Passive Leisure 6) Active Leisure 7) Religion 8) Direct Attempts at Happiness • The use of self-regulatory happiness-boosting strategies are interrelated with personality traits. • Findings suggest that a large component of happiness maintenance involves mood regulation. • Relations of the strategies to happiness varied greatly across individuals and no definite conclusions can be drawn. • ‘Social Affiliation’ was the most frequently used strategy and was related to other strategies such as ‘Instrumental Goal Pursuit’, ‘Direct Attempts at Happiness’, ‘Active Leisure’, ‘Religion’ and ‘Partying and Clubbing’. • The ‘Mental Control’ strategy appeared to be associated with unhappiness even after controlling for other strategies used. • ‘Instrumental Goal Pursuit’ was one of the most effective strategies in increasing happiness levels. • Prolonged use of the ‘Passive Leisure’ strategy was not related to happiness. • ‘Active Leisure’ was a strong predictor of happiness even after controlling for the use of other strategies. • ‘Direct Attempts at Happiness’ was an excellent predictor of happiness. • Men used ‘Active Leisure’ and ‘Mental Control’ more frequently than women. • Women used the ‘Social Affiliation’ strategy more. • There was a lack of ethnic difference observed. • Happiness strategies accounted for a higher amount of the variance in happiness levels than personality traits. They continued to account for substantial proportion of this variance even after controlling for the influence of personality. |

| Study Number & Authors | Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Findings |
|------------------------------|---|-------------|--|--|--|
| [3] Lyke (2009) | The sample consisted of members of a community. | n=208 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self Reflection, Engagement and Insight subscales from the Self Reflection and Insight Scale (Grant, Franklin & Langford, 2002). 2. The Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). 3. The Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, et al., 1985). 4. Psychosocial distress scale (K10) (Kessler, Andrews, Colpe, Hiripi, Mroczek, Normand et al., 2002). | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The sample was not a random sample. 2. All measures used were self-report in nature. 3. There was no means of identifying causal relationships between variables. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement in self reflection is neither positively nor negatively correlated with life satisfaction. • Insight is positively correlated with both happiness and life satisfaction but only at the highest levels. • The crucial factor that distinguishes self reflection from insight is a sense of intuitive understanding of emotional and cognitive experiences. • Happiness and satisfaction with life are not identical constructs e.g. old people are as likely to report themselves to be happy as young people but are less likely to report themselves to be fully satisfied with their lives. • Psychological distress was negatively correlated with happiness. |
| [4] Bartels & Boomsma (2009) | The participants were selected from the Netherlands Twin Registry. 2157 families were studied with participants comprising of 2015 first born twins, 2037 second born twins, 485 singleton brothers and 534 singleton sisters. Males comprised 45% of the sample and the mean age for participants was 13.28 years. | n=5074 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dutch Health Behaviour Questionnaire (DHBQ) comprising of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. The Cantril Ladder (Cantril, 1965). II. The Satisfaction with Life Questionnaire (Diener et al., 1985). III. The Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). 2. Parent and teachers reports of childhood emotional and behavioural problems. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Environmental factors, in addition to genetic factors, are important to levels of subjective happiness and these environmental relations need to be understood in order to determine why some people are happier than others. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The distinct measures of subjective wellbeing are not determined at a genetic level. • Covariance in the measures is mainly accounted for by additive and non-additive effects. • Results provided converging evidence for the importance of non-additive genetic effects in exemplifying individual differences in subjective wellbeing. • No sex differences were found. • Small but significant negative effects of age were found for mean levels of subjective wellbeing. • Over half of the variance in subjective wellbeing is accounted for by non-shared environmental influences. |

| Study Number & Authors | Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Findings |
|--|--|-------------|--|---|--|
| [5] Froh, Kashdan, Yurkewicz, Fan, Glowacki & Allen (2010) | Five studies were conducted using three samples of early to late adolescents. All participants were recruited from an affluent suburban area in Long Island. | n=2198 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6) (McCullough, Emmons & Tsang, 2002). 2. Gratitude, Resentment and Appreciation Test Short-Form (Thomas & Watkins, 2003). 3. Gratitude Adjective Checklist (McCullough et al., 2002). 4. Children's Hope Scale (Snyder, Hoza, Pelham, Rapoff, Ware, Danovsky, Hightberger, Ribinstein & Stahl, 1997). 5. Child Behaviour Questionnaire (Warden, Cheyne, Christie, Fitzpatrick & Reid, 2003). 6. Meaning in Life Questionnaire (Steger, Frazier, Oishi & Kaler, 2006). 7. Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al. 1985). 8. Multidimensional Students Satisfaction with Life Scale (Huebner, 1994). 9. Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). 10. Material Values Scale (Richins, 2004). 11. Dispositional Envy Scale (Smith, Parrott, Diener, Hayle & Kim, 1999). 12. Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). <p><i>(Continued...)</i></p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No behavioural data. 2. Character strengths were not investigated. 3. Sample was not nationally representative and socio-affluence effects may have biased the findings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong positive relations were found between engaged living and both life satisfaction and positive emotions. • Strong negative relations were found between engaged living and both negative emotions and traits. • Capitalising on one's strengths and fostering positive traits through engaged living may help one experience fewer psychological maladies. • Engaged living has robust relations with life satisfaction and its multiple domains (e.g. academics) along with other positive relations. This relationship was still evident six months later. • Helping students become more passionate about helping others and absorbed in their activities today will likely have academic dividends in the future. |

| Study Number & Authors | Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Findings |
|--|-------------|-------------|--|--------------------------|---------------|
| [5] Froh et al. (2010) <i>(Continued)</i> | | | 13. Adjective Test (Froh, Ubertini, Wajsblat & Yurkewicz, 2008). 14. Positive and Negative Affect Scale for Children (PANAS-C) (Laurent, Catanzaro, Joiner, Rudolph, Potter & Lambert, 1999). 15. Brief Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (Seligson, Huebner & Valois, 2003). 16. The Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). 17. Centre for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale for Children (CES-DC) (Weissman, Orvaschel & Padian, 1980). 18. Delinquency Scale (Roeser, Strobel & Quihuis, 2002). 19. Other students and teachers reports. 20. GPA. | | |

Appendix E. Findings from empirical studies using the Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being, 84-Item (Ryff, 1989).

| Study Number & Authors | Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Findings |
|-------------------------------------|---|-------------|---|---|---|
| [1] Ryff (1989) | The sample consisted of three sub-samples: I. Young Adults: 133 University Students who were nearly all single. Mean age - 19.53 years. II. Middle-Aged Adults: 108 participants who were nearly all married. Mean age – 49.85. III. Older Adults: 80 participants only half of whom were married with the majority of the remaining participants being either widowed or divorced. Mean age – 74.96 years. The educational levels of the three groups were all high with the Middle-Aged and Older adults reporting their financial status as ‘Very Good’ or ‘Excellent’ | n=321 | 1. The Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being (Ryff, 1989). 2. Affect Balance Scale (Bradburn, 1969). 3. The Life Satisfaction Index (Neugarten, Havighurst & Tobin, 1961). 4. The Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). 5. The Revised Philadelphia Geriatric Center Morale Scale (Lawton, 1975). 6. Locus of Control (Levenson, 1974). 7. Zung Depression Scale (Zung, 1965). | 1. Sample was culturally limited. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-scales on the Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being were not strongly tied to their assessment indexes therefore supporting the claim, that these aspects of positive functioning have not yet been represented in measures. • Age profiles revealed a more differentiated pattern of wellbeing than previously identified. |
| [2] Cooper, Okamura & McNeil (1995) | Two Studies: Study 1: This sample consisted of 118 first year students from a large state funded university in the mid-western United States. 53 participants were male and 65 were female. The participants were tested in 3 conditions: I. 43 were tested alone. II. 38 were tested with strangers. III. 36 were tested with friends. Study 2: This sample consisted of 110 first year students from the same university. 31 of these participants were male and 79 were female. The participants were randomly assigned to a ‘situational control’ or a ‘no situational control’ condition. | n=228 | 1. The Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being (Ryff, 1989). 2. ‘Extroversion’ sub-scale of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975). 3. The Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). 4. The Social Activity Measure (Cooper, Okamura & Gurka, 1992). 5. Perceived Situational Control (Single Item – Designed for This Study). 6. Rotter Internal-External Control Scale (Rotter, 1966). 7. Desirability of Control Scale (Burger & Cooper, 1979). | 1. The measures were self-report in nature. 2. The sample was not nationally representative. 3. The hypothesis was only tested at one time period with a single sample. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants who completed the questionnaire in the company of friends reported greater self-mastery and purpose in life. • Significant relations were found between extroversion and both total psychological wellbeing and scores on the ‘Positive Relations with Others’ scale. • People who were given greater situational control reported a greater sense of personal autonomy. • Participants who rated themselves as more extroverted, more internal and/or more desirous of control reported greater levels of psychological well-being. • Need for social approval was related to psychological well-being. • Participants who reported greater internal locus of control scored higher on all subscales of the Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being with the exception of ‘Autonomy’. • Frequency of social interactions did not predict psychological well-being but satisfaction with these social interactions did. • Ryff Psychological Well-Being Sub-Scales did not predict autonomy among variables, therefore indicating that it is best not to construct positive wellbeing as a unitary construct. • Second study only: Females were found to report higher levels of personal growth and social relations. |

| Study Number & Authors | Sample Type | Sample Size | Measures Used | Limitations of the Study | Main Findings |
|-----------------------------|--|-------------|---|---|--|
| [3] Vleioras & Bosma (2005) | The sample consisted of 43 male and 187 female university students. The age range for the sample was 18 to 23 years, with the mean age being 20 years. | n=230 | 1. The Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being (Ryff, 1989). 2. Identity Styles Inventory (Berzonsky, 1992). | 1. Low numbers of men. 2. The Identity Styles Inventory had low reliability. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealing with identity issues is related to higher levels of psychological well-being. • The way individuals deal with identity issues is not related to wellbeing. • ‘Achievers’ and ‘Foreclosures’ had the highest scores for psychological wellbeing. • There were sex differences found but this may have been due to the low number of male participants. |



**Research for Gaisce - the President's
Award Information for Principals,
Teachers and President's Award Leaders**



Dear Principals, Teachers and President's Award Leaders,

Gaisce –The President's Award in conjunction with UCD School of Psychology are conducting research from September 2010 to May 2011 to evaluate the positive psychological effects of students' participation in Gaisce's Bronze Award. Asking the question does The President's Award act as a catalyst in the enhancement of positive psychological attributes for its participants?

Your participation is crucial to the success of this research. In order to complete this research into the positive psychological effects of Gaisce - The President's Award, we will be asking if you could please give a letter of explanation about the research and a parental consent form to all bronze participants (Both will be supplied by Gaisce). Once consent forms have been signed we will be asking the students to return them to you, and in turn for you to return all signed consents to Gaisce. We hope that all Bronze Participants will complete 5 questionnaires before they begin the programme and again on completion of the programme. The questionnaires will be completed online and take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

All necessary documentation relating to the research will be supplied to each school. Please feel free to contact the researcher at 086 2442181 or a staff member of Gaisce at 01 4758746 should you need any further information.

Gaisce- The President's Award is committed to providing a quality award programme. Your participation will help ensure that Gaisce's high standards will continue to be met and maintained. This research will assist in securing future funding for Gaisce.

Many thanks in advance for your assistance.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'P.G. Callaghan'.

P.G. Callaghan (Barney)
C.E.O.
Gaisce – The President's Award

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Niamh Clarke MacMahon'.

Niamh Clarke MacMahon
Researcher
UCD School of Psychology



Gaisce Research - Parents / Guardians Information Letter



Dear Parent / Guardian,

Your child has registered with Gaisce - The President's Award to complete their Bronze Award from September 2010 to May 2011.

The mission of Gaisce - The President's Award is to contribute to the development of all young people through the achievement of personal challenges, and the realisation of their potential.

Gaisce – The President's Award, in conjunction with UCD School of Psychology and researcher Niamh Clarke MacMahon, intend to evaluate the positive effects of participation in Gaisce's Bronze Award. In order to evaluate these positive effects we will be asking all participants to complete questionnaires on hope, self efficacy, self esteem, happiness and wellbeing before they begin the programme and again on completion of the programme. The questionnaires will be completed online at:

<http://www.ucd.ie/psychology/Gaisce/index.html>

In order to determine if positive effects may be solely attributed to participation in Gaisce – The President's Award, we need to compare Gaisce participants with non Gaisce participants. Consequently, we are asking where possible, one sibling of each bronze participant to also complete the questionnaires. Sibling to be aged between 14 and 17 years only. Siblings' involvement is voluntary and is not essential for your child's participation in Gaisce the President's Award.

The findings of the research will be written up in fulfilment of the requirements for a PhD in Psychology. Your child or children will not be identifiable as they will not be asked to provide their name or address. Hence all information will remain totally confidential and anonymous. Each participant in the research is allocated a code number. Your child's / children's code are printed on the Consent Form (accompanying this letter), and this number will be requested when completing the questionnaires. It is important that your child / children store this number.

Attached is a parent/guardian consent and assent forms for your child participating in Gaisce, and the sibling of the participant. Please complete the consent / assent forms and ask your child to return to their Gaisce President's Award Leader.

If you would like to speak with those involved about any aspect of this research before you make a decision about your child's participation please feel free to contact the researcher, Niamh Clarke MacMahon at 086 2442181. Alternatively, you may contact a staff member of Gaisce at 01 61 71 999. You may withdraw your consent / assent at any point over the course of the programme: September 2010 – May 2011. Participation in the research is optional, and is not a prerequisite for completing Gaisce – The President's Award.

Gaisce - The President's Award is committed to providing a quality Award programme. Your participation will help ensure that the high standards of Gaisce – The President's Award will continue to be met and maintained. This research is the first study of its kind; it will improve the award for future generations and assist in securing future support for Gaisce – The President's Award.

Many thanks in advance for your assistance,

P.G. Callaghan (Barney)
Chief Executive
Gaisce – The President's Award

Niamh Clarke MacMahon
Researcher
UCD School of Psychology



Gaisce Research Participants and Siblings' Assent Information Letter



Dear Gaisce Participant / Sibling (brother or sister) of participant,

You / your brother or sister, has registered with Gaisce - The President's Award to complete the Bronze Award from September 2010 to May 2011.

Gaisce – The President's Award, along with me, Niamh Clarke MacMahon, researcher for UCD School of Psychology, hope to see if taking part in Gaisce's Bronze Award increases teenagers' levels of hope, happiness, self esteem, ability to do things and their overall well being.

In order to see if taking part in Gaisce, The President's Award does improve all of the above, we will be asking if all Bronze Award Gaisce participants would complete questionnaires before they begin the programme and again when they finish the programme. The questionnaires may be completed online at:

<http://www.ucd.ie/psychology/Gaisce/index.html>

To find out if these positive factors are helped by taking part in Gaisce – The President's Award, we need to compare Gaisce participants with your brother or sister who is not taking part in Gaisce. Therefore, we are asking where possible, one brother or sister of each bronze participant to also complete the questionnaires online. (Brothers and sisters can only be aged between 14 and 17 years). You taking part, and your brother or sister's taking part is your choice. Neither you or your brother or sister has to fill out either the pre or post questionnaires if you do not want to. If you or your brother or sister does not fill out the questionnaires it will not stop you from taking part in the Gaisce Award.

The findings of the research will be written up by me to complete a PhD in Psychology. You and your brother or sister, will be given a code number to log on to the website. This means you will not be asked to give your name or address. Therefore, all information you give will be totally confidential and anonymous. Your code number, and your brother or sister's code numbers are printed on the Consent / Assent Form (accompanying this letter). It is important that you and your brother or sister keep this number safe – This is the number that you need to log on to the website.

Please bring home the consent / assent forms to your parents / guardians, and if you want to take part in the research, sign them and also get them signed by your parents. Please bring back the signed form to your teacher / Gaisce President's Award Leader.

If you would like to speak with me, or anyone involved about any part of this research before you decide to take part, please feel free to contact me, Niamh Clarke MacMahon at 086 2442181. Or, you could contact a staff member of Gaisce at 01 61 71 999.

Gaisce - The President's Award is trying to provide teenagers with a useful and quality Award programme. Your taking part will help shape Gaisce – The President's Award for future generations of teenagers. You are the first group of participants that have been asked to help Gaisce in this way. It is hoped that your participation in the research will improve the award for future generations and help in securing future support for Gaisce – The President's Award.

Many thanks in advance for your assistance,

P.G. Callaghan (Barney)
Chief Executive
Gaisce – The President's Award

Niamh Clarke MacMahon
Researcher
UCD School of Psychology



**Gaisce – The President’s Award Research
Parental / Guardian Consent
& Participant Assent Form**



Gaisce Participant’s Parental / Guardian Consent and Participant’s Assent

We have read and understand the contents of the Gaisce Research Consent/Assent information letter. We give permission for my/our child to participate in the research into the positive effects of participation in Gaisce - The President’s Award, and our child gives their assent to participate in the research.

Please print your child’s name _____ Date _____
Signature of Parent / Guardian _____
Signature of Gaisce Participant _____

Gaisce Participant Code Number : 1

Sibling of Gaisce Participant’s Parental Consent

We have read and understand the contents of the Gaisce Research Consent/Assent information letter. We give permission for the sibling of my/our child to participate in the research into the positive effects of participation in Gaisce - The President’s Award. The sibling of the Gaisce participant gives their assent to participate in the research.

Please print your child’s name _____ Date _____
Signature of Parent / Guardian _____
Signature of Sibling of Gaisce Participant _____

Sibling of Gaisce Participant Code Number : S1

✂.....

Gaisce Participant : Please detach and keep safe – code numbers are required to complete the questionnaires online.

Gaisce Participant Code Number: 1

Sibling of Gaisce Participant Code Number: S1

WEBSITE ADDRESS FOR RESEARCH:
<http://www.ucd.ie/psychology/Gaisce/index.html>



Gaisce Control Group Research Information Letter



Dear Parent / Guardian,

Gaisce – The President’s Award, in conjunction with UCD School of Psychology and researcher Niamh Clarke MacMahon, intend to evaluate the positive effects of participation in Gaisce – The President’s Award.

Your child’s school has been selected to take part as the control group in this important research, and we are asking your child to kindly take part in the research. The findings of the research will be written up in fulfilment of the requirements for a PhD in Psychology. Your child will not be identifiable as they will not be asked to provide their name or address. Hence all information will remain totally confidential and anonymous. The questionnaires will be completed online at <http://www.ucd.ie/psychology/Gaisce/index.html>

Your child’s identification code is printed at the bottom of this page, and this number will be requested when completing the questionnaires online. It is important that your child writes this number down / stores it for safe keeping.

Below is a parent/guardian consent and assent forms to allow your child participate in the research. Please complete the consent / assent forms and ask your child to return them to their Vice Principal.

If you would like to speak about any aspect of this research before you make a decision about your child’s participation please feel free to contact the researcher, Niamh Clarke MacMahon at 086 2442181.

Many thanks in advance for your assistance,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Niamh Clarke MacMahon'.

Niamh Clarke MacMahon,
Researcher ,
UCD School of Psychology



Gaisce Control Group Research Information Letter



Dear Control Participant,

Gaisce – The President’s Award, in conjunction with UCD School of Psychology and researcher Niamh Clarke MacMahon, intend to evaluate the positive effects of participation in Gaisce – The President’s Award.

Your school has been selected to take part as the control group in this important research, and we are asking you to kindly take part in the research. The findings of the research will be written up in fulfilment of the requirements for a PhD in Psychology. You will not be identifiable as you will not be asked to provide your name or address. Hence all information will remain totally confidential and anonymous. The questionnaires will be completed online at

<http://www.ucd.ie/psychology/Gaisce/index.html>

Your identification code is printed at the bottom of this page, and this number will be requested when completing the questionnaires online. It is important that you write this number down / store it for safe keeping.

Below is an assent form to allow you to participate in the research. Please complete the consent / assent form and return them to your Vice Principal.

If you would like to speak about any aspect of this research before you make a decision about your participation please feel free to contact the researcher, Niamh Clarke MacMahon at 086 2442181.

Many thanks in advance for your assistance,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Niamh Clarke MacMahon".

Niamh Clarke MacMahon,
Researcher ,
UCD School of Psychology



**Gaisce Control Group Research
Consent and Assent Form**



Parental / Guardian Consent and Participant's Assent

We give permission for my/our child to participate, and our child gives their assent to participate in the research.

Please print your child's name _____ Date _____

Signature of Parent / Guardian _____

Signature of Participant _____

Participant's Code Number :

----- ✂ -----

Participant : Please detach and keep safe – code numbers are required to complete the questionnaires online.

Participant's Code Number:

Many thanks in advance for your assistance,

Niamh Clarke MacMahon,
Researcher , UCD School of Psychology

Appendix M. Advertisement of research in ASTI magazine

Gaisce research – your help is needed



Gaisce – The President's Award, in conjunction with the UCD School of Psychology, is conducting research from this autumn until May 2011 to determine if participation in Gaisce – The President's Award (Bronze Award) enhances the positive psychological attributes of its participants.

The involvement of second-level teachers is crucial to the success of this research. In order to complete this study, Gaisce regional development officers will be asking if you could give a letter of explanation about the research and a parental consent form to all Bronze Award participants (both will be supplied by Gaisce).

It is hoped that all Bronze Award participants will complete a questionnaire before they begin the programme and again on completion of the programme. The questionnaires will be completed online and take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

All necessary documentation and information relating to the research will be supplied to each school.

Gaisce – The President's Award is committed to providing a quality award programme. Your participation will help to ensure that Gaisce's high standards will continue to be met and maintained.

It's been said...

"Education, if it is prioritised, can provide us with the single most important route to job creation – white collar, blue collar, any collar – full stop." Martin Murphy, Managing Director of Hewlett Packard, in *The Irish Times*, Thursday, October 5, 2010.

Induction for new teachers

A new induction programme for newly qualified teachers is now available in all education centres around the country. The support programme helps teachers to manage the transition from pre-service education to the daily realities of school life and the daily demands of life in the classroom. Participation is voluntary but is recommended for all teachers in their first year of teaching or those who have been teaching for a number of years but who have not previously completed an induction programme.

The programme includes modules focusing on the needs of newly qualified teachers: peer networking and support opportunities; the development of an induction portfolio and resource materials; and, mentoring support and advice. Participants will be awarded a certificate to acknowledge their successful participation in the programme.

For full information, see www.nationalinductionprogramme.com.

Student council support

Student council support is now jointly managed by the Schools Division of the Department of Education and Skills and the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs.

The role of the Student Council Co-ordinator is to provide a programme of professional development in response to the information, resources and training needs of schools in planning the implementation or establishment of an effective student council.

According to the Student Council Support Service, an effective student council is one that is democratically elected, is representative of the entire school and has meaningful involvement and participation through consultation in relevant policy making, which allows young people to have a real influence over decisions that affect them.

See www.studentcouncil.ie.

the EU Directive which does not leave it open to employers to make a blanket decision regarding a full category of employee and which requires the employer to have regard to the circumstances of the particular job

Cross-border Student Traffic

The unions agreed that there is a very significant information deficit at present in regard to the cross-border movement of students and that comprehensive data is urgently required. The portability of qualifications, the implications of mooted changes (North or South) in fee structures and the desirability of facilitating, to the greatest extent possible, the mobility of students (as envisaged by the European Commission and by the Bologna process) were among the issues considered in this regard.

Transferability of Pensions

This has been a matter of concern for many years. It was noted that discussions in respect of this matter are ongoing .

Academic freedom

A trend has been detected towards demands by management for individual research plans that are consistent with the overall strategic plan of the particular Higher Education institution.



There is also, in some institutions, an attempt to insist on publication of research papers in particular identified publications. This appears to relate to the imposition of full economic costing, as a consequence of which lecturers are now expected to generate alternative sources of income to compensate for cuts in the exchequer contribution to the HEIs. The unions agreed that these tendencies, individually and combined, are having a distorting effect on research and are funnelling research into a few disciplines to the exclusion of the broader range of disciplines. A further consequence is that, whether ideologically driven or not, the

privatisation of higher education is gathering pace.

Decisions

It was agreed that the unions will establish structures to share relevant information and will comment collectively, where appropriate, on matters of common interest . A further meeting of the three unions will be held before the end of the academic year. It was also decided that the further education union members would meet with the TUI with a view to setting up joint FE activities.

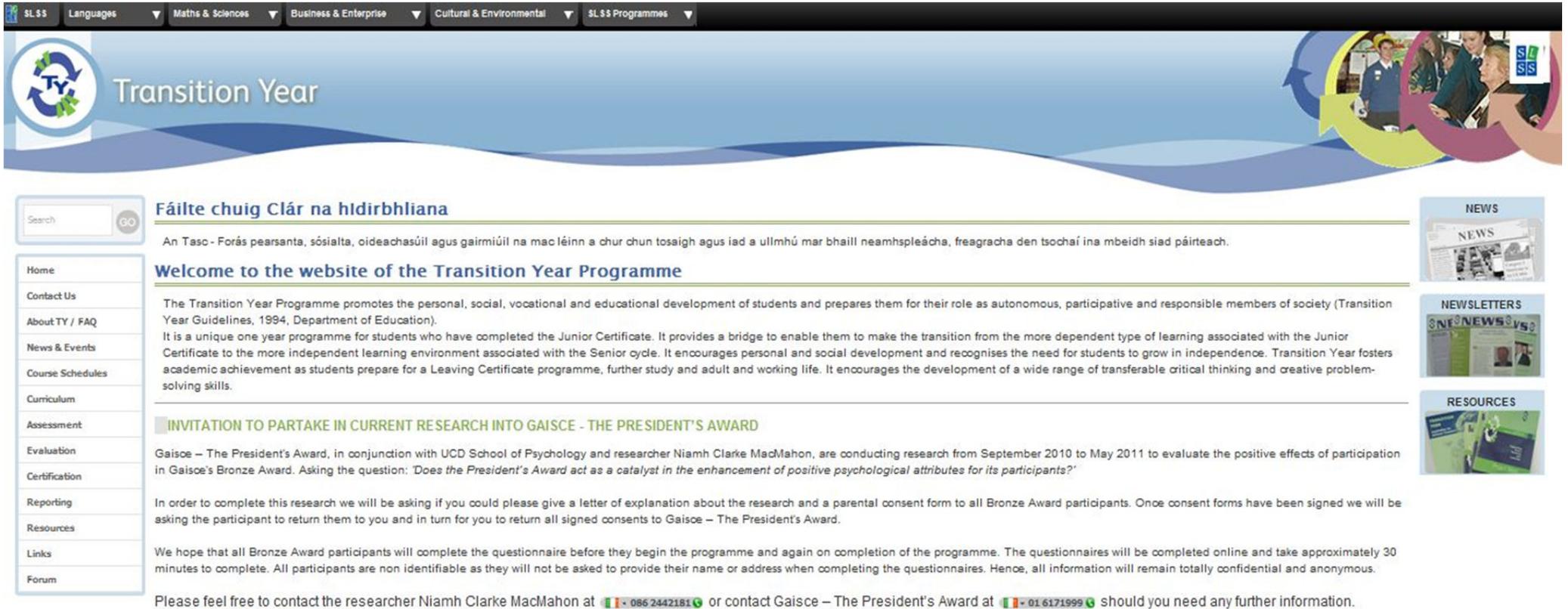
Attention Transition Year Co-Ordinators/Gaisce PALS

Gaisce, the President's Award is undertaking research into the positive psychological effects of participation in the award. Gaisce would like all Bronze Award participants to complete online questionnaires at the start and finish of

the Gaisce Bronze Award Programme. All necessary research participant information has been forwarded to every school. Your help and assistance with the research is gratefully appreciated and vital to the continued

success of Gaisce. For further information, please contact Gaisce head office at tel. 01 617 1999 www.gaisce.ie

Appendix O. Advertisement of research on Department of Education Transition Year Website



The screenshot shows the website's navigation menu at the top with categories: SLSS, Languages, Maths & sciences, Business & Enterprise, Cultural & Environmental, and SLSS Programmes. The main header features a 'Transition Year' logo and a banner image of students. A search bar is located on the left. The main content area is titled 'Fáilte chuig Clár na hIdirbhliana' and includes a welcome message in Irish and English. A sidebar on the left lists navigation options: Home, Contact Us, About TY / FAQ, News & Events, Course Schedules, Curriculum, Assessment, Evaluation, Certification, Reporting, Resources, Links, and Forum. On the right, there are sections for NEWS, NEWSLETTERS, and RESOURCES. The central text is an invitation to participate in research into Gaisce - The President's Award, detailing the research objectives and contact information for the researcher Niamh Clarke MacMahon.

SLSS Languages Maths & sciences Business & Enterprise Cultural & Environmental SLSS Programmes

Transition Year

Fáilte chuig Clár na hIdirbhliana

An Tasc - Forás pearsanta, sóisialta, oideachasúil agus gairmiúil na mac léinn a chur chun tosaigh agus iad a ullmhú mar bhaill neamhspleácha, freagracha den tsochaí ina mbeidh siad páirteach.

Welcome to the website of the Transition Year Programme

The Transition Year Programme promotes the personal, social, vocational and educational development of students and prepares them for their role as autonomous, participative and responsible members of society (Transition Year Guidelines, 1994, Department of Education). It is a unique one year programme for students who have completed the Junior Certificate. It provides a bridge to enable them to make the transition from the more dependent type of learning associated with the Junior Certificate to the more independent learning environment associated with the Senior cycle. It encourages personal and social development and recognises the need for students to grow in independence. Transition Year fosters academic achievement as students prepare for a Leaving Certificate programme, further study and adult and working life. It encourages the development of a wide range of transferable critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills.

INVITATION TO PARTAKE IN CURRENT RESEARCH INTO GAISCE - THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Gaisce – The President's Award, in conjunction with UCD School of Psychology and researcher Niamh Clarke MacMahon, are conducting research from September 2010 to May 2011 to evaluate the positive effects of participation in Gaisce's Bronze Award. Asking the question: *'Does the President's Award act as a catalyst in the enhancement of positive psychological attributes for its participants?'*

In order to complete this research we will be asking if you could please give a letter of explanation about the research and a parental consent form to all Bronze Award participants. Once consent forms have been signed we will be asking the participant to return them to you and in turn for you to return all signed consents to Gaisce – The President's Award.

We hope that all Bronze Award participants will complete the questionnaire before they begin the programme and again on completion of the programme. The questionnaires will be completed online and take approximately 30 minutes to complete. All participants are non identifiable as they will not be asked to provide their name or address when completing the questionnaires. Hence, all information will remain totally confidential and anonymous.

Please feel free to contact the researcher Niamh Clarke MacMahon at [+353 1 086 2442181](tel:+35310862442181) or contact Gaisce – The President's Award at [+353 1 01 6171999](tel:+3531016171999) should you need any further information.

NEWS

NEWSLETTERS

RESOURCES



Demographics Questionnaire

Gaisce Participant:

Are you completing this questionnaire at the start or the end of your Gaisce Bronze Award programme?

Start of Bronze Award

End of Bronze Award

Brother or Sister of Gaisce Participant:

Are you completing this questionnaire while your brother or sister has started or finished their Gaisce Bronze Award programme?

Start of Brother or Sister's Bronze Award

End of Brother or Sister's Bronze Award

1. Gender

Male
Female

2. Age

Years Months

3. Do you live in:

A City
A Town
The Countryside

4. What County do you live in?

Antrim 1, Armagh 2, Derry 3, Down 4, Fermanagh 5, Tyrone 6,
Carlow 7, Cavan 8, Clare 9, Cork 10, Donegal 11, Dublin 12, Galway 13,
Kerry 14, Kildare 15, Kilkenny 16, Laois 17, Leitrim 18, Limerick 19,
Longford 20, Louth 21, Mayo 22, Meath 23, Monaghan 24, Offaly 25,
Roscommon 26, Sligo 27, Tipperary 28, Waterford, 29, Westmeath, 30
Wexford 31, Wicklow 32

5. What country is your family from?

Republic of Ireland = 1

Northern Ireland = 2

UK (England, Scotland, Wales) = 3

Other EU Country (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania. Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden.) = 4

Rest of Europe (Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Iceland, Kosovo, Liechtenstein, Macedonia, Moldova, Norway, Romania, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine) = 5

Africa (Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Rep, Chad, Congo, Dem. Rep. Congo (Zaire), Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Reunion, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zanzibar, Zimbabwe) = 6

(Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, China, East Timor, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, North Korea, South Korea, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Syria, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Yemen) = 7

America (Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Tobago Trinidad and Tobago, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela) =8

Australia & New Zealand = 9

Other = 10

6. What is the job / occupation of the main earner in your household?

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
Education
Mining, Quarrying and Turf Production
Health
Manufacturing Industries
Clerical / Administration
Building and Construction
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply
Commerce, Insurance, Finance and Business Services
Transport, Communication and Storage
Defence
Public Administration
Service Industry
Legal
Unemployed at present
Retired
Studying at present
Others

7. Which challenge within Gaisce – The President’s Award are you most looking forward to completing? (Pre- participation questionnaire)

Community Involvement
Personal Skill
Physical Recreation
Adventure Journey

(The following questions will be in the post - participation questionnaire and ONLY for Gaisce Participants)

**8. Which challenge within Gaisce – The President’s Award did you find most enjoyable?
(Please rank - 1 = least , 4 = most)**

Community Involvement
Personal Skill
Physical Recreation
Adventure Journey

9. Which challenge within Gaisce – The President’s Award did you find most challenging? (Please rank - 1 = least , 4 = most)

Community Involvement
Personal Skill
Physical Recreation
Adventure Journey

10. Which challenge within Gaisce – The President’s Award provided the greatest personal growth for you? (Please rank - 1 = least , 4 = most)

Community Involvement
Personal Skill
Physical Recreation
Adventure Journey

11. Did you find your President’s Award Leader (PAL)

No help
A little helpful
Helpful
Very Helpful
Exceptionally Helpful

Appendix Q. The Children's Hope Scale



The Children's Hope Scale



Directions : The six sentences below describe how children think about themselves and how they do things in general . Read each sentence carefully. For each sentence, please think about how you are in most situations. Place a check (✓) inside the circle that describes YOU best. For example, place a check (✓) in the circle (○) above “None of the time”, if this describes you. Or , if you are this way “All the time” , check this circle. Please answer every question by putting a check in one of the circles. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. ***I think I am doing pretty well.***

None of the time
 A little of the time
 Some of the time
 Most of the time
 All of the time

2. ***I can think of many ways to get the things in life that are most important to me.***

None of the time
 A little of the time
 Some of the time
 Most of the time
 All of the time

3. ***I am doing just as well as other kids my age.***

None of the time
 A little of the time
 Some of the time
 Most of the time
 All of the time

4. ***When I have a problem, I can come up with lots of ways to solve it.***

None of the time
 A little of the time
 Some of the time
 Most of the time
 All of the time

5. ***I think the things I have done in the past will help me in the future.***

None of the time
 A little of the time
 Some of the time
 Most of the time
 All of the time

6. ***Even when others want to quit, I know that I can find ways to solve the problem.***

None of the time
 A little of the time
 Some of the time
 Most of the time
 All of the time



The General Self Efficacy Scale

- | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1 | I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough | Not at all true | Hardly true | Moderately true | Exactly true |
| 2 | If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want | Not at all true | Hardly true | Moderately true | Exactly true |
| 3 | It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals | Not at all true | Hardly true | Moderately true | Exactly true |
| 4 | I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events | Not at all true | Hardly true | Moderately true | Exactly true |
| 5 | Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations | Not at all true | Hardly true | Moderately true | Exactly true |
| 6 | I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort | Not at all true | Hardly true | Moderately true | Exactly true |
| 7 | I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities | Not at all true | Hardly true | Moderately true | Exactly true |
| 8 | When I am confronted with a problem , I can usually find several solutions | Not at all true | Hardly true | Moderately true | Exactly true |
| 9 | If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution | Not at all true | Hardly true | Moderately true | Exactly true |
| 10 | I Can usually handle whatever comes my way | Not at all true | Hardly true | Moderately true | Exactly true |



The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

- 1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree
- 2. At times, I think I am no good at all.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree
- 3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree
- 4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree
- 5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree
- 6. I certainly feel useless at times.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree
- 7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree
- 8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree
- 9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree
- 10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree



The Psychological Well Being Scale

The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your life.

| Circle the number that best describes your present agreement or disagreement with each statement. | Strongly Disagree | Disagree Somewhat | Disagree Slightly | Agree Slightly | Agree Somewhat | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Most people see me as loving and affectionate. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 2. Sometimes I change the way I act or think to be more like those around me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 3. In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 4. I am not interested in activities that will expand my horizons. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 5. I feel good when I think of what I've done in the past and what I hope to do in the future. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 6. When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7. Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 8. I am not afraid to voice my opinions, even when they are in opposition to the | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| opinions of most people. | | | | | | |
| 9. The demands of everyday life often get me down. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 10. In general, I feel that I continue to learn more about myself as time goes by. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 11. I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 12. In general, I feel confident and positive about myself. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 13. I often feel lonely because I have few close friends with whom to share my concerns. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 14. My decisions are not usually influenced by what everyone else is doing. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers.

| Circle the number that best describes your present agreement or disagreement with each statement. | Strongly Disagree | Disagree Somewhat | Disagree Slightly | Agree Slightly | Agree Somewhat | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 15. I do not fit very well with the people and the community around me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 16. I am the kind of person who likes to give new things a try. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 17. I tend to focus on the present, because the future nearly always brings me problems. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18. I feel like many of the people I know have gotten more out of life than I have. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 19. I enjoy personal and mutual conversations with family members or friends. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 20. I tend to worry about what other people think of me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 21. I am quite good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 22. I don't want to try new ways of doing things - my life is fine the way it is. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 23. I have a sense of direction and purpose in life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 24. Given the opportunity, there are many things about myself that I would change. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 25. It is important to me to be a good listener when close friends talk to me about their problems. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 26. Being happy with myself is more important to me than having others approve of me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 27. I often feel overwhelmed by my responsibilities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 28. I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 29. My daily activities often seem trivial | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| and unimportant to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 30. I like most aspects of my personality. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 31. I don't have many people who want to listen when I need to talk. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

| Circle the number that best describes your present agreement or disagreement with each statement. | Strongly Disagree | Disagree Somewhat | Disagree Slightly | Agree Slightly | Agree Somewhat | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 32. I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 33. If I were unhappy with my living situation, I would take effective steps to change it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 34. When I think about it, I haven't really improved much as a person over the years. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 35. I don't have a good sense of what it is I'm trying to accomplish in life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 36. I made some mistakes in the past, but I feel that all in all everything has worked out for the best. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 37. I feel like I get a lot out of my friendships. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 38. People rarely talk to me into doing things I don't want to do. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 39. I generally do a good job of taking care of my personal finances and | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| affairs. | | | | | | |
| 40. In my view, people of every age are able to continue growing and developing. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 41. I used to set goals for myself, but that now seems like a waste of time. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 42. In many ways, I feel disappointed about my achievements in life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 43. It seems to me that most other people have more friends than I do. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 44. It is more important to me to “fit in” with others than to stand alone on my principles. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 45. I find it stressful that I can’t keep up with all of the things I have to do each day. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 46. With time, I have gained a lot of insight about life that has made me a stronger, more capable person. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 47. I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 48. For the most part, I am proud of who I am and the life I lead. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|-------|----------------|
| Circle the number that best describes your present agreement or | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|-------|----------------|

| disagreement with each statement. | | Somewhat | Slightly | Slightly | Somewhat | |
|--|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|---|
| 49. People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 50. I have confidence in my opinions, even if they are contrary to the general consensus. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 51. I am good at juggling my time so that I can fit everything in that needs to be done. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 52. I have a sense that I have developed a lot as a person over time. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 53. I am an active person in carrying out the plans I set for myself. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 54. I envy many people for the lives they lead. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 55. I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 56. It's difficult for me to voice my own opinions on controversial matters. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 57. My daily life is busy, but I derive a sense of satisfaction from keeping up with everything. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 58. I do not enjoy being in new situations that require me to change my old familiar ways of doing things. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 59. Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 60. My attitude about myself is probably not as positive as most people feel about themselves. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 61. I often feel as if I'm on the outside looking in when it comes to friendships. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 62. I often change my mind about decisions if my friends or family disagree. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 63. I get frustrated when trying to plan my daily activities because I never accomplish the things I set out to do. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 64. For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

| Circle the number that best describes your present agreement or disagreement with each statement. | Strongly Disagree | Disagree Somewhat | Disagree Slightly | Agree Slightly | Agree Somewhat | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 65. I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 66. Many days I wake up feeling discouraged about how I have lived my life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 67. I know that I can trust my friends, and they know they can trust me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 68. I am not the kind of person who gives in to social pressures to think or | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

act in certain ways.

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 69. My efforts to find the kinds of activities and relationships that I need have been quite successful. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 70. I enjoy seeing how my views have changed and matured over the years. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 71. My aims in life have been more a source of satisfaction than frustration to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 72. The past had its ups and downs, but in general, I wouldn't want to change it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 73. I find it difficult to really open up when I talk with others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 74. I am concerned about how other people evaluate the choices I have made in my life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 75. I have difficulty arranging my life in a way that is satisfying to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 76. I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 77. I find it satisfying to think about what I have accomplished in life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 78. When I compare myself to friends and acquaintances, it makes me feel good about who I am. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 79. My friends and I sympathize with each other's problems. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 80. I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

| Circle the number that best describes your present agreement or disagreement with each statement. | Strongly Disagree | Disagree Somewhat | Disagree Slightly | Agree Slightly | Agree Somewhat | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 81. I have been able to build a home and a lifestyle for myself that is much to my liking. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 82. There is truth to the saying that you can't teach an old dog new tricks. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 83. In the final analysis, I'm not so sure that my life adds up to much. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 84. Everyone has their weaknesses, but I seem to have more than my share. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

Appendix V. Contact details for ISPCC, Teen Focus, Childline



Dear Participant of Gaisce Bronze Award / Brother or Sister of Gaisce Bronze Award Participant,



Thank you very much for your time and co-operation in participating in this research.

If any issues have been raised for you by completing the questionnaires in this research, please contact the ISPCC at the free-phone telephone number or website displayed below.



<http://www.ispcc.ie>

The Teenfocus service provides a comprehensive support service, including out of hours access, to teenagers aged 13-18 years who are experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties.

The service aims to intervene to provide young people with the necessary supports to promote psychological resilience and maintain their psychological well being, regardless of social or emotional background.

For Childline nationwide:

Call the free phone number **1800 66 66 66**
Text 'talk' to **50101**



Log onto www.childline.ie

Appendix W. Approval letter from Human Research Ethics Committee – Humanities



Cliath 4, D112

UCD Research Ethics

c/o UCD Humanities Institute
don Léann
of Ireland
University College Dublin
Baile Átha Cliath
Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland

T + 353 1 716 4689

Eitic Thaighde UCD

Institiúid na hÉireann
Daonna UCD
An Coláiste Ollscoile,
Belfield, Baile Átha

research.ethics@ucd.ie

www.ucd.ie/researchethics

8th October 2010

Ms Niamh Clarke MacMahon
c/o Dr. Gary O'Reilly
UCD School of Psychology
Newman Building
Belfield
Dublin 4

Re: HS-10-162-Clarke-OReilly: *Does Gaisce-The President's Award, act as a catalyst in the enhancement of positive psychological attributes?*

Dear Ms Clarke MacMahon

Thank you for your response to the Human Research Ethics Committee – Humanities (07/10/10). **The Decision of the Committee is to grant approval for this application which is subject to the conditions set out below. Please note, if not already done, that a signed hard copy of the HREC Application Form is required by the Research Ethics Office. Please ensure that the signed form includes all approved revisions – your approval status will be registered upon receipt of this document.**

Please also note that approval is for the work and the time period specified in the above protocol and is subject to the following:

- If applicable - all permissions to access participants, whether internal (heads of Schools/Registrar) or external are obtained before recruitment of participants is commenced;
- Any amendments or requests to extend the original approved study will need to be approved by the Committee. Therefore you will need to submit by email the *Request to Amend/Extend Form* (HREC Doc 10);

- The Committee should also be notified of any unexpected adverse events that occur during the conduct of your research by submitting an *Unexpected Adverse Events Report* (HREC Doc 11);
- You are required to provide an *End of Study Report Form* (HREC Doc 12) to the Committee upon the completion of your study;

.../.

- This approval is granted on condition that you ensure that, in compliance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003, all data will be destroyed in accordance with your application and that you will confirm this in your *End of Study Report* (HREC Doc 12), or indicate when this will occur and how this will be communicated to the Human Research Ethics Committee;
- You may require copies of submitted documentation relating to this approved application and therefore we advise that you retain copies for your own records;
- It must be understood that any ethical approval granted is premised on the assumption that the research will be carried out within the limits of the law. The Committee wishes you well with your research and look forward to receiving your report. All forms are available on the website www.ucd.ie/researchethics please ensure that you submit the latest version of the relevant form. If you have any queries regarding the above please contact the Office of Research Ethics.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Joan Tiernan
Chair Human Research Ethics Committee - Humanities



Gaisce Research Information for Gold Award Participants.

Dear Gaisce Gold Participant,

Gaisce – The President’s Award, in conjunction with UCD School of Psychology and researcher Niamh Clarke MacMahon, are conducting research from September 2010 to May 2013 to evaluate the positive effects of participation in Gaisce’s The President’s Award. Asking the question: *‘Does the President’s Award act as a catalyst in the enhancement of positive psychological attributes for its participants?’*

Your participation is crucial to the success of this research. We are asking you most sincerely for your cooperation.

We hope that all Gold Award participants will complete pre and post questionnaires. The pre questionnaire is to be completed as you begin your gold award and the post questionnaire on nearing completion/completion of the programme. The pre and post questionnaires take approximately 20 minutes to complete. All participants are non identifiable as you will not be asked to provide your name or address when completing the questionnaires. Hence, all information will remain totally confidential and anonymous. Each Gold Award participant taking part in the research is allocated a code number. Code numbers are written on each consent form. Enclosed is the pre questionnaire for you to please complete and return it along with the signed consent form to the researcher Niamh Clarke Mac Mahon in the stamped addressed envelope.

In order to determine if positive psychological effects may be solely attributed to participation in Gaisce – The President’s Award, we also need to compare Award participants with non Award participants. Consequently, we are asking where possible, if you could ask a friend or sibling of approximately the same age who is not a Gold Award Gaisce participant to also complete a set of pre and post questionnaires.(If this is not possible could you as the Gold Award Participate please complete your questionnaire)

Please feel free to contact the researcher Niamh Clarke MacMahon at 086 2442181 should you need any further clarification.

Gaisce - The President’s Award is committed to providing a quality Award programme. Your participation will help ensure that the high standards of Gaisce – The President’s Award will continue to be met and maintained. This research will assist in securing future support for the ongoing development of Gaisce – The President’s Award.

Many thanks in advance for your assistance,

P. G. Callaghan (Barney)
Chief Executive
Gaisce – The President’s Award

Niamh Clarke MacMahon
Researcher
UCD School of Psychology



Gaisce Gold Control Group Research Consent Information Letter



Dear Friend / Sibling of Gold Award Participant,

Gaisce – The President’s Award, in conjunction with UCD School of Psychology and me the researcher Niamh Clarke MacMahon, intend to evaluate the positive effects of participation in Gaisce – The President’s Award.

In order to determine if positive psychological effects may be solely attributed to participation in Gaisce – The President’s Award, we also need to compare Award participants with non Award participants. Consequently, we are asking where possible, a sibling/friend of each gold award participant to also complete the pre and post questionnaires.

The findings of the research will be written up in fulfilment of the requirements for a PhD in Psychology. You will not be identifiable as you will not be asked to provide your name or address. Hence all information will remain totally confidential and anonymous.

Attached is a consent form for you to please complete.

If you would like to speak about any aspect of this research before you make a decision about your participation please feel free to contact me at 086 2442181. I enclose a stamped addressed envelope for you to return your consent form and questionnaire.

Many thanks in advance for your assistance,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Niamh Clarke MacMahon'.

Niamh Clarke MacMahon,
Researcher , UCD School of Psychology

Appendix Z. Consent forms for Gold and Control Group Participants



**Gaisce –The President’s Award Research
Gold Participant Consent Form**



Gaisce Gold Participant’s Consent

I give my consent to participate in the research into the positive effects of participation in Gaisce - The President’s Award.

Please print your name _____ Date _____

Start date of Gold Award _____

Proposed Finish date of Gold Award _____

Signature of Gaisce Participant _____

Gaisce Participant Code Number : _____



**Gaisce –The President’s Award Research
Friend / Sibling Consent Form**



Friend / Sibling of Gaisce Gold Participant’s Consent

I give my consent to participate in the research into the positive effects of participation in Gaisce - The President’s Award.

Please print your name _____ Date _____

Signature of Friend / Sibling of Gaisce Participant _____

Friend / Sibling of Gaisce Participant Code Number : _____

Please return this page to the researcher, Niamh Clarke MacMahon in the stamp addressed envelope provided.



The Adult State Hope Scale

Read each item carefully. Using the scale shown below, please select the number that best describes *how you think about yourself right now* and put that number in the blank before each sentence. Please take a few moments to focus on yourself and what is going on in *your life at this moment*. Once you have this “ here and now ” set, go ahead and answer each item according to the following scale:

1. If I should find myself in a jam, I could think of many ways to get out of it

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Definitely False | Mostly False | Somewhat False | Slightly False | Slightly True | Somewhat True | Mostly True | Definitely True |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my goals

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Definitely False | Mostly False | Somewhat False | Slightly False | Slightly True | Somewhat True | Mostly True | Definitely True |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |

3. There are lots of ways around any problem that I am facing now

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Definitely False | Mostly False | Somewhat False | Slightly False | Slightly True | Somewhat True | Mostly True | Definitely True |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. Right now, I see myself as being pretty successful

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Definitely False | Mostly False | Somewhat False | Slightly False | Slightly True | Somewhat True | Mostly True | Definitely True |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. I can think of many ways to reach my current goals

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Definitely False | Mostly False | Somewhat False | Slightly False | Slightly True | Somewhat True | Mostly True | Definitely True |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |

6. At this time, I am meeting the goals that I have set for myself

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Definitely False | Mostly False | Somewhat False | Slightly False | Slightly True | Somewhat True | Mostly True | Definitely True |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |



Gaisce-The President's Award Research Parental / Guardian Information Sheet for Focus Group

Dear Parent /Guardian,

Your son/daughter has registered with Gaisce-The President's Award to complete their Bronze Award from September 2010 to June 2011.

The mission of Gaisce –The President's Award is to contribute to the development of all young people through the achievement of personal challenges, and the realisation of their potential.

Your son/daughter has already completed the online part of the research. In order to obtain a greater understanding of the effects on participants of Gaisce – The President's Award, we would like to speak with groups of Bronze Participants about their experience of the award.

Your son/daughter's school has been selected to partake in this aspect of the research.

I, Niamh Clarke MacMahon, hope to speak with your son/daughter as part of a group of Bronze Award participants. The group will comprise of 8-9 students and will also contain some of your son/daughter's classmates. The interview will take place in May 2011 in your son/daughter's school and during the school day.

The group interview will last for approximately one class (40 – 45 minutes). You may withdraw your consent at any point until 30th of June 2011. Participation in the group interview is optional, and is not a prerequisite for completing Gaisce – The President's Award.

The group interview will be conducted, audio- taped, transcribed and written up as part of a PhD in Psychology by Niamh Clarke MacMahon. Your son /daughter will not be asked to give any personal details about themselves, and will remain anonymous as no names will be required. All the information will be anonymized and stored on a password protected computer.

If you would like to speak with us about any aspect of the interviews please feel free to contact Niamh at 086 2442181.

We wish to thank you most sincerely for your assistance,

Kind regards,

Handwritten signature of P.G. Callaghan in black ink.

P.G. Callaghan (Barney)
Chief Executive
Gaisce – The President's Award

Handwritten signature of Niamh Clarke MacMahon in blue ink.

Niamh Clarke MacMahon
Researcher
UCD School of Psychology



Gaisce-The President's Award Research – Gaisce Participant Information Sheet for Focus Groups

Dear Gaisce Participant,

You have registered with Gaisce-The President's Award to complete the Bronze Award from September 2010 to June 2011.

You have already completed the online part of the research. In order to obtain a greater understanding of the effects on participants of Gaisce – The President's Award, we would like to speak with groups of Bronze Participants about their experience of the award.

Your school has been selected to take part in this aspect of the research.

I hope to speak with you as part of a group of Bronze Award participants. The group will comprise of 8-9 students and will also contain some of your classmates. The group discussion will take place in May 2011 in your school and during the school day. The group discussion will last for approximately one class (40 – 45 minutes).

The group discussion will be conducted, audio- taped and written up by Niamh Clarke MacMahon as part of a PhD in Psychology. You will not be asked to give any personal details about yourself, and you will remain anonymous as your name will be asked for. All the information will be anonymised and stored on a password protected computer.

You may withdraw your assent at any point up until 30th of June 2011. Participation in the group interview is optional, and is not a condition for completing Gaisce – The President's Award.

If you would like to speak with us about any aspect of the interviews please feel free to contact Niamh at 086 2442181.

We wish to thank you most sincerely for your assistance,

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Pádraig Callaghan'.

P.G. Callaghan (Barney)
Chief Executive
Gaisce – The President's Award

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Niamh Clarke MacMahon'.

Niamh Clarke MacMahon
Researcher
UCD School of Psychology



Gaisce – The President’s Award Research



Parental / Guardian Consent and Participant Assent Form for Focus Group

Gaisce Participant’s Parental / Guardian Consent and Participant’s Assent

We have read and understand the contents of the Gaisce Research Consent/Assent information letter. We give permission for my/our son or daughter to participate in a group interview exploring the effects of participation in Gaisce - The President’s Award, and our son / daughter gives their assent to participate in the group interview.

Please print your son / daughter’s name _____

Date _____

Signature of Parent / Guardian _____

Signature of Gaisce Participant _____



Gaisce-The President's Award Research Information Sheet for Group Interview.

Dear Gaisce Participant,

You have registered with Gaisce-The President's Award to complete the Gold Award from June 2011 to September 2012.

You have already completed the online part of the research. In order to obtain a greater understanding of the effects on participants of Gaisce – The President's Award, we would like to speak with groups of Gold Participants about their experience of the award.

I hope to speak with you as part of a group of Gold Award participants.. The group discussion will last for approximately 45 – 60 minutes, and comprise of between 4 – 6 participants.

The group discussion will be conducted, audio- taped and written up by Niamh Clarke MacMahon as part of a PhD in Psychology. You will not be asked to give any personal details about yourself, and you will remain anonymous as your name will be asked for. All the information will be anonymised and stored on a password protected computer.

You may withdraw your assent at any point up until 30th September 2012. Participation in the group interview is optional, and is not a condition for completing Gaisce – The President's Award.

If you would like to speak with us about any aspect of the interviews please feel free to contact Niamh at 086 2442181.

We wish to thank you most sincerely for your assistance,

Kind regards,

Handwritten signature of P.G. Callaghan in black ink.

P.G. Callaghan (Barney)
Chief Executive
Gaisce – The President's Award

Handwritten signature of Niamh Clarke MacMahon in blue ink.

Niamh Clarke MacMahon
Researcher
UCD School of Psychology



Gaisce – The President’s Award Research
Consent Form for Interview



Gaisce Participant’s Consent

I have read and understand the contents of the Gaisce Research Consent information letter.

I am aware that the information obtained from the interview will be written up as part of a PhD for the UCD Psychology Department, and I give my consent to participate in the group interview.

Please print your name _____

Date _____

Signature of Gaisce Participant _____

Appendix AG Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis

AG.01 Chapter outline

This chapter presents the results of the exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses on the:

- The Children's Hope Scale
- The General Self-Efficacy Scale
- The Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale
- The Subjective Happiness Scale
- The Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being

AG.02 Research Questions

- Do the alpha coefficients indicate that the scales are reliable for an Irish secondary school population?
- What is the factor structure of the Children's Hope Scale, the General Self-Efficacy Scale, the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale, the Subjective Happiness Scale, and the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being?
- Do the factors identified in the original questionnaire studies for the above mentioned five scales correspond with the factors identified for the current sample?
- Are these scales, overall, reliable and valid for use with an adolescent Irish secondary school sample?

AG.03

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the factor structure and reliability of the Children's Hope Scale (Snyder, Hoza, Pelham, Rapoff, Ware, Danovsky, Highberger, Ribinstein & Stahl, 1997), the Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999), the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), the General Self-Efficacy Scale (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1995) and the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being (Long-Form [84-Items]) (Ryff, 1989), for an Irish adolescent secondary school student population.

The data from both sets of the Bronze sample (participants and control) collected at Time 1 were utilised as part of the analyses in both the exploratory factor analyses and the confirmatory factor analyses. This total Bronze sample, which consisted of 647 (n=647) secondary school students, was employed to determine the factor structure and reliability of the respective questionnaires. There were 362 females in the sample, representing 56% of the total sample, while the male participants numbered 285 (44%). The mean age of the total sample was 15.89 years, with males ($\bar{x} = 16.03$) presenting as older than the females ($\bar{x} = 15.77$).

The total Bronze sample was randomly split into 2 sub-data sets using SPSS. Sample 1 consisted of the data of 319 students and sample 2 was comprised of the data from 328 students. The first grouping ($n_1 = 319$), was utilised for all the exploratory factor analyses (EFA). 177 of this sample were female (55.5%), while 142 participants were male (44.5%). The average age of the group, overall, was 15.78 years.

The second group, ($n_2 = 328$) was utilised for all Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA). This group comprised of 185 females (56.4%) and 143 males (43.6%). The average age of this group was 16.03 years.

AG.04

Factor analysis

Factor analysis is a type of statistical technique that is conducted to identify clusters or patterns/groups of related items (called factors) on a test. It is a data reduction tool the process removes redundancy or duplication from a set of correlated variables. In summary according to Garrett-Mayer (2006) factor analysis allows one to describe many variables using a few factors. It helps select small group of variables of representative variables from larger set and allows for categories to be created depending on factor scores. Streiner (2003)

states that factor analysis can be used to explore the data for patterns, confirm our hypotheses, or reduce the many variables to a more manageable number.

AG.04.01 Scale reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha)

According to Tavakol, Mohagheghi and Dennick (2008), validity and reliability are two primary elements in the evaluation of a measurement instrument/questionnaire. Alpha is a commonly used index of test reliability. Reliability is the ability of an instrument to measure consistently. Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency that is how closely related a set of items are as a group. Alpha was developed by Cronbach in 1951 to provide a measure of internal consistency and is expressed as a number between 0 and 1. A "high" value of alpha is often used as confirmation or proof that items measure an underlying or latent construct. Bland and Altman (1997) propose that alpha values over 0.70 indicate satisfactory estimate of internal reliability; while those over 0.80 indicate an excellent reliability.

AG.04.02 Exploratory Factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis according to Hooper, Coughlan and Mullen (2009) is a technique used to explore the factor structure and to examine the inter-correlations that exist between a large numbers of items; this method reduces the items into smaller groups called factors. Neill (2012) defines Exploratory Factor Analysis as a method to investigate and summarises underlying correlation structure. As the name suggests EFA is exploratory in nature it allows the researcher to establish the underlying dimensions or factors that exist within a data set without having any preconceived notions about the data .As Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum and Strahan (1999) state a starting position for exploratory factor analysis is that any indicator may be linked to any factor, therefore EFA serves to identify a set of latent constructs within the variables.

AG.04.03 Confirmatory Factor analysis

Confirmatory Factor analysis is the next step after EFA as the researcher has an understanding of the constructs underlying the data and wish to confirm the factor structure extracted from the EFA. Kyle (1999) states that CFA is a way to test a prior expectation or theory. Therefore Confirmatory Analysis is a theory testing procedure. Put another way it tests the correlation structure of a data set against a hypothesised structure and rates "goodness of fit" to a hypothesised model. According to Cahill (2009) model estimates are obtained by minimising the differences between the expected and the observed covariance

matrix and assessing the overall fit of a model. If the differences (chi-square) between both matrices are close to zero, then the model ‘fits the data’. When using many variables, a large sample sizes, or high degrees of freedom chi-square model-fit becomes poor, as small differences can generate significant deviations. It is therefore necessary, as recommended by Byrne (2001), that other fit-indexes should be used as well as to the Chi-square test. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) measures the discrepancy per degree of freedom for the model Browne and Cudeck (1993) RMSEA ranges from 0-1 with smaller values indicating better model fit, values of less than (or equal to) 0.08 indicate a close-fit between the expected and observed matrices. A value less than 0.05 for the RMSEA indicates excellent fit to the data. Furthermore, according to Hu and Bentler (1999), model-fit can be examined using the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) (also known as the non-normed fit index) as they are less sensitive to sample size a CFI and TLI. Values of 0.90 or higher indicate indicate satisfactory model-fit. Asparouhov and Muthén (2009) suggest that a Standardised Root Mean Residual (SRMR) of less than 0.07 is also indicative of the acceptable fit of a model. These indices were chosen for this research based on their frequent use in CFA studies. Hair, Tatham, Anderson and Black (1998) summarised the measure and the acceptable threshold (see Table 8.1).

Table 8.1 Hair et al.’s (1998) Acceptable Threshold

| Model Fit Statistics | Threshold |
|---|--|
| Chi-square /df | <3 good; <5 sometimes permissible |
| p-value for the model | >.05 |
| CFI-Comparative fit index | >0.95 great; >0.90 traditional ; >0.80 sometimes permissible |
| GFI- Goodness of Fit Index | >0.90 |
| SRMR- Standardized Root Mean Square Residual | <.09 |
| RMSEA- The Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation | < .05 excellent; .05-.10 moderate >.10 bad |

AG.05**Results**

The findings from factor analysis of The Children's Hope Scale (Snyder, Hoza, Pelham, Rapoff, Ware, Danovsky, Highberger, Ribinstein & Stahl, 1997), The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999), The Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), The General Self-Efficacy Scale (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1995) and The Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being (Long-Form [84-Items]) (Ryff, 1989), for an Irish adolescent secondary school student population.

AG.06**Research questions on the Child's Hope Scale**

Research questions

- Does the alpha coefficient indicate scale reliability for an Irish secondary school population?
- What is the factor structure of the Children's Hope Scale in an Irish Adolescent Secondary School population?
- Do the factors identified in the original study by Snyder et al (1997) match the factors identified in this research?
- Are these factors and the overall scale reliable for an adolescent Irish Secondary School sample?

AG.06.01**Data Analysis and findings on the Children's Hope Scale**

Cronbach's alpha for the Children's Hope Scale was calculated for the total sample, utilising both sub-data sets. An alpha of .881 was obtained for the Bronze sample, well over the threshold level of .7, indicating the Children's Hope Scale had excellent reliability for the current Irish secondary school sample (Bland and Altman 1997).

The total Bronze sample was randomly split into 2 sub-data sets using SPSS ($n_1 = 319$ and $n_2 = 328$). The first grouping ($n_1 = 319$), was utilised for all the exploratory factor analyses (EFA). 177 of the participants were female (55.5%) and 142 participants were male (44.5%). The average age of the group was 15.78 years.

The Exploratory factor analysis group ($n = 319$) was used to explore the underlying structure of The Hope Scale by exploratory factor analysis.

AG.06.02 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) of the Children's Hope Scale

The Children's Hope Scale contains two subscales: the Agency subscale which assesses the child's perceived ability to reach goals and the Pathways subscale which measures the child's ability to form routes to achieving these goals (Snyder et al., 1997). The scale has been validated for use among over two thousand children from diverse demographic and ethnic backgrounds in the United States (see Snyder, 2003). Although the scale has not been studied as extensively for samples outside the United States (see Frehe-Torres, 2010), Marques, Pais-Ribeiro and Lopez (2009) found that the proposed factor structure was evident for a sample of three hundred and sixty seven Portuguese students.

Factor analysis was conducted on the Hope Scale (6-Item) on the n_1 sub-sample ($n_1=319$) consisting of secondary students, some of whom were Gaisce participants and some of whom acted as a control group. Given Comrey and Lee's (1992) recommendation that with a sample of more than 300 participants, the scree plot provides a good reliable criterion for factor analysis, the scree plot was used to determine factor structure. Furthermore, the cut-off point for factors was set at an eigenvalue of 1. Bartlett's test of Sphericity was significant ($p<.05$) suggesting that the data was factorable. As the validity of Bartlett's test is impacted by large samples, the appropriateness of the data was also assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy which is a measure of the total amount of variance explained by the items. A .6 score on this test is considered the cut-off point for acceptability with scores becoming increasingly adequate as they approach 1. The KMO score for the split exploratory sample was .84, thus indicating the data was adequate for factor analysis.

Factor analysis was conducted using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with a varimax rotation. A one-factor solution emerged with an eigenvalue over one. This was confirmed by Scree plot (see Figure 8.1).

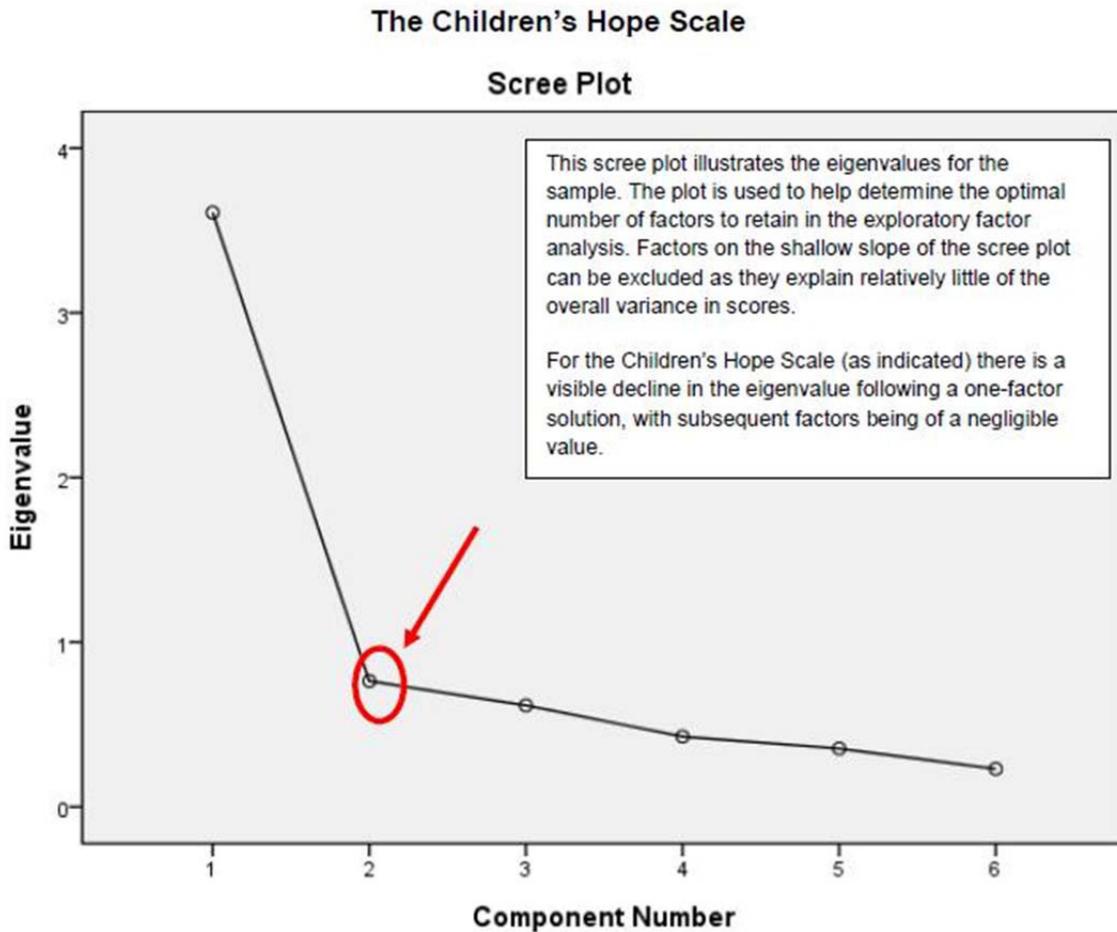


Figure 8.1 Scree plot illustrating factor loadings for the Children's Hope Scale

The PCA showed a model, consisting of this single factor, explaining 60.14% of the variance in hope scores. This factor had an eigenvalue of 3.61. The factors could not be rotated as only a single factor was extracted. The item loadings on this factor ranged from .837 to .689. The item loadings can be seen in figure 8.1.

Table 8.2 Item loadings on the single factor extracted for the Children’s Hope Scale.

Component Matrix^{a,b}

| The Children’s Hope Scale | Component |
|--|-----------|
| <i>The six sentences below describe how children think about themselves</i> | 1 |
| <i>The Children’s Hope Scale</i> | |
| 1. I think I am doing pretty well. | .837 |
| 2. I can think of many ways to get the things in life that are most important to me. | .796 |
| 3. I am doing just as well as other kids my age. | .835 |
| 4. When I have a problem, I can come up with lots of ways to solve it. | .790 |
| 5. I think the things I have done in the past will help me in the future. | .692 |
| 6. Even when others want to quit, I know that I can find ways to solve the problem. | .689 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

b. Only cases for which factor grp = 1 are used in the analysis phase.

It was suggested by the authors of the Children’s Hope Scale that analysis of the scale would produce a two-factor solution with appropriate items loading onto either factor. This has been supported by studies in both the United States (e.g. Valle, Huebner, & Suldo, 2004) and Europe (Marques, Pais-Ribeiro & Lopez, 2009). The results from the current exploratory analysis did not support Snyder et al.’s (1997) hypothesis with an Irish adolescent secondary school population. However, it should be noted that previous studies exploring the structure of the Children’s Hope Scale using exploratory factor analysis (e.g. Snyder et al., 1997; Marques et al., 2009) specifically requested a two-factor solution.

In contrast to the latter’s premise, the current findings from the PCA identified a One-Factor structure. To confirm that a one-factor solution was a best fit to the model, confirmatory factor analyses was conducted on the CFA half of the sample ($n_2=328$).

AG.06.03 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) of the Children's Hope Scale

The next step of the analysis was to conduct Confirmatory Factor Analysis on the one-factor solution for the hope scale with the second half of the sample ($n_2=328$). This latter group of 328 participants was utilised to cross-validate the one-factor solution identified from the EFA described above.

In accordance with the guidelines outlined by Hoyle and Panter (1995), the goodness of fit for each model was assessed using the chi-square test (the Satorra-Bentler scaled chi-square), along with the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) fit indices. The Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA) value with 90% confidence intervals is reported along with the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR).

The one-factor solution derived from the EFA was then cross-validated on 328 participants retained from the same overall sample on which the EFA was conducted. A confirmatory factor model was specified and estimated using LISREL 8.8 (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 2006). The model parameters were estimated using maximum likelihood (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1999) (see Figure 8.2).

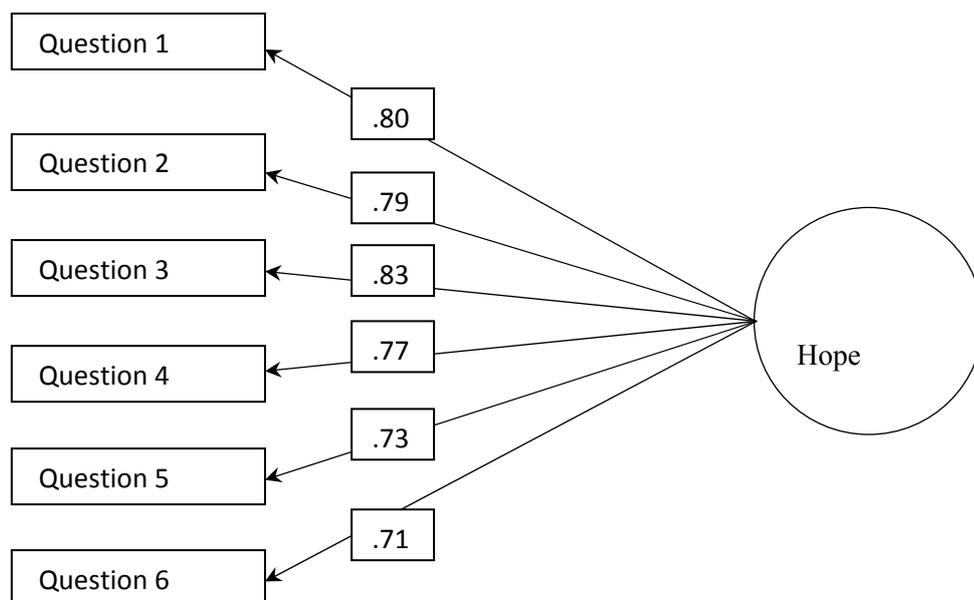


Figure 8.2 CFA Model (A) for one factor solution on the Children's Hope Scale

Goodness-of-fit indices indicated that the one factor solution was not a good fit for the data (see Table 8.3). Consequently, confirmative factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using a two factor model as per Snyder et al.'s (1997) proposal (see Figure 8.3). The results of that model are given in Table 8.3 (subtest 2).

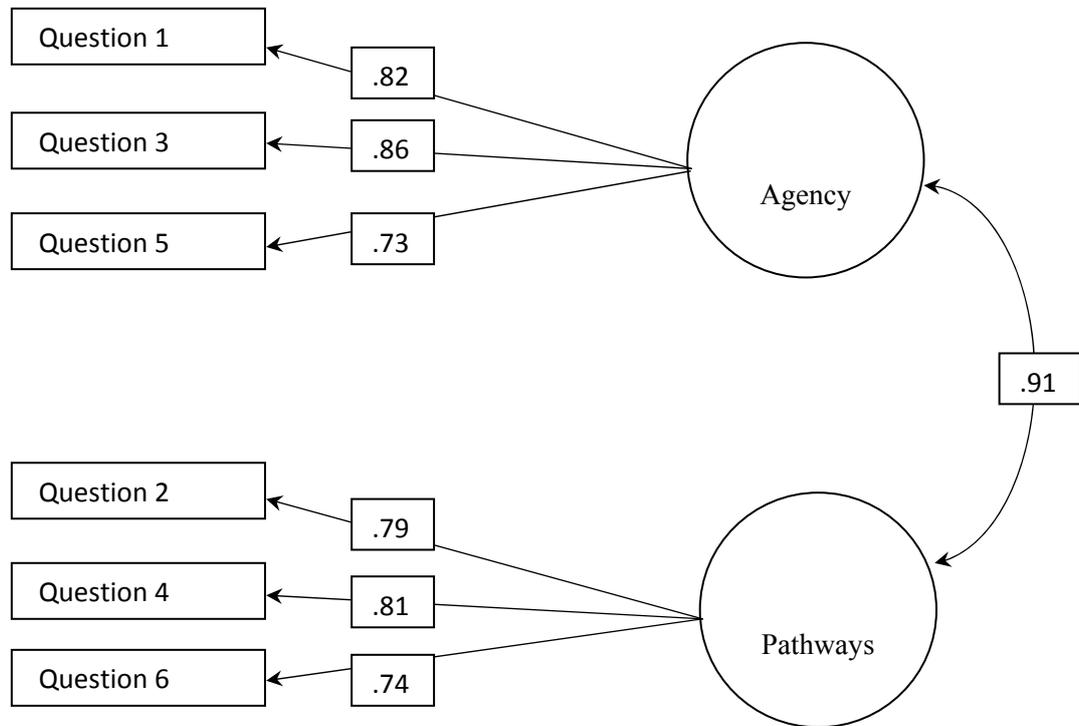


Figure 8.3 CFA Model (B) for two factor solution on the Children's Hope Scale

The comparative fit of Model A (one-factor solution) and Model B was assessed using the Expected Cross Validation Index (ECVI; Browne and Cudeck, 1989), an index used for the purpose of model comparison, with the smallest value being indicative of the best fitting model.

The two factor solution identified by Snyder provided a better fit to the data compared to the one-factor solution. However, the RMSEA for this two-factor model was still above the recommended cut-off of ≤ 0.05 . Therefore, the modifications indices were examined to identify if any modifications could be made to the two factor solution that made theoretical sense and would improve the fit of the model. The modification index value computed in LISREL gives the expected drop in the likelihood ratio chi-square statistics when a modification is made to a model parameter (Byrne, Shavelson and Muthén, 1989; Oort,

1998). Numerous researchers have used modification index values in CFA to test whether modifying model parameters would significantly improve the fit of the model (e.g., DuBois, Burk-Braxton, Swenson, Tevendale and Hardesty, 2002; Tildesley and Andrews, 2008).

The modification indices suggested to add the path from the latent construct of ‘agency’ to item 2 on the Hope scale to improve the model fit. This modified two factor model was tested (Model c) see Table 8.3. The findings of the modified two factor model (see figure 8.4, model c) suggested excellent fit to the data (see Table 8.3 for goodness of fit indices for all three models).

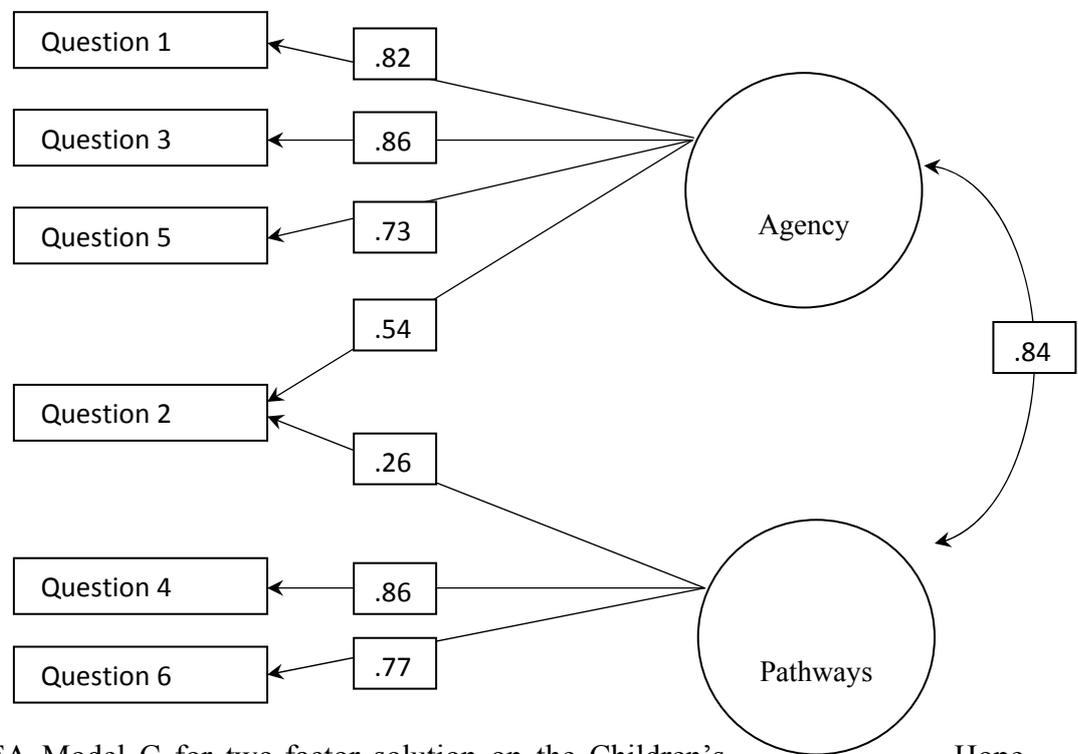


Figure 8.4 CFA Model C for two-factor solution on the Children's Scale

Table 8.3 Goodness of fit indices

| Confirmatory Factor Analysis | χ^2 | Df | P | RMSEA | CFI | GFI | SRMR | Model AIC | ECVI |
|---|----------|----|-------|-------------|---------|---------|-------------|-----------|------|
| <i>Recommended level 'Good Fit'</i> | | | | ≤ 0.05 | >0.90 | >0.90 | ≤ 0.07 | | |
| Subtest 2 (n = 328) MODEL A | 48.34 | 9 | .001 | .116 | .98 | .95 | .035 | 72.34 | .22 |
| Subtest 2 (n = 328) MODEL B | 28.88 | 8 | <.001 | .089 | .99 | .97 | .028 | 54.88 | .17 |
| Subtest 2 (n = 328) MODEL C | 9.49 | 7 | .22 | .033 | .99 | .99 | .017 | 37.49 | .11 |

A chi-square difference test was conducted to determine whether the two- factor solution (Model B) and the modified two-factor solution (Model C) model were significantly different. The chi square difference suggests that Model C should be accepted, $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 19.39, p < .05$.

In 2007 Edwards, Ong and Lopez conducted research into the Hope measurement in Mexican American Youths. They stated that while the original Hope two factor model by Snyder et al. has robust theoretical framework, its fit was relatively poor to serve as formal measurement in their study with Mexican American Youths. However when they allowed item 5 to load onto the pathways factors as opposed to the suggested agency factors it resulted in a significant improvement in model fit. They suggested that cultural difference accounted for the required adjustment of the Hope scale with a Mexican American youth population.

In the current research the best fit model was reached when item 2, “I can think of many ways to get the things in life that are most important to me” was respectively allowed to load onto both the agency and pathways subscales. For Irish adolescent secondary school students item 2 appeared to represent an ambiguous question. Based on the original scale developed by Snyder, Question 2 should load exclusively onto the pathways subscale which measures the young person’s ability to form routes to achieving their goals. However, for the current Irish adolescent sample, the modification indices in the CFA suggested loading question 2 onto the ‘Agency’ subscale which assesses the young person’s perceived ability to reach their goals, in addition to the ‘Pathways’ subscale. Having made these modifications to the model and allowing question 2 to cross load onto both Agency and Pathways latent constructs, the CFA resulted in an the best fit for an Irish adolescent population . Consequently, the data analysis suggests using Model C.

AG.07 Research questions for the General Self-efficacy Scale

- Does the alpha coefficient indicate scale reliability for an Irish secondary school population?
- What is the factor structure of the General Self-efficacy Scale in an Irish Adolescent secondary school?
- Do the factors identified in the original study by Jerusalem & Schwarzer, (1995) match the factors identified in this research?
- Are these factors and the overall scale reliable for an adolescent Irish secondary school sample?

AG.07.01 Data Analysis and findings for the General Self-Efficacy Scale

Cronbach's alpha for the General Self-Efficacy Scale was calculated for the total sample, utilising both sub-data sets. An alpha of .867 was obtained for the Bronze sample, well over the threshold level of .7, indicating the General Self-Efficacy Scale had excellent reliability for the current Irish secondary school sample.

A total sample of 647 secondary school students were randomly split into 2 sub-data sets, ($n_1 = 319$ and $n_2 = 328$). The first group, that of $n = 319$ were used to explore the underlying structure of The General Self-Efficacy Scale by exploratory factor analysis.

AG.07.02 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) of the General Self-Efficacy Scale

Factor analysis was conducted on the General Self-Efficacy Scale (10-Item) for the EFA sub-sample ($n=319$) consisting of secondary students, some of whom were Gaisce participants and some of whom acted as a control group. The cut-off point for factors was an eigenvalue of 1. Bartlett's test of Sphericity was significant ($p<.05$) suggesting that the data was factorable. In addition, the KMO score for the split exploratory sample was .895, thus indicating the data was adequate for factor analysis.

Factor analysis was conducted using Principal Component Analysis. One factor emerged with an eigenvalue over one. This was confirmed by Scree plot (see Figure 8.5).

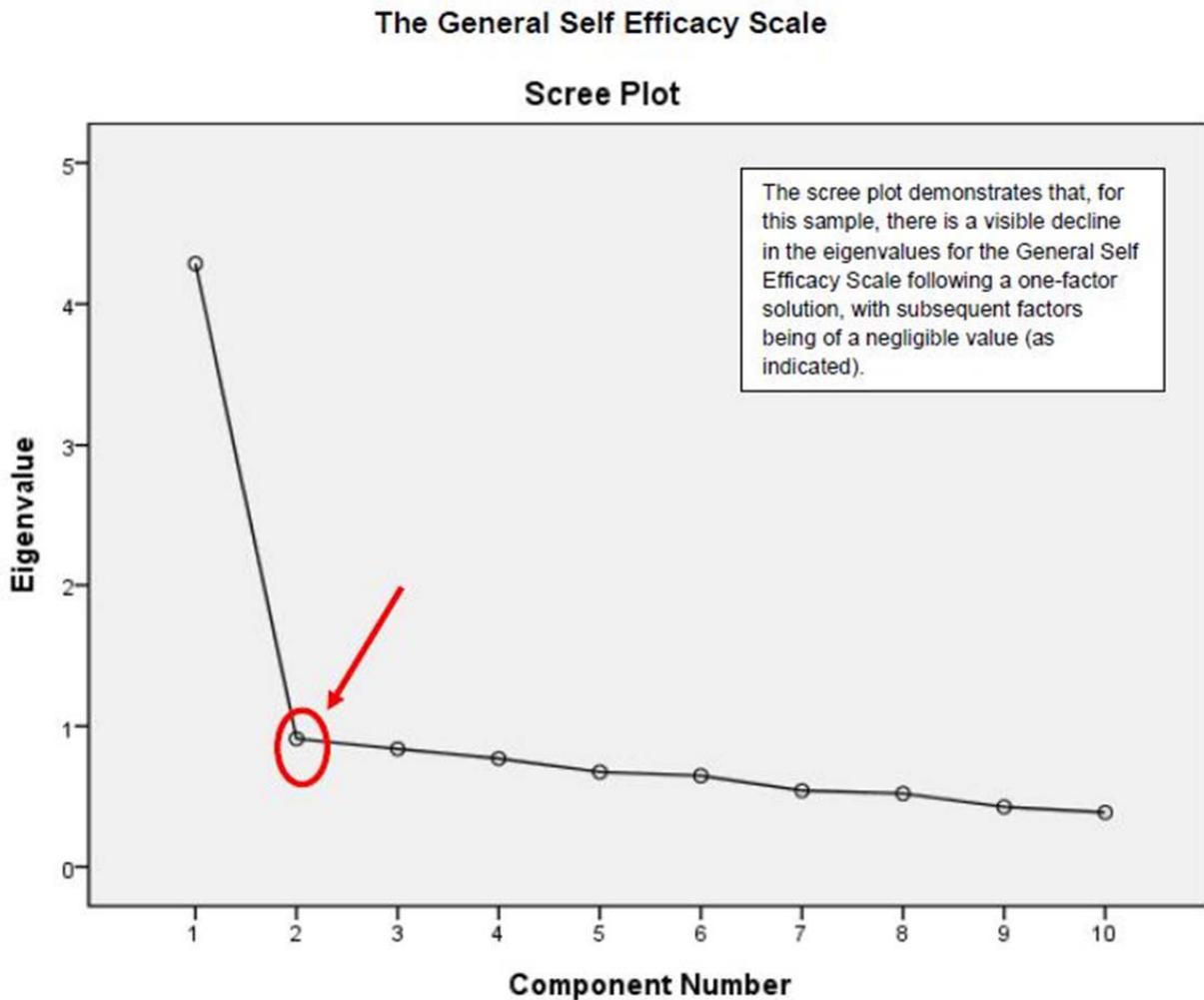


Figure 8.5 Scree plot illustrating factor loadings for the General Self-efficacy Scale

The model, consisting of this single factor, explained 42.86% of the variance in general self-efficacy scores. This factor had an eigenvalue of 4.29. The factors could not be rotated as only a single factor was extracted. The item loadings on this factor ranged from .763 to .466. The item loadings can be seen in table 8.4.

Table 8.4 Item loadings on the single factor extracted for the General Self Efficacy Scale

Component Matrix^a

| The General Self-Efficacy Scale | Component 1 |
|---|----------------|
| The General Self-efficacy Scale-6. I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort | .736 |
| The General Self-efficacy Scale-7. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities | .705 |
| The General Self-efficacy Scale-4. I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events | .696 |
| The General Self-efficacy Scale-10. I can usually handle whatever comes my way | .694 |
| The General Self-efficacy Scale-9. If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution | .673 |
| The General Self-efficacy Scale-5. Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations | .669 |
| The General Self-efficacy Scale-8. When I am confronted with a problem , I can usually find several solutions | .663 |
| The General Self-efficacy Scale-1. I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough | .646 |
| The General Self-efficacy Scale-3. It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals | .573 |
| The General Self-efficacy Scale-2. If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want | .446 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

AG.08 Research questions for the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale

- Does the alpha coefficient indicate scale reliability for an Irish secondary school population?
- What is the factor structure of the Rosenberg Self-esteem Questionnaire in an Irish Adolescent Community population?
- Do the factors identified in the original study Rosenberg, (1965) match the factors identified in this research?
- Are these factors and the overall scale reliable for an adolescent Irish secondary school community sample?

AG.08.01 Data Analysis and findings for the Rosenberg Self-esteem Questionnaire

Cronbach's alpha for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was calculated for the total sample, utilising both sub-data sets. An alpha of .870 was obtained for the Bronze sample, indicating the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale had excellent reliability for the current Irish secondary school sample.

The total sample of 647 secondary school students were randomly split into 2 sub-data sets, ($n_1 = 319$ and $n_2 = 328$). The first group, that of $n = 319$ were used to explore the underlying structure of The Rosenberg Self-esteem Questionnaire by exploratory factor analysis.

AG.08.02 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) of The Rosenberg Self-esteem Questionnaire

Factor analysis was conducted on the Rosenberg Self-esteem Questionnaire (10-Item) for the split adolescent sample for exploratory analysis ($n=318$) consisting of transition year secondary students, some of whom were Gaisce participants and some of whom acted as a control group. The cut-off point for factors was an eigenvalue of 1. Bartlett's test of Sphericity was significant ($p < .05$) suggesting that the data was factorable. In addition, the KMO score for the split exploratory sample was .886, thus indicating the data was adequate for factor analysis.

Factor analysis was conducted using Principal Component Analysis. One factor emerged with an eigenvalue over one. This was confirmed by Scree plot (see Figure 8.6).

The General Self-Esteem Scale

Scree Plot

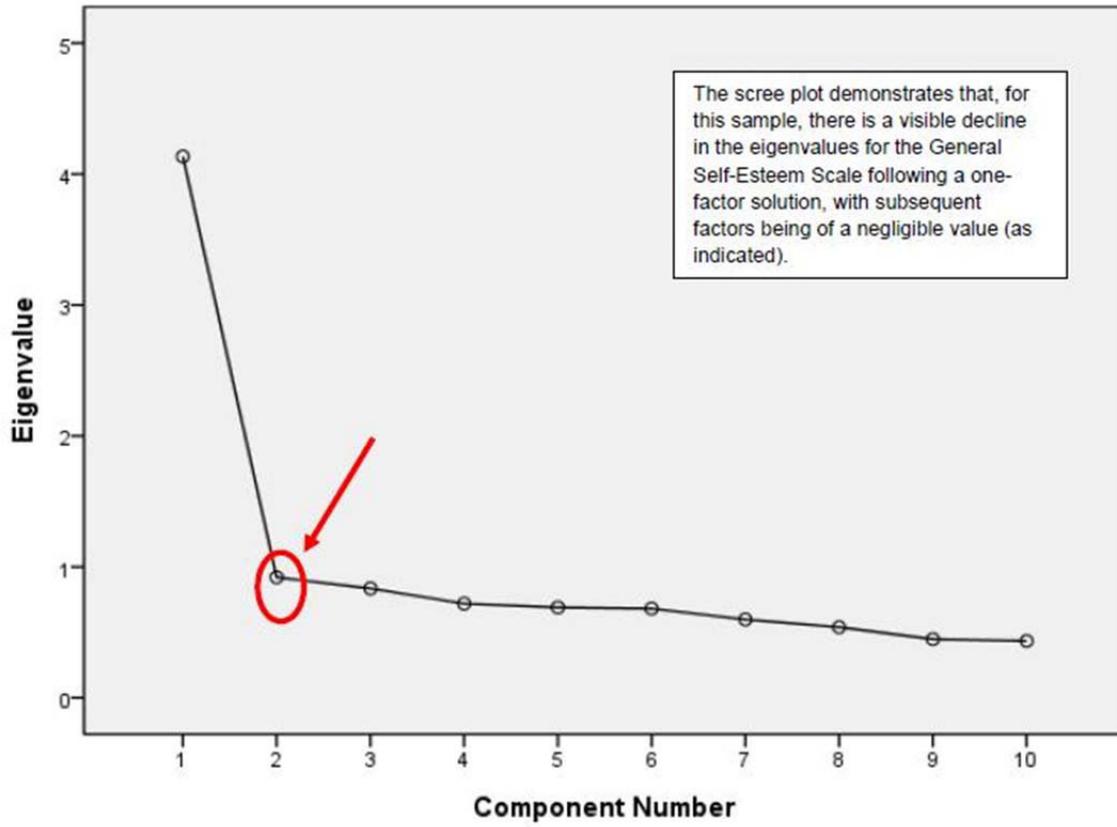


Figure 8.6 Scree plot illustrating factor loadings for the Self-esteem Scale

The model, consisting of this single factor, explained 59.59% of the variance in the self-esteem scale. This factor had an eigenvalue of 4.56 the factors could not be rotated as only a single factor was extracted. The item loadings on this factor ranged from .807 to .567. The item loadings can be seen in table 8.5.

Table 8.5 Item loadings on the one factors extracted for the General Self-Esteem Scale

Rotated Component Matrix^a

| The General Self-Esteem Scale | Component |
|---|-----------|
| | 1 |
| Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale-6. I certainly feel useless at times. | .803 |
| Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale-2. At times, I think I am no good at all. | .785 |
| Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale-8. I wish I could have more respect for myself. | .727 |
| Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale-9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure. | .693 |
| Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale-5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of. | .585 |
| Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale-3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities. | .807 |
| Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale-4. I am able to do things as well as most other people. | .772 |
| Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale-7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others. | .770 |
| Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale-1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself. | .620 |
| Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale-10. I take a positive attitude toward myself. | .567 |

Extraction Method :Principal Component Analysis
a.1 components extracted

As Rosenberg suggests that the scale consist of a single factor solution and the results from the current exploratory factor analysis concur with Rosenberg's theory for an Irish adolescent sample, no further analysis was needed. Consequently, the research proceeded using a one-factor structure for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

AG.09 Research questions on the Subjective Happiness Scale

- Does the alpha coefficient indicate scale reliability for an Irish secondary school population?
- What is the factor structure of the Subjective Happiness Scale in an Irish Adolescent Secondary School population?
- Do the factors identified in the original study match the factors identified Lyubomirsky & Lepper's in this research?
- Are these factors and the overall scale reliable for an adolescent Irish secondary school sample?

AG.09.01 Data Analysis and findings for the Subjective Happiness Scale

Cronbach's alpha for the Subjective Happiness Scale was calculated for the total sample, utilising both sub-data sets. An alpha of .796 was obtained for the Bronze sample, above the threshold level of .7, indicating the Subjective Happiness Scale had adequate reliability for the current Irish secondary school sample.

A total sample of 647 secondary school students were randomly split into 2 sub-data sets, ($n_1 = 319$ and $n_2 = 328$). The first group, that of $n = 319$ were used to explore the underlying structure of The Subjective Happiness scale by exploratory factor analysis.

AG.09.02 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) of the Subjective Happiness Scale

Factor analysis was conducted on the Subjective Happiness Scale (4-Item) for the EFA sub-sample ($n=319$) consisting of secondary students, some of whom were Gaisce participants and some of whom acted as a control group. The cut-off point for factors was an eigenvalue of 1. Bartlett's test of Sphericity was significant ($p<.05$) suggesting that the data was factorable. In addition, the KMO score for the split exploratory sample was .744, thus indicating the data was adequate for factor analysis.

Factor analysis was conducted using Principal Component Analysis. One factor emerged with an eigenvalue over one. This was confirmed by Scree plot (see Figure 8.7).

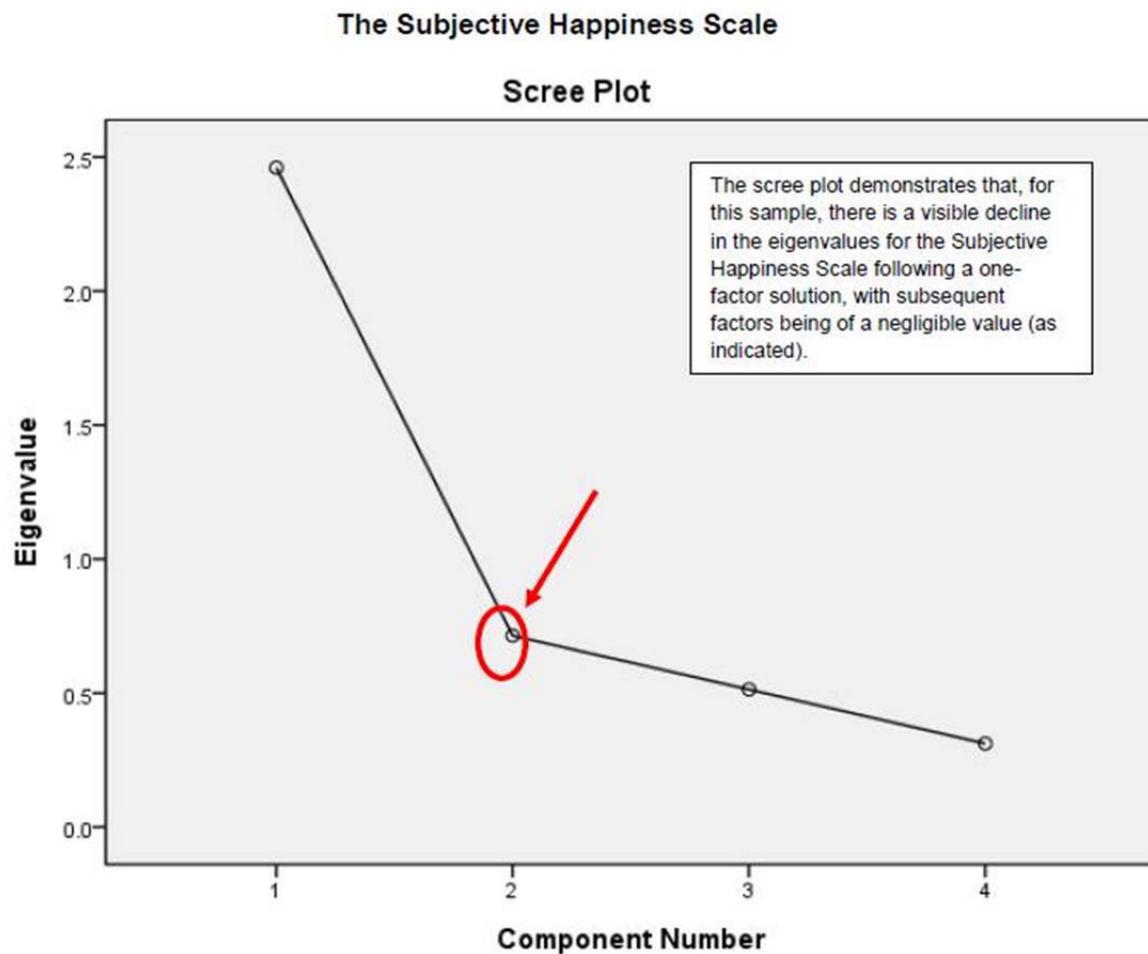


Figure 8.7. Scree plot illustrating factor loadings for the Subjective Happiness Scale.

The model, consisting of this single factor, explained 61.51% of the variance in subjective happiness scores. This factor had an eigenvalue of 2.46. The factors could not be rotated as only a single factor was extracted. The item loadings on this factor ranged from .848 to .645. The item loadings can be seen in Table 8.6.

Table 8.6 Item loadings on the single factor extracted for the Subjective Happiness Scale.

Component Matrix^a

| The Subjective Happiness Scale | | Component |
|--------------------------------|--|-----------|
| | | 1 |
| 1. | In general , I consider myself: Not a very happy person.....A very happy person | .848 |
| 2. | Compared to most of my peers , I consider myself: Less happyMore happy | .841 |
| 3. | Some people are generally very happy. They enjoy life regardless of what is going on, getting the most out of everything. To what extent does this characterisation describe you? Not at all.....A great deal | .786 |
| 4. | Some people are generally not very happy. Although they are not depressed, they never seem as happy as they might be. To what extent does this characterisation describe you? Not at allA great deal | .645 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

The authors of the Subjective Happiness Scale reported that analysis of the scale would produce a single-factor solution with all items loading onto the respective factor. The results from the current exploratory analysis support Lyubomirsky & Lepper’s theory within an Irish adolescent population. Accordingly, no further analysis was conducted. Consequently, the research proceeded using a one-factor solution for the Subjective Happiness Scale.

AG.10 Research questions for the Ryff Psychological Well-being Scale

- Does the alpha coefficient indicate scale reliability for an Irish secondary school population?
- What is the factor structure of the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-being Scale in an Irish Adolescent Secondary School population?
- Do the factors identified in the original study by The Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being (Long-Form [84-Items]) (Ryff, 1989), match the factors identified in this research?
- Are these factors and the overall scale reliable for an adolescent Irish secondary school sample?

AG.10.01 Data Analysis and findings for the Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale

Cronbach's alpha for the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-being Scale was calculated for the total sample, utilising both sub-data sets. An alpha of .879 was obtained for the Bronze sample, indicating the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-being Scale had an excellent reliability for the current Irish secondary school sample.

A total sample of 647 secondary school students were randomly split into 2 sub-data sets, ($n_1 = 319$ and $n_2 = 328$). The first group, that of $n = 319$ were used to explore the underlying structure of The Ryff Scale Psychological Well-Being by exploratory factor analysis.

AG.10.02 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) of the Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale

Factor analysis was conducted on the Ryff Well-Being Scale (84-Item) for the split adolescent sample for exploratory analysis ($n=319$) consisting of transition year secondary students, some of whom were Gaisce participants and some of whom acted as a control group. The cut-off point for factors was an eigenvalue of 1. Bartlett's test of Sphericity was significant ($p<.05$) suggesting that the data was factorable. As the validity of Bartlett's test is impacted by large samples, the appropriateness of the data was also assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy which is a measure of the total amount of variance explained by the items. A .6 score on this test is considered the cut-off point for acceptability with scores becoming increasingly adequate as they approach 1. The

KMO score for the split exploratory sample was .897, thus indicating the data was adequate for factor analysis.

Factor analysis was conducted using Principal Component Analysis (PCA). Nineteen factors emerged with an eigenvalue over one. This was confirmed by Scree plot (see Figure 8.8). As the scree plot indicated that there was a visible decline in eigenvalues following the sixth factor, it was decided to focus on the first six values extracted by the PCA only.

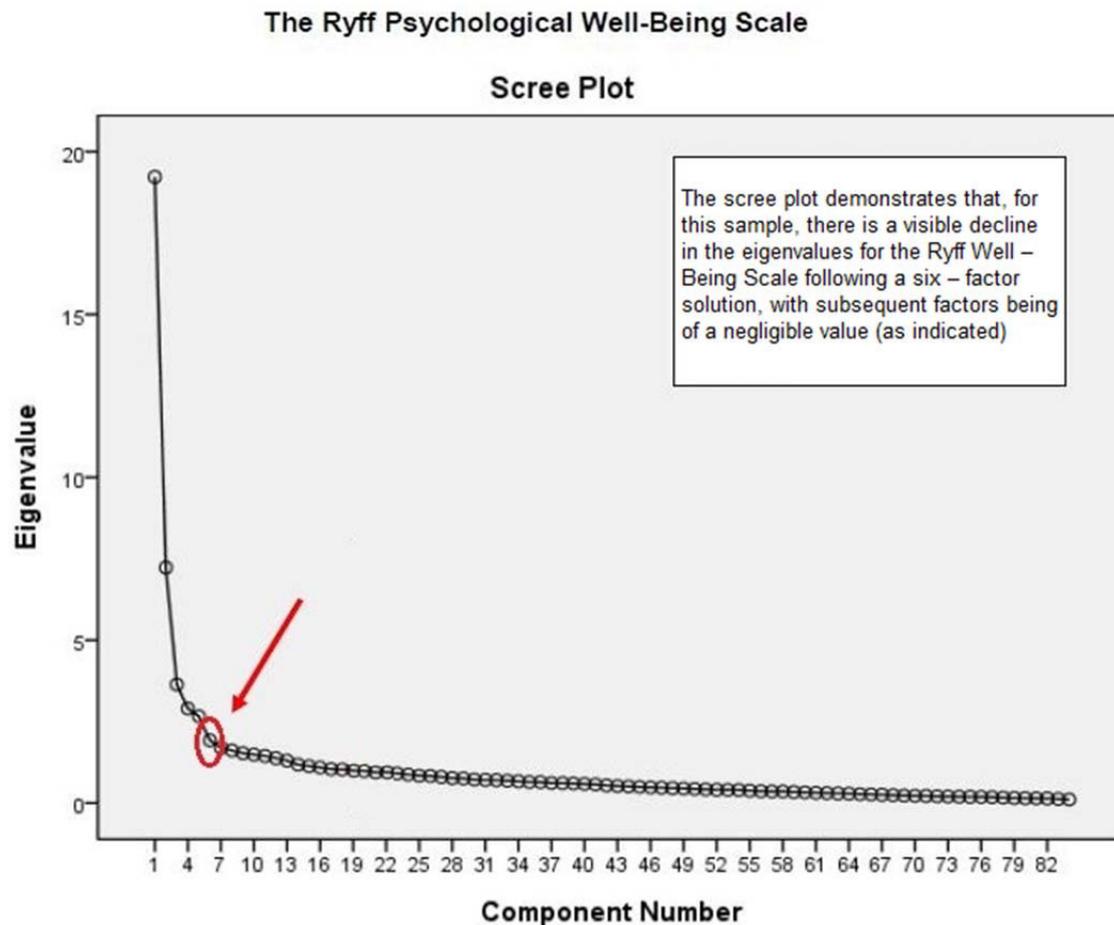


Figure 8.8 Scree plot illustrating factor loadings for the Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale

The model containing nineteen factors explains 64.99% of the variance in well-being scores. A rotation of the factors was attempted using varimax rotation which minimises variance within factors and maximises variance between factors. However, this rotation was unsuccessful as it failed to converge in 25 iterations (convergence=.001). Factor 1 had an eigenvalue of 19.22 and explained 22.84% of the variance observed. Factor 2 had an eigenvalue of 7.23 and explained a further 8.61% of the variance. Factor 3 had an eigenvalue of 3.64 and explained 4.33% of the variance. The eigenvalue of factor 4 was 2.9 and

explained 3.45% of the variance in scores. Factor 5 had an eigenvalue of 2.66 and explained 3.17% of the variance. Factor 6 had an eigenvalue of 1.92 and explained 2.29% of variance. The remaining twelve factors individually explained in the vicinity of 1% of the variance and eigenvalues ranged from 1.7 to 1.02. Item loadings revealed disparate loadings onto each of the factors, meaning no definite factor structure for each of the nineteen factors was identifiable (see Appendix AG).

It was suggested by Ryff author of the scale of psychological well-being that analysis of the scale would produce a six – Factor solution with appropriate items loading onto their respective factors. The results from the current exploratory analysis with Irish adolescent secondary students did not support Ryff's et al.'s hypothesis as nineteen factors were extracted by this exploratory factor analysis, each with an eigenvalue greater than 1. It is clear that the results obtained differ from the predicated structure of six-factor . Accordingly, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted.

AG.10.03 SEM Procedures for the Psychological Well-Being scale

For the purpose of the current study, the hypothesised conceptual model was specified and estimated using LISREL 8.8 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2006a).

AG.10.04 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) of the Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale

In accordance with the guidelines outlined by Hoyle and Panter (1995), the goodness of fit for each model was assessed using the chi-square test (the Satorra-Bentler scaled chi-square), along with the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) , Incremental Fit Index (IFI), and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) fit indices. The Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA) value with 90% confidence intervals is reported along with the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR).

The results from the EFA suggested a nineteen factor model for the Ryff Psychological scale. After reviewing the statistical output from the EFA on the Ryff scale it was clear that a nineteen factor model was not a conducive method to proceed. As good practice dictates that one should not proceed with CFA until an identifiable and proper structure is found with EFA (see Costello & Osbourne, 2005), attempts were made to force the psychological well-being scales into a six factor solution as: (a) a six factor model was suggested by the author; (b) the scree plot indicates a six factor model; and (c) factors one to six explained 44.69% of the

variance. However these attempts to restrict the structure proved unsuccessful, with many of the 84 items loading onto a single factor. Therefore, it would be contrary to standard convention to proceed to CFA to identify the most representative structure to the scales. It was decided at this point that a one factor solution - overall global psychological well-being - would be used, rather than the six sub-scales proposed by Ryff assessing six different aspects of psychological well-being, namely 'Autonomy', 'Environmental Mastery', 'Personal Growth', 'Positive Relations with Others', 'Purpose in Life' and 'Self-Acceptance'.

Research has shown significant discrepancy with the factor structure of the well-being scale. Kafka and Kozma (2001) state that the structure of the Ryff Psychological well-being scale "is limited to face validity". Hillson (1999) found that one factor contained accounted for self-acceptance, environmental mastery, and purpose in life subscales, Van Dierendonck (2004) also found high correlations among these subscales. Clarke, Marshall, Ryff and Wheaton (2001) have drawn attention to a high degree of correlation between four of Ryff's six factors that of Environment mastery, Personal Growth, Purpose in Life, and Self acceptance. They stated that such was the high correlation between these factors they proposed analysing these factors as a "super -ordinate factor". Spinger and Hauser (2006) proposed that given the extremely high factor correlations that of three factors of self-acceptance, purpose in life, and environmental mastery seem to reflect only a single factor. They also stated that their study adds to a growing body of evidence that Ryff Psychological Well-Being (RYWB) scale does not measure six distinct dimensions of psychological well-being. Spinger and Hauser (2006) propose that the RPWB definitely represents some aspects of positive mental health, they "strongly caution against analyses that treat the scale components as if they measured six distinct dimensions of psychological well-being". They suggest that a global score representing overall psychological well-being should be used. Finally Burns and Machin (2009) believe that the construct validation of RPWB factors will persist to be difficult in its current 84 item form and will "fail to adequately evaluate the nature of psychological well-being."

Appendix AH Item loadings on the factors extracted for the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well Being

Component Matrix^a

| Ryff Scale of Psychological Well Being | Component | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 48. For the most part, I am proud of who I am and the life I lead. | <u>.767</u> | .178 | .186 | .125 | .017 | .073 | -.015 | -.136 | -.102 | .007 | -.115 | -.074 | .035 | -.057 | .045 | -.075 | -.078 | -.001 | .004 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 77. I find it satisfying to think about what I have accomplished in life. | <u>.695</u> | .182 | .149 | .037 | .128 | .012 | -.017 | .036 | -.153 | .089 | -.074 | -.096 | .105 | -.027 | .010 | -.166 | .117 | .076 | -.114 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 83. In the final analysis, I'm not so sure that my life adds up to much. | <u>-.689</u> | .269 | .007 | .083 | -.051 | -.188 | -.049 | -.018 | -.010 | .037 | .192 | .079 | .141 | .035 | -.111 | -.007 | -.104 | .024 | .043 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 46. With time, I have gained a lot of insight about life that has made me a stronger, more capable person. | <u>.667</u> | .359 | -.137 | -.033 | -.064 | -.033 | .082 | -.104 | -.089 | .195 | -.006 | -.021 | -.049 | -.142 | -.072 | -.052 | -.145 | .020 | .135 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 42. In many ways, I feel disappointed about my achievements in life. | <u>-.666</u> | .300 | .004 | .130 | .015 | -.135 | .055 | .087 | .106 | -.053 | .134 | .093 | .002 | -.142 | .108 | .081 | -.187 | -.158 | .009 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 52. I have a sense that I have developed a lot as a person over time. | <u>.651</u> | .198 | .103 | .001 | .005 | .245 | .126 | -.080 | -.188 | .137 | .103 | -.039 | .156 | -.094 | -.048 | -.008 | .003 | .186 | .115 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 6. When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out. | <u>.642</u> | .111 | .352 | .084 | .073 | .016 | .010 | -.116 | -.027 | -.156 | -.169 | -.004 | -.008 | -.072 | .040 | -.124 | .035 | .077 | .013 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 66. Many days I wake up feeling discouraged about how I have lived my life. | <u>-.640</u> | .331 | .048 | -.031 | -.055 | -.094 | -.089 | .103 | -.019 | .138 | .139 | .169 | .025 | -.064 | -.006 | .068 | .048 | .167 | -.149 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 53. I am an active person in carrying out the plans I set for myself. | <u>.628</u> | .255 | -.033 | -.028 | .311 | .010 | .007 | .047 | -.142 | .217 | .188 | .006 | .072 | -.083 | -.021 | -.016 | .007 | .097 | -.124 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 12. In general, I feel confident and positive about myself. | .627 | -.020 | .224 | .237 | .015 | -.193 | .126 | -.018 | -.216 | -.155 | -.046 | .131 | -.108 | .054 | -.101 | .114 | .040 | -.021 | .060 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 81. I have been able to build a home and a lifestyle for myself that is much to my liking. | .617 | .179 | .156 | .097 | .072 | -.016 | -.132 | -.062 | .087 | .173 | -.137 | .144 | .164 | .111 | -.154 | .084 | -.092 | -.144 | .035 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 30. I like most aspects of my personality. | .606 | .184 | .133 | .214 | -.110 | -.112 | .139 | -.137 | -.096 | -.133 | .001 | -.046 | .257 | .078 | -.069 | -.006 | -.004 | -.042 | -.031 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 69. My efforts to find the kinds of activities and relationships that I need have been quite successful. | .601 | .106 | .360 | -.031 | -.001 | .105 | -.054 | .141 | .072 | -.014 | .095 | .081 | -.013 | .138 | .061 | .205 | .066 | -.026 | .030 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 76. I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago. | -.599 | .253 | .299 | .173 | .050 | -.157 | -.160 | .026 | -.139 | .002 | .116 | .104 | .086 | -.103 | .013 | -.100 | -.012 | -.033 | .018 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 34. When I think about it, I haven't really improved much as a person over the years. | -.597 | .160 | .126 | .150 | .055 | -.106 | .007 | -.099 | .225 | .074 | -.128 | .157 | -.169 | -.115 | .131 | -.022 | .041 | -.116 | .057 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 5. I feel good when I think of what I've done in the past and what I hope to do in the future. | <u>.596</u> | .273 | .017 | .004 | .081 | -.294 | .051 | -.059 | -.091 | -.076 | -.129 | -.065 | .014 | -.086 | .045 | -.120 | .209 | .033 | -.207 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 37. I feel like I get a lot out of my friendships. | <u>.594</u> | .142 | .224 | -.155 | -.286 | .159 | -.009 | -.127 | .209 | -.071 | .146 | .000 | .118 | -.149 | .068 | -.161 | .135 | .084 | .084 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 18. I feel like many of the people I know have gotten more out of life than I have. | <u>-.588</u> | .326 | -.079 | -.033 | -.175 | .012 | .127 | -.064 | .094 | .106 | -.055 | .029 | .104 | -.061 | .024 | -.039 | .089 | .070 | .050 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 75. I have difficulty arranging my life in a way that is satisfying to me. | <u>-.584</u> | .428 | .047 | -.026 | -.162 | -.047 | -.177 | -.087 | -.171 | .011 | .133 | .045 | -.004 | -.023 | .019 | .090 | -.143 | .188 | .038 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 84. Everyone has their weaknesses, but I seem to have more than my share. | <u>-.581</u> | .337 | -.015 | -.003 | -.022 | -.099 | -.060 | .061 | -.024 | .136 | .187 | -.148 | .063 | .056 | -.018 | -.216 | -.101 | .153 | .047 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 71. My aims in life have been more a source of satisfaction than frustration to me. | <u>.575</u> | .282 | .084 | .006 | .063 | .183 | -.147 | .020 | -.082 | .110 | -.076 | .151 | -.183 | -.057 | -.069 | -.078 | -.131 | -.207 | .011 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 23. I have a sense of direction and purpose in life. | <u>.569</u> | .259 | -.053 | .003 | .286 | .005 | -.016 | .243 | -.026 | -.115 | -.055 | -.158 | -.063 | .071 | .141 | -.034 | -.040 | .137 | .085 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 61. I often feel as if I'm on the outside looking in when it comes to friendships. | <u>-.565</u> | .377 | -.299 | .128 | .265 | .014 | -.025 | .025 | -.002 | .060 | -.174 | -.017 | -.035 | .016 | -.026 | .008 | .003 | .036 | -.030 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 33. If I were unhappy with my living situation, I would take effective steps to change it. | <u>.565</u> | .221 | .080 | .066 | .088 | -.145 | .033 | -.051 | .072 | .048 | -.128 | .057 | .050 | -.020 | .030 | -.152 | -.170 | -.033 | .254 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 64. For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth. | <u>.541</u> | .358 | -.157 | -.137 | -.046 | .104 | .011 | -.125 | -.031 | .270 | .066 | -.166 | -.012 | -.203 | -.057 | .144 | -.124 | .040 | .010 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 78. When I compare myself to friends and acquaintances, it makes me feel good about who I am. | <u>.535</u> | .078 | .218 | .238 | .167 | -.092 | -.070 | .062 | -.155 | .061 | .040 | -.098 | .256 | .077 | -.035 | .042 | .005 | -.147 | -.049 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 67. I know that I can trust my friends, and they know they can trust me. | <u>.530</u> | .129 | .298 | -.151 | -.248 | -.008 | -.193 | .155 | .164 | -.009 | .126 | .206 | .084 | .142 | .052 | .065 | -.044 | -.104 | .006 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 31. I don't have many people who want to listen when I need to talk. | <u>-.528</u> | .347 | -.236 | .256 | .131 | .078 | .097 | -.090 | .052 | .113 | -.055 | .087 | -.070 | .038 | .048 | -.079 | -.073 | .052 | .050 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 47. I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality. | <u>.519</u> | .390 | -.236 | -.226 | .098 | .174 | -.038 | -.102 | -.104 | .131 | -.024 | .045 | -.075 | -.158 | .042 | -.037 | -.014 | -.060 | .075 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 72. The past had its ups and downs, but in general, I wouldn't want to change it. | <u>.518</u> | .188 | .261 | .100 | -.031 | .201 | -.023 | -.194 | .052 | .028 | -.086 | .153 | -.261 | -.016 | -.046 | -.077 | -.067 | -.018 | -.282 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 70. I enjoy seeing how my views have changed and matured over the years. | .514 | .412 | -.111 | -.035 | -.066 | .175 | .013 | .105 | -.095 | .111 | .030 | .234 | -.054 | .132 | -.027 | .090 | -.203 | -.173 | .038 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 43. It seems to me that most other people have more friends than I do. | -.510 | .470 | -.271 | .182 | .146 | -.027 | .122 | .102 | .010 | .007 | -.076 | .077 | -.031 | -.115 | .020 | .049 | -.148 | -.119 | -.048 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 50. I have confidence in my opinions, even if they are contrary to the general consensus. | .509 | .218 | -.084 | .301 | -.230 | .137 | .159 | .154 | -.067 | -.136 | .147 | .085 | .022 | -.269 | -.071 | -.013 | .042 | .004 | -.014 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 13. I often feel lonely because I have few close friends with whom to share my concerns. | -.508 | .372 | -.308 | .233 | .054 | .122 | .197 | .051 | -.043 | .172 | -.044 | .110 | -.068 | .230 | -.033 | .025 | .047 | -.052 | .110 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 49. People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others. | .506 | .368 | -.022 | -.121 | -.045 | -.110 | -.196 | .040 | .230 | .157 | -.081 | .018 | -.105 | .098 | -.035 | -.056 | .122 | -.062 | -.080 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 35. I don't have a good sense of what it is I'm trying to accomplish in life. | <u>-.500</u> | .205 | .256 | .137 | -.168 | -.093 | .166 | -.063 | .139 | -.079 | -.072 | .126 | .093 | -.087 | -.349 | -.141 | -.067 | .103 | -.065 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 60. My attitude about myself is probably not as positive as most people feel about themselves. | <u>-.484</u> | .406 | -.168 | -.073 | .000 | .082 | -.152 | .139 | .147 | .037 | .026 | -.175 | -.017 | .139 | .112 | -.182 | -.012 | .079 | -.209 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 36. I made some mistakes in the past, but I feel that all in all everything has worked out for the best. | <u>.483</u> | .249 | .244 | .015 | .022 | .182 | .071 | -.260 | .042 | -.100 | .118 | .183 | .127 | .044 | .036 | -.072 | -.080 | .004 | -.177 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 21. I am quite good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily life. | <u>.478</u> | .280 | .015 | .060 | .450 | -.149 | .165 | .154 | -.035 | -.269 | .032 | -.125 | -.209 | -.069 | -.002 | .057 | -.030 | -.005 | -.037 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 26. Being happy with myself is more important to me than having others approve of me. | <u>.467</u> | .254 | -.045 | .310 | -.165 | -.059 | -.061 | -.156 | -.011 | -.156 | .015 | -.045 | .080 | .254 | -.144 | .120 | -.082 | -.036 | .050 |

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|---|--------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 80. I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important. | .462 | .162 | -.072 | .341 | -.075 | .113 | -.206 | -.014 | .150 | .057 | -.093 | .039 | .162 | -.030 | .127 | .182 | -.051 | .043 | .072 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 79. My friends and I sympathize with each other's problems. | .462 | .272 | .141 | -.194 | -.312 | -.014 | -.054 | .230 | .189 | .205 | .086 | .137 | -.003 | -.083 | .121 | -.131 | .076 | -.029 | .106 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 54. I envy many people for the lives they lead. | -.461 | .401 | .068 | -.109 | -.104 | .084 | .052 | .076 | .150 | -.076 | .159 | .054 | -.124 | -.194 | -.022 | .113 | -.053 | .101 | .138 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 28. I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world. | .458 | .415 | -.363 | -.085 | -.137 | -.159 | .154 | -.237 | -.001 | -.123 | -.010 | .040 | .035 | -.010 | .113 | .042 | .115 | -.065 | -.121 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 55. I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others. | -.441 | .268 | -.215 | .267 | .203 | -.024 | .002 | -.271 | -.073 | -.018 | .095 | -.043 | .031 | -.150 | -.085 | -.093 | .175 | -.085 | -.063 |

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|--|---------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 63. I get frustrated when trying to plan my daily activities because I never accomplish the things I set out to do. | <u>-.433</u> | .329 | .243 | -.019 | -.133 | -.064 | -.326 | -.190 | -.030 | -.175 | .049 | .086 | -.057 | .109 | .040 | -.052 | .092 | -.179 | .110 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 44. It is more important to me to "fit in" with others than to stand alone on my principles. | <u>-.432</u> | .251 | .396 | -.194 | .204 | -.106 | .262 | .006 | .001 | -.090 | .010 | -.125 | .079 | -.131 | -.082 | -.047 | -.077 | -.123 | .007 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 16. I am the kind of person who likes to give new things a try. | <u>.432</u> | .276 | -.133 | -.155 | -.102 | -.347 | -.018 | -.104 | -.170 | -.086 | .323 | .129 | -.137 | .022 | .083 | .047 | .161 | .021 | -.086 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 9. The demands of everyday life often get me down. | <u>-.426</u> | .377 | -.073 | -.131 | -.257 | .190 | -.056 | .169 | -.329 | -.031 | -.161 | -.073 | .079 | .055 | .019 | .000 | .105 | -.241 | .020 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 41. I used to set goals for myself, but that now seems like a waste of time. | <u>-.424</u> | .247 | .362 | .209 | .036 | -.224 | .168 | .103 | .085 | -.037 | .046 | .002 | .088 | .014 | .233 | -.105 | -.080 | -.070 | -.209 |

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|---|---------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 56. It's difficult for me to voice my own opinions on controversial matters. | <u>-.416</u> | .339 | .130 | -.143 | .336 | -.028 | -.172 | -.326 | -.018 | .146 | .024 | -.131 | -.047 | .131 | .156 | .050 | .111 | -.022 | .050 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 59. Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them. | <u>.416</u> | .259 | -.170 | .006 | .280 | .169 | -.206 | .133 | -.045 | -.152 | -.091 | -.022 | .131 | .237 | .190 | -.052 | -.168 | .035 | -.162 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 19. I enjoy personal and mutual conversations with family members or friends. | <u>.415</u> | .308 | .046 | -.216 | -.120 | -.218 | .148 | .026 | .146 | -.079 | .072 | -.165 | .042 | .174 | -.182 | .097 | .079 | .050 | .036 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 51. I am good at juggling my time so that I can fit everything in that needs to be done. | <u>.413</u> | .271 | -.015 | .012 | .308 | .043 | .257 | .139 | .021 | .187 | .308 | .140 | -.037 | .057 | .035 | .210 | .178 | .068 | -.038 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 57. My daily life is busy, but I derive a sense of satisfaction from keeping up with everything. | <u>.408</u> | .268 | -.109 | -.098 | .300 | .131 | -.203 | .057 | .212 | .139 | -.066 | .146 | .258 | -.066 | -.136 | .014 | .118 | .166 | -.076 |

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|--|---------------------|------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 7. Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me. | <u>-.406</u> | .371 | -.228 | .199 | .117 | -.030 | .057 | .015 | -.213 | .013 | -.034 | .080 | .031 | .025 | -.261 | -.094 | .194 | -.142 | -.038 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 15. I do not fit very well with the people and the community around me. | <u>-.401</u> | .263 | -.264 | .355 | -.047 | .136 | -.026 | -.013 | .050 | .090 | -.186 | .213 | .073 | .163 | -.104 | -.001 | .161 | .111 | .104 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 8. I am not afraid to voice my opinions, even when they are in opposition to the opinions of most people. | <u>.366</u> | .119 | -.089 | .312 | -.351 | .231 | .179 | .162 | -.094 | -.172 | .156 | .136 | -.210 | .030 | .019 | -.140 | .063 | .028 | -.235 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 17. I tend to focus on the present, because the future nearly always brings me problems. | <u>-.353</u> | .204 | .306 | .169 | -.172 | -.127 | .126 | -.136 | -.023 | .255 | -.139 | -.277 | -.105 | .006 | .157 | .196 | -.078 | -.003 | -.148 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 4. I am not interested in activities that will expand my horizons. | <u>-.335</u> | .073 | .321 | .228 | .008 | .319 | .236 | .081 | .035 | .138 | .066 | -.077 | .017 | -.164 | .170 | .005 | .230 | -.137 | .123 |

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|--|---------------------|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 29. My daily activities often seem trivial and unimportant to me. | <u>-.317</u> | .136 | .151 | .302 | -.307 | -.101 | -.007 | .128 | -.261 | -.124 | -.121 | .132 | .026 | .172 | .100 | .000 | -.033 | .163 | .136 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 24. Given the opportunity, there are many things about myself that I would change. | -.375 | <u>.467</u> | -.108 | -.114 | -.153 | .223 | .086 | .229 | .100 | -.096 | .180 | -.132 | -.018 | .179 | -.090 | -.136 | -.085 | -.113 | -.128 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 25. It is important to me to be a good listener when close friends talk to me about their problems. | .343 | <u>.459</u> | -.144 | -.198 | -.217 | -.150 | .000 | .052 | .191 | -.100 | .041 | -.212 | .003 | .032 | -.154 | -.047 | -.082 | -.144 | .082 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 27. I often feel overwhelmed by my responsibilities. | -.179 | <u>.445</u> | .069 | -.206 | -.307 | .151 | -.055 | .151 | -.328 | .029 | -.197 | -.140 | .214 | -.060 | .210 | .071 | .080 | -.019 | -.068 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 74. I am concerned about how other people evaluate the choices I have made in my life. | -.436 | <u>.444</u> | .142 | -.212 | -.026 | .078 | .014 | -.139 | -.107 | -.193 | .164 | .084 | .046 | .102 | -.061 | .089 | -.057 | .169 | -.003 |

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|---|-------|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 40. In my view, people of every age are able to continue growing and developing. | .354 | <u>.424</u> | -.252 | .060 | -.153 | -.226 | .211 | -.186 | .223 | .062 | -.060 | -.148 | -.017 | .057 | .027 | -.023 | .010 | -.086 | .066 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 10. In general, I feel that I continue to learn more about myself as time goes by. | .407 | <u>.421</u> | -.101 | -.091 | -.099 | -.076 | -.020 | -.161 | -.178 | -.077 | .081 | -.065 | -.204 | -.092 | .029 | -.034 | -.092 | -.037 | .278 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 45. I find it stressful that I can't keep up with all of the things I have to do each day. | -.375 | <u>.406</u> | .185 | -.065 | -.278 | -.036 | -.261 | .073 | -.050 | -.141 | -.299 | -.085 | .078 | -.252 | .024 | .096 | .078 | .004 | -.007 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 1. Most people see me as loving and affectionate. | .322 | <u>.406</u> | .066 | -.113 | -.088 | -.342 | -.086 | .224 | .030 | .187 | -.229 | -.059 | -.255 | .003 | -.008 | -.094 | -.031 | .032 | -.075 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 2. Sometimes I change the way I act or think to be more like those around me. | -.305 | <u>.340</u> | .161 | -.313 | .128 | .091 | .303 | .068 | -.075 | -.075 | -.287 | .083 | .170 | -.010 | -.047 | .321 | .134 | -.068 | .014 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 32. I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions. | -.266 | <u>.337</u> | .213 | -.171 | .258 | .073 | .110 | -.116 | .049 | -.078 | -.124 | .192 | .050 | .064 | .141 | -.283 | -.156 | .016 | -.060 |

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|---|-------|--------------------|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 62. I often change my mind about decisions if my friends or family disagree. | -.217 | <u>.330</u> | .309 | -.252 | .178 | .196 | -.114 | -.185 | .095 | -.118 | .024 | .079 | -.323 | .182 | -.107 | .063 | .307 | -.041 | .046 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 22. I don't want to try new ways of doing things - my life is fine the way it is. | -.184 | -.004 | <u>.528</u> | .257 | .094 | .363 | .094 | .103 | .104 | .002 | .072 | -.197 | -.072 | -.036 | -.114 | -.028 | -.150 | -.022 | .032 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 11. I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future. | -.028 | -.032 | <u>.442</u> | .233 | -.270 | -.059 | .301 | -.162 | .130 | .373 | -.049 | -.068 | -.060 | .230 | .151 | .100 | .066 | .052 | -.069 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 82. There is truth to the saying that you can't teach an old dog new tricks. | -.221 | .142 | <u>.429</u> | -.034 | .157 | -.081 | -.077 | .122 | -.223 | .215 | .148 | -.261 | -.079 | .172 | -.292 | .057 | -.093 | .055 | .020 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 58. I do not enjoy being in new situations that require me to change my old familiar ways of doing things. | -.255 | .230 | <u>.278</u> | .204 | .123 | .242 | -.170 | -.008 | .077 | -.149 | -.108 | -.231 | -.136 | -.019 | -.194 | -.151 | .162 | .027 | .150 |

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|--|---------------------|------|-------|---------------------|--------------------|-------|---------------------|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 20. I tend to worry about what other people think of me. | <u>-.352</u> | .430 | .017 | <u>-.467</u> | .021 | .118 | .233 | .082 | .095 | -.149 | -.109 | -.026 | .046 | .041 | -.020 | .044 | .015 | .220 | .007 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 14. My decisions are not usually influenced by what everyone else is doing. | .332 | .112 | -.178 | <u>.410</u> | -.158 | .070 | -.065 | .090 | -.082 | .032 | .172 | -.247 | -.125 | .126 | .177 | -.147 | .187 | .118 | .172 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 39. I generally do a good job of taking care of my personal finances and affairs. | .299 | .236 | -.060 | .171 | <u>.337</u> | -.071 | .052 | .248 | .255 | -.207 | .145 | -.098 | .159 | -.007 | .181 | .071 | .078 | -.246 | .176 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 65. I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life. | <u>-.337</u> | .114 | .312 | .164 | .227 | -.245 | <u>-.337</u> | .139 | -.094 | .095 | .187 | .153 | .006 | -.197 | .036 | .054 | .112 | -.034 | .002 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 73. I find it difficult to really open up when I talk with others. | -.284 | .300 | -.107 | .186 | .132 | .164 | -.137 | <u>-.384</u> | .104 | -.218 | .149 | -.133 | .124 | .021 | .227 | .169 | -.120 | .126 | .020 |

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|--|------|------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 38. People rarely talk me into doing things I don't want to do. | .268 | .157 | -.103 | .307 | -.071 | -.126 | -.134 | .087 | .312 | .012 | -.013 | -.097 | .242 | -.058 | -.204 | .006 | .125 | .090 | -.033 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 68. I am not the kind of person who gives in to social pressures to think or act in certain ways. | .225 | .270 | -.094 | .342 | -.113 | .083 | -.226 | .061 | .151 | -.157 | -.105 | -.136 | -.279 | -.194 | -.094 | .377 | -.079 | .105 | -.240 |
| WELL BEING SCALE The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your...- 3. In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live. | .372 | .149 | .157 | .090 | .180 | -.213 | .114 | .204 | .014 | -.109 | -.241 | .234 | -.132 | .037 | .095 | -.008 | -.021 | .376 | .233 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 19 components extracted.

Results of Gaisce Bronze Award Quantitative Study

Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the results of the quantitative component of the study.

Results are organised in sections as indicated below:

Does participation in Gaisce – The President’s Bronze Award increase individuals levels of self esteem, self efficacy, happiness, hope and well being for participants who scored within the lowest quartile on the Children’s Hope Scale, the General Self-Efficacy Scale, Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale, the Subjective Happiness Scale, and the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being

Demographics for the Bronze Award Quantitative Study

Age, Gender and Number of Participants involved in the Bronze Award Study

In total, 283 (N=283) participants completed online questionnaires at pre Gaisce participation (Time 1) and post Gaisce participation (Time 2) (see Table 1). The majority (58%) of these participants were female, n = 164. The mean age of all participants was 15.88 years.

Table 1 Demographic statistics for the respondents of pre and post Gaisce Bronze Study

| Participants | Total | Mean Age | SD | Male | % | Mean Age | SD | Female | % | Mean Age | SD |
|----------------|-------|----------|------|------|------|----------|------|--------|------|----------|------|
| <i>All</i> | 283 | 15.88 | 0.66 | 119 | 42 | 15.94 | 0.57 | 164 | 58 | 15.85 | 0.67 |
| <i>Gaisce</i> | 152 | 15.7 | 0.58 | 57 | 37.5 | 15.74 | 0.48 | 95 | 62.5 | 15.67 | 0.61 |
| <i>Control</i> | 131 | 16.09 | 0.71 | 62 | 47.3 | 16.15 | 0.67 | 69 | 52.7 | 16.04 | 0.74 |

County of Residence

Gaisce Bronze participants from 18 counties took part in the research. Dublin was represented by 31.6 % of the Gaisce Bronze Participants (Figure 1). Kerry emerged as the county with the second largest number of Gaisce Bronze respondents with the remaining counties all falling below 10%.

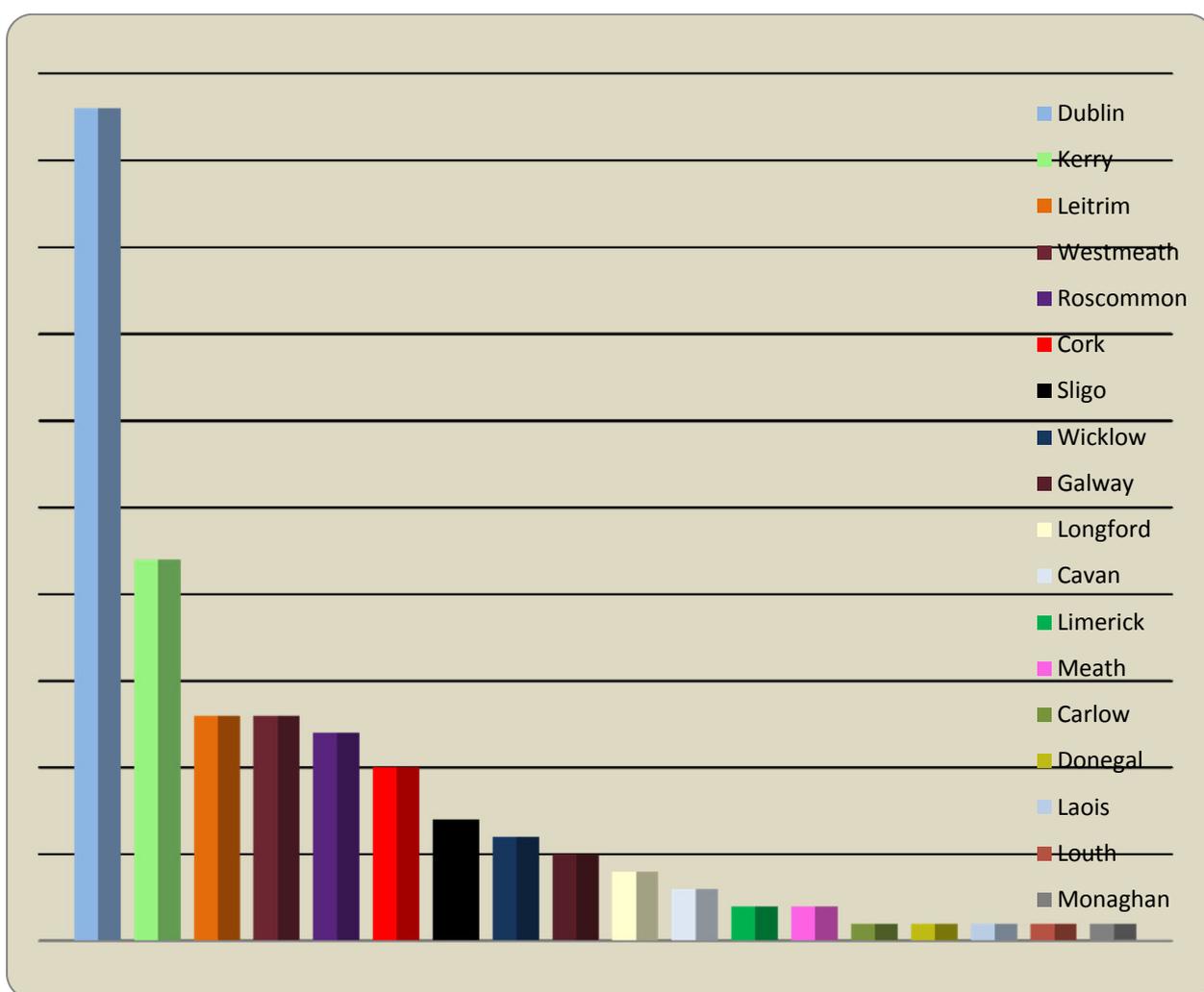


Figure 1 County of residence for the Gaisce Bronze Participants

The largest representation of participants for the Gaisce Bronze Award Control Group also lived in Dublin, however, a greater percentage (42.7 %) lived there (Figure). The second most represented county was Westmeath which accounted for 27% of the Control Group’s county of residence. In total the Control Group consisted of participants from 8 counties.

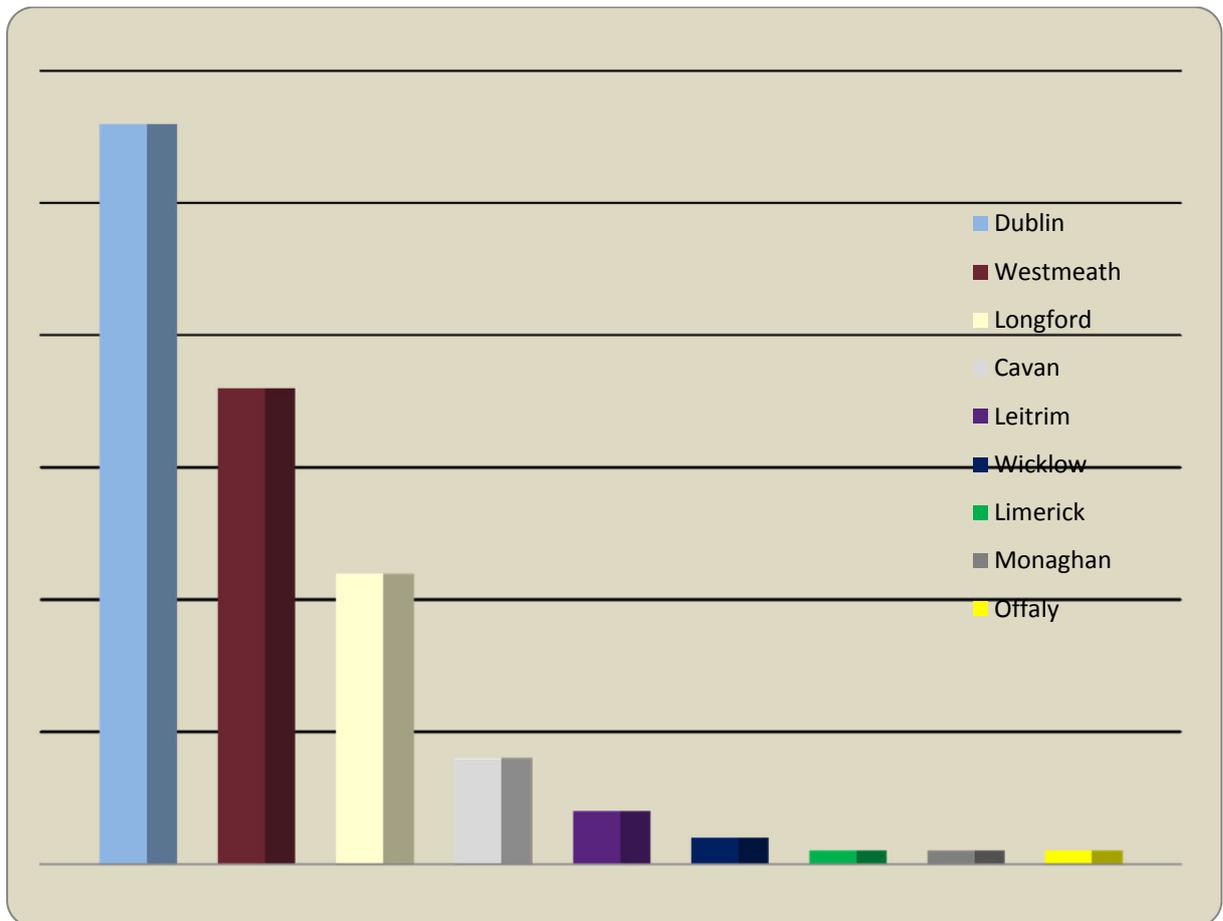


Figure 2 County of residence for Control Group Participants

Location of Residence

Eighty (53 %) of the Gaisce Bronze Participants indicated that they lived in the countryside, while 25% (n = 38) of the respondents stated that they lived in a city (see Figure 3) The remaining 34 (n=34) participants lived in a town.

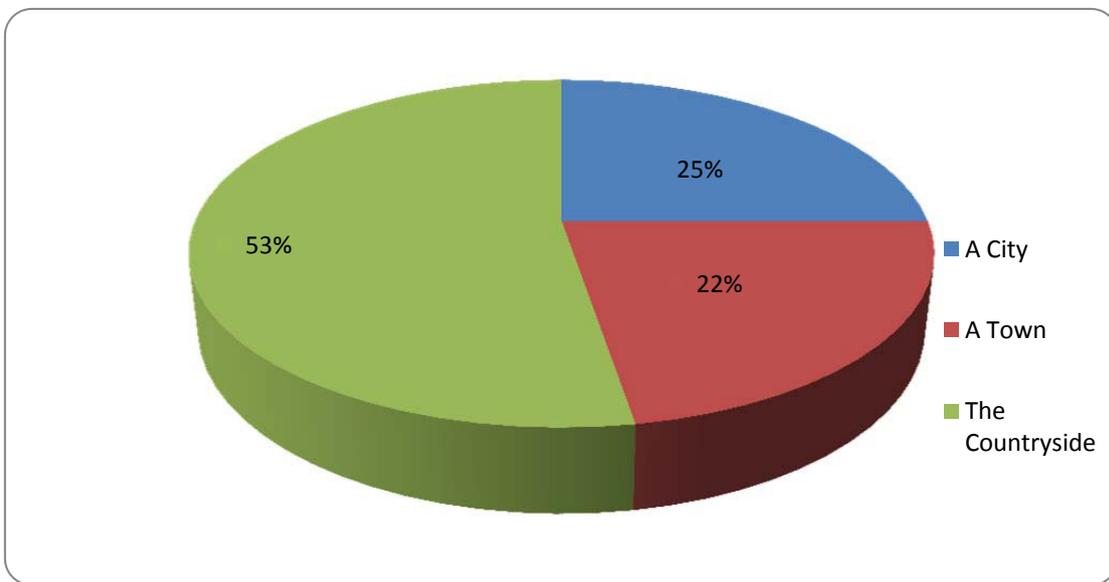


Figure 3 Area where Gaisce Bronze Participants lived

While the Gaisce Control group did not have as many participants living in the countryside, 44.3 % (n= 58) of the Control respondents indicated that they lived in a rural area (Figure 4). Forty three of the relevant group reported living in a city (32.8%).

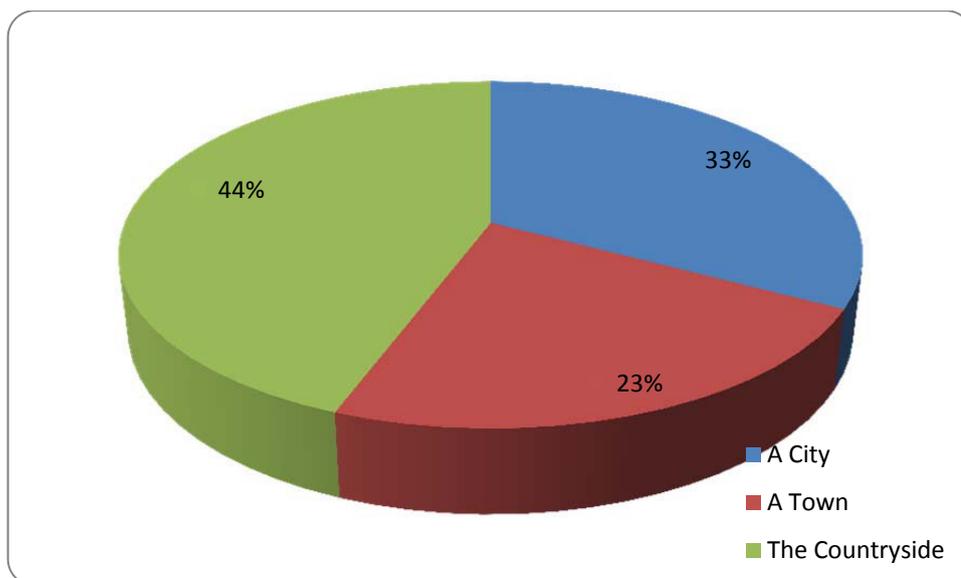


Figure 4 Area where the Gaisce Bronze Control Participants lived

Responses to the question : What is your parents' current occupation?

Thirty three, (21.7%) of the Gaisce Bronze Participants described their parents' occupations as 'other', while 12.5 % indicated that their parents worked in commerce, insurance or finance (Table 2) The third most common occupation amongst the Bronze Participants parents was in the area of the health.

Table 2 The Parental Occupations of All the Gaisce Bronze Participants

| Occupation | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Other | 33 | 21.7 |
| Commerce, Insurance & Finance | 19 | 12.5 |
| Health | 14 | 9.2 |
| Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing | 13 | 8.6 |
| Education | 13 | 8.6 |
| Building and Construction | 13 | 8.6 |
| Service Industry | 12 | 7.9 |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---|-----|
| Manufacturing Industry | 8 | 5.3 |
| Transport, Communication & Storage | 5 | 3.3 |
| Public Administration | 4 | 2.6 |
| Clerical / Administration | 3 | 2 |
| Defence | 3 | 2 |
| Unemployed at Present | 3 | 2 |
| Retired | 3 | 2 |
| Studying at Present | 3 | 2 |
| Electricity, Gas & Water supply | 2 | 1.3 |
| Legal | 1 | 0.7 |

Twenty five (19.1%) of the Control Group described their parents' occupation as 'other' (Table 3). The second and third largest category of parental employment (14.5 % and 13.7 %) was in the commerce, insurance / finance and construction respectively. The six most frequently cited parental occupations for the Bronze Control Group were also the six most frequently cited occupations for the Gaise Bronze Participant Group.

Table 3 The Parental Occupations of all the Bronze Award Control group

| Occupation | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Other | 25 | 19.1 |
| Commerce, Insurance & Finance | 19 | 14.5 |
| Building and Construction | 18 | 13.7 |
| Health | 12 | 9.2 |
| Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing | 8 | 6.1 |
| Education | 8 | 6.1 |
| Manufacturing Industry | 8 | 6.1 |
| Public Administration | 7 | 5.3 |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---|-----|
| Transport, Communication & Storage | 6 | 4.6 |
| Service Industry | 5 | 3.8 |
| Unemployed at Present | 5 | 3.8 |
| Clerical / Administration | 2 | 1.5 |
| Electricity, Gas & Water supply | 2 | 1.5 |
| Defence | 2 | 1.5 |
| Retired | 2 | 1.5 |
| Mining, Quarrying, Turf | 1 | 0.8 |
| Legal | 1 | 0.8 |

Results of the Gaisce Bronze Participants' scores on the Children's Hope Scale

This section presents the results of the following question:

- Does participation in Gaisce – The President's Bronze Award improve an individual's level of hope?

This section describes and compares the scores of Gaisce Bronze Award Participants with a Control Group on the Children's Hope Scale. A two by two (2x2) ANOVA was used to compare the scores obtained by the respective groups (Table 4)

Table 4 2X2 ANOVA: Gaisce Bronze Award Participant' scores on Children's Hope Scale

| Variable | Bronze Gaisce (N= 152) | | Control (N = 131) | | ANOVA group | ANOVA | | Interpretation |
|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------|--------------|--|
| | time 1 (n = 152) | time 2 (n = 152) | time 1 (n = 131) | time 2 (n = 131) | | time | group X time | |
| Hope | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 25.05 | 26.28 | 26.37 | 25.81 | 0.55 | 0.66 | 4.71 | No intervention related change |
| Standard deviation | 6.10 | 5.92 | 6.02 | 5.82 | | | | |
| Hope Agency | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 13.00 | 13.41 | 13.57 | 13.2 | 0.50 | 0.08 | 2.64 | No intervention related change |
| Standard deviation | 3.30 | 3.17 | 3.21 | 3.03 | | | | |
| Hope Pathways | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 12.05 | 12.87 | 12.80 | 12.53 | 0.47 | 1.53 | 6.14* | Significant difference between groups at Time 1 Significant increase for Gaisce Group over time |
| Standard deviation | 3.2 | 3.04 | 3.2 | 3.13 | | | | |

Note: F Values are from 2 x 2 group (Gaisce, Control) x time (time 1, time 2) ANOVAs. *p < .05; **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Scores on the Children's Hope Scale

The mean scores for the Gaisce Bronze Participants demonstrated increases over time in the Total Hope, Hope Agency and Hope Pathways scores. In contrast, the Control group exhibited a decrease in time on each of the three subscales (Table 4). While the Control group's scores on all three subscales were higher at time 1, the Bronze participants exhibited higher scores on each subtest at Time 2.

Total Hope

While a significant interaction effect was evident in the overall Hope scores, $F(1, 281) = .47$, $p = .03$ (Figure 5) there were no significant effects in the tests of simple effects (Table 5)

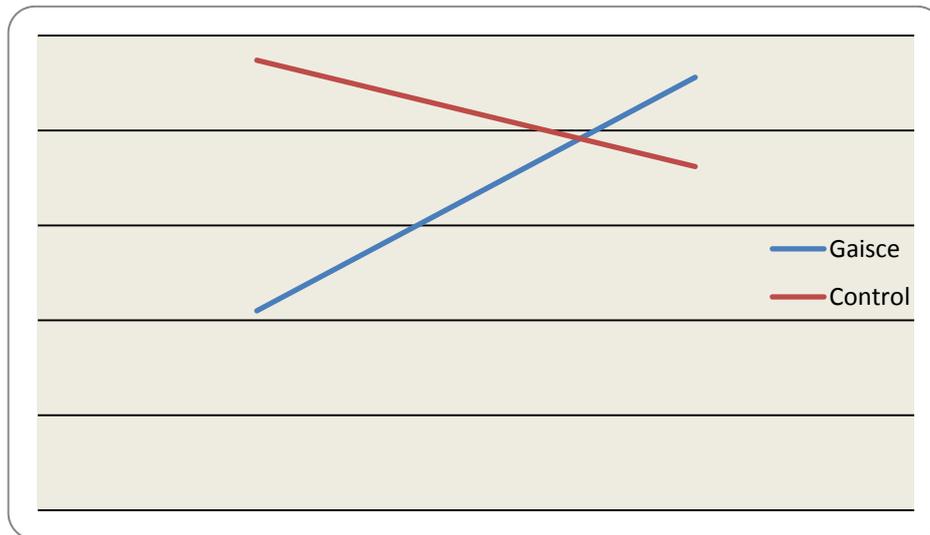


Figure 5 Estimated marginal means for Gaisce Bronze Participants and Control in the overall Hope Scale

Table 5 ANOVA for All Gaisce Participation / Time and overall Hope Score (Including Tests of Simple Effects)

| <i>Source</i> | <i>SS</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>MS</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>Sig.</i> | <i>Fcv</i> |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-------------|------------|
| <i>Group</i> | 25.67 | 1 | 25.67 | 0.55 | 0.46 | - |
| Group at Time 1 | 124.07 | 1 | 124.07 | 5.12 | - | 5.58 |
| Group at Time 2 | 15.79 | 1 | 15.79 | 0.65 | - | 5.58 |
| <i>Time</i> | 15.89 | 1 | 15.89 | 0.66 | 0.42 | - |
| Gaisce Participant | 116.26 | 1 | 116.26 | 4.80 | - | 5.58 |
| Control | 20.90 | 1 | 20.90 | 0.86 | - | 5.58 |
| Time X Group | 114.20 | 1 | 114.20 | 4.71 | 0.03 | - |

There was no significant main effect for Group on the Total Hope Scale , $F(1, 281) = 0.55$, $p = .46$, and no significant main effect for Time, $F(1, 281) = .66$, $p = .42$.

Hope Agency Subscale

No significant interaction effect between Time and Group emerged for the Hope Agency subscale, $F(1, 281) = 2.64$, $p = .106$.

There were no significant main effects present for either Group, $F(1, 281) = .50$, $p = .48$, or Time $F(1, 281) = .08$, $p = .78$.

Hope Pathways Subscale

A significant interaction effect occurred between Time and Group, $F(1, 281) = 4.71$, $p = .031$, on the Hope Pathways Score. This emerged as a small effect size, $\eta^2 = .016$ (Figure 6).

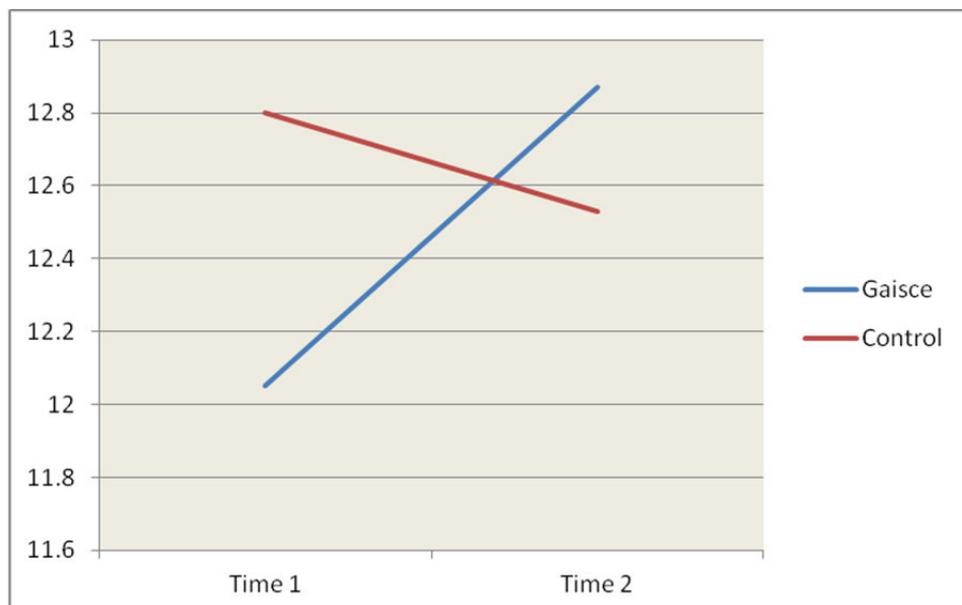


Figure 6 Estimated marginal means for Gaisce Bronze Participants and Control in the Hope – Pathways subscale

A test of simple effects indicate a significant difference between the groups at Time 1 whilst a significant change occurred for the Bronze Participants over time (Table 6)

Table 6 ANOVA for Gaisce Bronze Participation / Time and Hope Pathways (Including Tests of Simple Effects)

| <i>Source</i> | <i>SS</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>MS</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>Sig.</i> | <i>F_{cv}</i> |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Group</i> | 6.023 | 1 | 6.023 | .468 | .494 | - |
| Group at Time 1 | 40.16 | 1 | 40.16 | 5.82 | - | 5.58 |
| Group at Time 2 | 8.22 | 1 | 8.22 | 1.19 | - | 5.58 |
| <i>Time</i> | 10.548 | 1 | 10.548 | 1.528 | .217 | - |
| Gaisce Participant | 51.40 | 1 | 51.40 | 7.45 | - | 5.58 |
| Control | 4.95 | 1 | 4.95 | 0.717 | - | 5.58 |
| Time X Group | 42.350 | 1 | 42.350 | 6.137 | .014 | - |
| Error | 1939.16 | 281 | 6.901 | | | |

There was no significant main effect for Group, $F(1, 281) = .47, p = .49$, and no significant main effect for Time, $F(1, 281) = 1.53, p = .22$.

Results of the Gaisce Bronze Participants' scores on the General Self Efficacy Scale

This section presents the results of the following question:

- Does participation in Gaisce – The President's Bronze Award improve an individual's self efficacy?

This section describes and compares the scores of Gaisce Bronze Award Participants with a Control Group on the General Self Efficacy Scale. A two by two (2x2) ANOVA was used to compare the scores obtained by the respective groups (Table 7).

Table 7 2X2 ANOVA: Gaisce Bronze and Control participants' Self Efficacy Scores

| Variable | Bronze Gaisce (N= 152) | | Control (N = 131) | | ANOVA group | ANOVA | | Interpretation |
|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------|--------------|---|
| | time 1 (n = 152) | time 2 (n = 152) | time 1 (n = 131) | time 2 (n = 131) | | time | group X time | |
| Self-Efficacy | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 30.05 | 31.13 | 30.85 | 30.56 | 0.07 | 2.01 | 5.84* | Significant increase for Bronze Group over time |
| Standard deviation | 3.88 | 4.20 | 4.81 | 4.81 | | | | |

Note: F Values are from 2 x 2 group (Bronze Gaisce, Control) x time (time 1, time 2) ANOVAs. *p< .05; **p < .01, ***p < .001

Scores on the General Self Efficacy Scale

At Time 1, the mean scores for the Gaisce Bronze Control group were higher than the equivalent means of the Gaisce Bronze Participants. In contrast, the Time 2 scores indicated higher scores for the Gaisce Bronze participants over the Control group, reflecting a drop in the Control group's scores over time and an increase in the Bronze participants' scores over time (Table 7).

A significant interaction effect occurred between Time and Group, $F(1, 281) = 5.84$, $p = .016$, which emerged as a small effect size, $\eta^2 = .02$. (Figure 7)

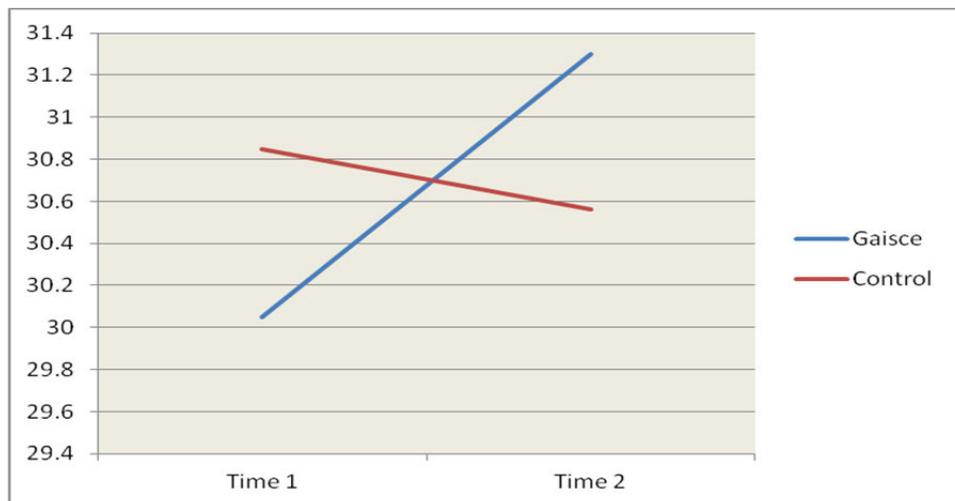


Figure 7 Estimated marginal means for Bronze Gaisce Participants and Control in the Self Efficacy Scale

A test of simple effects indicated that a significant increase occurred for the Bronze Participants over time (Table 8)

Table 8 ANOVA for Gaisce Participation / Time and Self Efficacy (Including Tests of Simple Effects)

| <i>Source</i> | <i>SS</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>MS</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>Sig.</i> | <i>Fcv</i> |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-------------|------------|
| <i>Group</i> | 1.936 | 1 | 1.936 | .07 | .792 | - |
| Group at Time 1 | 45.17 | 1 | 45.17 | 4.01 | - | 5.58 |
| Group at Time 2 | 22.60 | 1 | 22.60 | 2.00 | - | 5.58 |
| <i>Time</i> | 22.69 | 1 | 22.69 | 2.01 | .157 | - |
| Gaisce Participant | 89.55 | 1 | 89.55 | 7.94 | - | 5.58 |
| Control | 5.23 | 1 | 5.23 | 0.46 | - | 5.58 |
| Time X Group | 65.83 | 1 | 65.83 | 5.84 | .016 | - |
| Error | 281 | 281 | 11.278 | | | |

There was no significant main effect for Group, $F(1, 281) = .071$, $p = .792$, and no significant main effect emerged for Time, $F(1, 281) = 2.01$, $p = .16$.

Results of the Gaisce Bronze Participants' scores on the Self Esteem Scale

This section presents the results of the following question:

- Does participation in Gaisce – The President's Bronze Award improve an individual's Self Esteem?

This section describes and compares the scores of Gaisce Bronze Award Participants with a Control Group on the Self Esteem. A two by two (2x2) ANOVA was used to compare the scores obtained by the respective groups (Table 9)

Table 9 2X2 ANOVA: Gaisce Bronze Award and Control participants' scores on the Self Esteem Scale

| Variable | Gaisce (N= 152) | | Control (N = 131) | | ANOVA group | ANOVA | | Interpretation |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------|--------------|--------------------------------|
| | time 1 (n = 152) | time 2 (n = 152) | time 1 (n = 131) | time 2 (n = 131) | | time | group X time | |
| Self-Esteem | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 19.57 | 20.36 | 20.61 | 20.15 | 0.60 | 0.21 | 2.87 | No intervention related change |
| Standard deviation | 5.49 | 5.40 | 5.33 | 5.68 | | | | |

Note: F Values are from 2 x 2 group (Gaisce, Control) x time (time 1, time 2) ANOVAs. *p< .05; **p < .01, ***p < .001..

Scores on the Self Esteem Scale

The mean scores for the Gaisce Bronze participants demonstrated an increase in their scores on the Self Esteem Scale over time. In contrast, the Control group exhibited a decrease over time. The results indicate that the Control participants presented with higher levels of self esteem than the Bronze participants at time 1 (Table 9).

No significant interaction effect was evident in the Self Esteem Scale, $F(1, 281) = 2.87, p = .09$. There were no significant main effects for either Group, $F(1, 281) = .60, p = .43$, or Time, $F(1, 281) = .21, p = .65$.

Results of the Gaisce Bronze Participants' scores on the Happiness Scale

This section presents the results of the following question:

- Does participation in Gaisce – The President's Bronze Award improve an individual's level of happiness?

This section describes and compares the scores of Gaisce Bronze Award Participants with a Control Group on the Happiness Scale. A two by two (2x2) ANOVA was used to compare the scores obtained by the respective groups (Table 10).

Table 10 2X2 ANOVA: Gaisce Bronze Award and Control participants' scores on the Happiness Scale

| Variable | Gaisce (N= 152) | | Control (N = 131) | | ANOVA group | ANOVA time | | ANOVA group X time | Interpretation |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| | time 1 (n = 152) | time 2 (n = 152) | time 1 (n = 131) | time 2 (n = 131) | | time | group X time | | |
| Happiness | | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 18.41 | 18.94 | 18.98 | 18.91 | 0.48 | 0.93 | 1.67 | | No intervention related change |
| Standard deviation | 3.96 | 3.85 | 3.69 | 3.73 | | | | | |

Note: F Values are from 2 x 2 group (Gaisce, Control) x time (time 1, time 2) ANOVAs. *p < .05; **p < .01, ***p < .001..

Scores on the Happiness Scale

The mean scores for the Gaisce Bronze Participants demonstrated increases over time in their scores on the Happiness Scale. In contrast, the Bronze Control group exhibited a decrease over time (Table 10). While the Bronze participants' scores were lower than the Control Group at Time 1, the reverse was true at Time 2.

No significant interaction effect was evident in the Happiness Scale, $F(1, 281) = 1.67, p = .19$. There were significant main effects for either Group, $F(1, 281) = .48, p = .49$, or Time, $F(1, 281) = .93, p = .34$.

Results of the Gaisce Bronze Participants' scores on the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being

This section presents the results of the following question:

- Does participation in Gaisce – The President's Bronze Award improve an individual's psychological well being?

This section describes and compares the scores of Gaisce Bronze Award Participants with a Control Group on the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being. A two by two (2x2) ANOVA was used to compare the scores obtained by the respective groups (Table 11)

Table 11 2X2 ANOVA: Gaisce Bronze and Control participants' scores on the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well Being

| Variable | Bronze Gaisce (N= 152) | | Control (N = 131) | | ANOVA group | ANOVA time | | ANOVA group X time | Interpretation |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------------|--|
| | time 1 (n = 152) | time 2 (n = 152) | time 1 (n = 131) | time 2 (n = 131) | | time | group X time | | |
| Psychological Well-Being | | | | | | | | | |
| Mean | 362.41 | 368.7 | 375.02 | 360.35 | 0.16 | 1.65 | 10.33** | | Significant difference between groups at Time 1 |
| Standard deviation | 48.9 | 54.31 | 48.45 | 57.77 | | | | | Significant decrease for Control Group over time |

Note: F Values are from 2 x 2 group (Gaisce, Control) x time (time 1, time 2) ANOVAs. *p < .05; **p < .01, ***p < .001

Scores on the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being

The results from the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being indicate an increase in the mean score over time for the Gaisce Bronze Participants. In contrast, the Control group experienced a decrease in the mean score over time (Table 11). While the Bronze participants displayed an increase in their mean score, the Control group obtained a higher score at Time 1.

A significant interaction effect occurred between Time and Group, $F(1, 281) = 10.33$, $p = .001$, which emerged as a small effect size, $\eta^2 = .035$. (Figure 8)

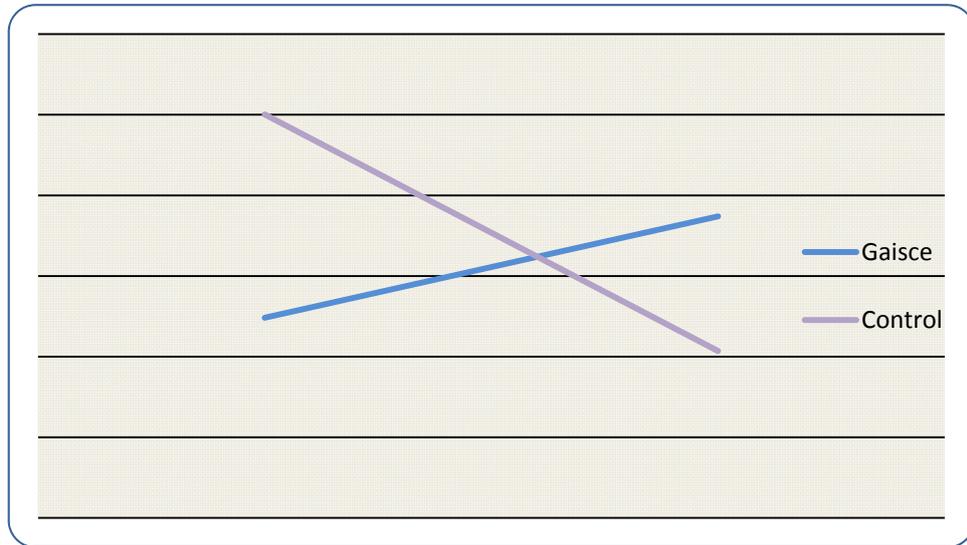


Figure 8 Estimated marginal means for Gaisce Bronze Participants and Control on The Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being

A test of simple effects indicated a significant difference between the Gaisce Bronze and Control groups at Time 1. The results also display a significant drop in the Control group's scores over time (Table 12).

Table 12 ANOVA for Gaisce Participation / Time and Well Being Score (Including Tests of Simple Effects)

| <i>Source</i> | <i>SS</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>MS</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>Sig.</i> | <i>Fcv</i> |
|--------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|-------------|------------|
| <i>Group</i> | 637.13 | 1 | 637.13 | .16 | .690 | - |
| Group at Time 1 | 11,185.36 | 1 | 11,185.36 | 7.47 | - | 5.58 |
| Group at Time 2 | 4,908.99 | 1 | 4,908.99 | 3.27 | - | 5.58 |
| <i>Time</i> | 2,471.86 | 1 | 2,471.86 | 1.65 | .200 | - |
| Gaisce Participant | 3,006.37 | 1 | 3,006.37 | 2.00 | - | 5.58 |
| Control | 14,099.56 | 1 | 14,099.56 | 9.49 | - | 5.58 |
| Time X Group | 15,457.24 | 1 | 15,457.24 | 10.325 | .001 | |
| Error | 420,657.07 | 281 | 1,497.01 | | | |

There was no significant main effect for Group, $F(1, 281) = 0.16, p = .69.$, and no significant main effect was present for Time, $F(1, 281) = 1.65, p = .20.$

Summary of Findings for Bronze Participants

A summary of key findings pertaining to the results from the analysis of the Bronze and Control Participants' scores on the Self Efficacy, Psychological Well Being, Hope, Self Esteem, Happiness scales are presented in Table 13.

Table 13 Key findings in relation to the positive effects of participation in Gaisce the Bronze Award.

Research Question:

- Does participation in the Gaisce Bronze Award improve levels of Self Efficacy, Psychological Well Being, Hope, Self Esteem, Happiness

Addressed by:

- 2 x 2 Anovas were utilised to compare Bronze Participants' pre and post participation scores on the on the Hope , Self Efficacy, Self Esteem, Hope, Happiness and Psychological Well Being scales, with a Control Group

Key Findings:

- The Hope Pathway Subscale demonstrated a significant interaction effect for Time x Group, $F(1, 281), = 4.71, p = .03$. A significant difference in scores was evident at Time 1, with the Gaisce Participants experiencing a significant increase in their score from Time 1 to Time 2.
- No significant interaction effects were present for the scores on the Overall Hope and Hope Agency Subscale
- The results indicated a significant main interaction effect from the scores on the Self Efficacy Scale, $F(1, 281) = 5.84, p = .016$. Simple effects analysis indicated a significant increase for the Gaisce Bronze Participants from Time 1 to Time 2.

- No significant interaction effects were present for the scores on the Self Esteem and Happiness Scale.
 - A significant interaction effect present between Time and Group on the Scale of Psychological Well Being, $F(1, 281) = 10.33, p = .001$. Analysis indicated a significant difference between the groups at Time 1, with the Control Participants experiencing a significant decrease in scores over time.
-