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Promoting Children's Well-being at School and at Home

Methodological Considerations

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Abstract

This study conducted research on children's well-being from their perspective, respecting their subjective experiences and viewpoints. The aim of the article is twofold: to discuss about how to research children's well-being and describe their well-being at home and school. In 2011, the data was gathered in two phases in the Finnish comprehensive schools of Päijät-Häme region. First, information about the children's knowledge of well-being was collected using interviews and workshops. Second, this data was used to develop an e-questionnaire, which was delivered to all the second to sixth graders (8–12 years old) in the region's schools (N=3731). In this article the focus is in the questionnaire, the data was analyzed using mainly descriptive methods. The analysis revealed that the adults in the schools, teachers and support personnel, as well as parents, are needed to foster the children's well-being. These contexts should be researched simultaneously, not as separate domains. The positive attitudes of school personnel towards pupils, and parents' positive, authoritative childrearing practices contribute to the children's feeling of well-being.

Introduction: the Janus-faced research on children's well-being

Children are usually perceived as the objects of research, not as subjects. The question is about epistemology, what kind of knowledge and who produces it is considered as relevant (Goertz and Mahoney 2012). The children should be given the right to speak, not merely spoken to by the adults. The children have personal experiences and views on their well-being, so their voices should be heard (Fattore, Mason and Watson 2007, James 2011, Karlsson 2010). In studies addressing the children's well-being, their research is based on the description of

the results produced by indicators that have been, as a rule, defined as adult-centred. These negative indicators are mainly normative and refer to problematic or unusual living conditions, for example, problems in parenthood, health problems and school difficulties of the children (Ben-Arieh and Frønes 2011, Bradshaw et al. 2011, Goswami 2012). The indicators show shortcomings in the children's well-being, and the statistics tell about the children's illnesses (Lommi et al. 2010, Rimpelä, Fröjd and Peltonen 2010). The aim of those indicators is to get 'objective' information defined by adults, and this is needed when designing, for example, the social policy. On the other hand, this yields a limited and one-

sided picture of the phenomenon. There is an urgent need for designing positive indicators and when doing that we need the children's definitions of those. Studying the children's well-being using both negative and positive indicators will portray a more exact image of their well-being than is presently obtained.

New information is needed about those issues affecting the children's lives that produce an experience of well-being. The expectation is that the stakeholders from different sectors would be able to identify better those significant matters which are worth supporting and those which require strengthening (Fattore, Mason and Watson 2007, Lippmanet et al. 2011). Knowledge about factors which specially promote the children's well-being, particularly from the children's perspective, is required. The questions should be addressed to the children, not to the adults, such as has been made traditionally (Poikolainen, submitted, Salo 2010, Strandell 1995). It is also valuable to study whether the children define well-being as a changing contextual phenomenon or categorize the content as what has traditionally been done in existing well-being studies. One of the most used contexts in which to measure well-being is the school, the variables are often designed specifically for this setting. The interrelation between home and school has been left behind or has received too little attention.

The aim of the article is twofold: to discuss about how to research children's well-being and describe their well-being at home and school. The particular focus is the e-questionnaire's suitability for the study of the children's well-being. The content's emphasis is on the children's social relations, how they experience relationships in the two environments of family and school. The children are viewed in this study as the active actors of everyday life, they are the experts in regard to their own well-being (see Lewis 2010).

Children as the research object or subject

The public concepts of well-being are not derived from a vacuum, instead, the societal situation, political mechanisms, discourses, norms and values construct standards for the definition of well-being of children and families. The issue at stake is about aspects at different levels, societal, physical and psychological, which limit the reasoning and action of individuals (Bronfenbrenner 1995, Lippman et al. 2011, Newbury 2011). In the Nordic countries, it is easier for the children to get their voices heard, compared, for example, to England where it is often thought that the children are still growing up, and are not yet mature citizens to be heard (James 2011). This reveals that the definition of well-being and childhood is tied up with sociocultural and chronological dimensions. Even though these are considered subjective indicators, for example, they are still, as a rule, defined as adult-centred (Goswami 2012, Lippman et al. 2011). Moreover, little research has been conducted so far on the well-being of the chosen age group, 8–12-year-old children, even internationally (Lippman et al. 2011).

The childhood researchers who refer to sociology have emphasized the importance of listening to the children, which has already been happening for several years in Finland. The objective should be to study together as a co-researcher with the children, without placing them as the target (Forsberg and Ritala-Koskinen 2010, Helavirta 2011). International scientific conversation about child-centered research has also been going on for a long time (e.g., Fattore, Mason and

Watson 2007, James 2007, 2011), since the well-being evaluations by children and adults differ (Gaspar et al. 2010). Adult-centred research is distant from a child-perspective approach (see Karlsson 2010), but recently more attention has been drawn to the knowledge produced by children themselves. This is a proof of its valuation and the acceptance of subjective knowledge. It is essential to consider children as individuals with distinct, personal experiences and as members of groups in the social, cultural, economic and political arenas, where the childhood is constructed (James 2007).

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Research is always designed according to a certain epistemology, this study was based on social constructionism (see Fattore, Mason and Watson 2007, Hacking 1999). The knowledge and essence of the phenomena under research is constructed differently depending for instance on the culture and time. For this reason inductive perspective on this research was unavoidable. Despite the inductive scope of this research, it did not start without framing the phenomenon. Understanding the children's knowledge depends on the researchers' contextual, chronological and cultural interpretation of the kind of growth environment where the children nowadays live. The research was designed on the basis of ecological systems theory model (see Derksen 2010, Newbury 2011, Peirson et al. 2011). In Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1995, Bronfenbrenner and Evans 2000) model, it is perceived that the changes in the macro (e.g. societal changes, recession), exo (e.g. education policy), meso (e.g. relationship between child, teacher and parent) and micro (e.g. relationship between child and parent) levels, including time, are reflected in families and children. The research was designed observing the dynamic effects of surrounding living environments on children's lives and conceptions.

In the macro level, in EU countries, children's subjective well-being has been investigated, specifically their personal and relative well-being, and well-being at school. The questionnaires are traditionally designed, referring, for example, to the sociodemographic figures which are assumed to predict well-being (Bradshaw et al. 2011). The subjective content relates to the children's experiences and opinions of the phenomenon, but most often the contents are defined by adults. However, the possibility for children to comment on the inquiry has sometimes been given, which is a step in the right direction (Goswami 2012). Children conceptualize and experience life very differently from adults, and they also use different concepts. Individuals learn well-being in various sociocultural contexts. Children learn well-being at their homes and schools, but also in neighbourhoods and streets, through media, etc. (Bronfenbrenner and Evans 2000, Gaspar et al. 2010, Peirson et al. 2011, Rimpelä 2013). Living environments and learning ecosystems have changed rapidly. Urbanization and modernization have revised the notion of well-being.

In EU and a few other countries, the children's well-being is monitored with several indicators, e.g., health, subjective well-being, personal relations, material resources, education, risk-taking behavior, and type of housing and environment. The information has been gathered from several

fact-finding systems (Bradshaw and Richardson 2009). In the Finnish context, the research on children's *positive and subjective well-being* has been scant to date. Most often the qualitative approach has been used – so far no national statistical data is available for the chosen age group, but some modeling attempts have been made. Helavirta (2005, 2011) has studied third and seventh graders' views on well-being, using both the qualitative and quantitative approaches. Rapeli and Mäkelä (2010) collected information about fifth graders' subjective well-being by a questionnaire.

The children are seen in this research as active citizens, subjects and information providers. The view is more than child-centred, the measure is the child and not the parents or the family. The child-perspective research methods were used, especially in the first, qualitative phase. Since the well-being of the chosen age group is not systematically examined in Finland, an e-questionnaire was designed, with future research in mind. The aim was to develop a research design which places children centrally and respects their subjective perspectives of well-being. Easily understandable concepts were used, for example, they were asked what matters belong to a good life, not how they define well-being.

Research methods, data and ethics

The children's well-being was studied through their experiences and definitions using the mixed-method design (e.g., Clark Plano et al. 2008, Small 2011). The qualitative well-being data was collected from three schools during the conversation and music workshops using video cameras. From this data, the themes and variables were selected to formulate the question-naire. The chosen items were those mean-ingful to the children and emphasized in the conversations among children, as well as between researchers and children. This outline was necessary to avoid information chaos (see James 2011). Furthermore, the researchers' scientific background directed the points of view of the research and affected the selection of the issues to be examined. To avoid the emphasis on the adults' views, the children also had the opportunity to participate in the decision making regarding the questionnaire's contents. The question designs followed as far as possible the forms developed in the workshops by the children. The basic idea was that the children would ask the questions they identified as being important to well-being.

The e-questionnaire data best suited the descriptive analysis, so the variables were described on direct distributions, averages and dispersions. Whenever reasonable, factor analysis, cross tabulation with χ^2-test and variance analysis were applied (e.g. Heikkilä 2008, Metsämuuronen 2009). The consistency of the sum variables was checked using Cronbach's Alpha. Age, grade, gender, school and municipality were included as background variables. The data was analyzed using Excel and SPSS PASW Statistics 20 for Windows. The objective was to form sum variables which described the children's well-being, among others. In spite of the child's perspective, when naming the variables, certain themes defined in earlier adult-centered research were used, such as authoritative childrearing. Renaming variables would not have produced new information in this section, on the other hand, in the study a confirmation was obtained when differences occurred between the children's and adults' definitions. In the analysis of open questions, the principles of content analysis (see Mayring 2000, Tuomi

and Sarajärvi 2009) were applied. The answers were categorized according to the content and the theme.

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The research ethics was taken care of during the whole process. Written permissions were collected from the school authorities, parents and pupils. Although the children were considered here as competent citizens, the school policy requires researchers to ask the adults' permission. If the data were collected in informal places, it is allowable in certain cases to ask permission only from the child (Tani 2010). The researchers in this study were in close interaction with the children when the qualitative data was gathered, this kind of action required specific sensitivity (see Phelan and Kinsella 2013). The research ethics was followed according to general instructions. For example, the research materials were confidentially retained and the participants' anonymity was guaranteed (see Carusi and Jirotka 2009).

In 2011, the data was gathered in two phases in the Finnish comprehensive schools of Päijät-Häme region. First, the children produced qualitative well-being information during interviews and workshops for designing the quantitative research. Second, this data was used to develop a multimedia e-questionnaire, which was delivered to all the second to sixth graders (8–12 years old) of the region. The e-questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first questionnaire was answered by 2879 pupils and the second by 852 (N=3731), the questions were partly identical in both questionnaires. The response rate was 37%. There were no clear reasons for missing information. Answering

was voluntary, of course and this causes loss. The youngest age group answered less, but there were no statistical differences between the groups. According to teachers, certain schools also had problems with the internet or they simply did not have enough computers in the classroom. When the communes were compared there were no statistical differences between missing information, but there was variance between the schools. For explaining the reasons for these phenomena needs further research, therefore it is not possible to find out the reasons for using the collected data. What follows the results can be used as a descriptive meaning, as was originally planned and when developing the e-questionnaire.

The main data used here is quantitative, but the qualitative data is used to fill the gaps of the primary information.

Methodological considerations and challenges

The questions or the statements of the questionnaire were not generally difficult or less appealing to most of the respondents. The sections that required answers were only about background questions. The missing information in the first inquiry in the scaled questions was + - 5%, with a 3.4–22% range. The relation was about the same in the second inquiry. When examined together, the fewest forms were returned by second graders. The difference from the following grade was nearly 6%, the same relation was seen when inquiries were examined separately. The statements and questions which the children perhaps experienced important to themselves or easy to answer were answered most conscientiously. For example, only a little more than 7% of the second graders (N=99) in the second inquiry did not answer the question

whether she/he had a good imagination. Around 15.2% of all the participants (N=2879, inquiry 1) and 31.2% of the second graders (N=382, inquiry 1) did not answer the question about their experience of corporal punishment. This is in spite of the fact that there was the option to answer "never" in this section. For individual questions, the one concerning the number of friends was answered least (missing answers were 17–24%) and most of them were by second and third graders. The missing information from the second graders consists of questions about the use of media (22–32%). Some questions were difficult for them, for example, "I do not know netiquette and information security matters, I know netiquette …". The older pupils answered these questions more accurately. The questions of the media section were defined as adult-centered.

The positive (e.g., My home is safe, I have a good home and parents) and negative atmosphere (e.g., The atmosphere at home is frightening, My home's atmosphere is tense) of the home, the authoritative (My parents listen to me, My parents have conversations with me) and authoritarian parenting styles (e.g., My parents are domineering, My parents scold me) and the positive relations with friends (I can trust my friends, I can choose my friends) turned to be sum variables. The sum variables had a good or moderate consistency when the limit value was set to .60 (e.g., Metsämuuronen 2009). Otherwise, the variables were organized according to themes and used as individual variables in the analysis.

It is usually recommended that the questions addressed to the children include the "I cannot say" option on the Likert questions, so that they would not be compelled to answer. The sliding scale was most often used where only the negative and positive dimensions had been marked. Certain sec-

tions included the smiley icon which facilitated answering. Dichotomies (no/yes) were also often used.

The results of contents from the methodological point of view are reported next as an example of the methodological innovations and challenges.

In this research, the open questions in particular produced versatile data. One of the best questions was: "What is needed for the child to have a good life"? The following is a female sixth grader's answer:

> Good people around who support you in difficult moments are needed for a good life. Comforting and understanding parents who respect your choices in life. A home and warmth, and to have everything you need at your home, and somebody to love. A human being cannot manage alone, so you will need a partner with whom you can share your world. I may sound like somebody's mother but it is the truth and it cannot be changed. It is not a laughing matter for an adult, but it is not worth mourning about now, you still have many years to grow up. Remember, if you do not feel safe, you must find out why, because it is a serious matter. The choices can always be changed. LIFE WAITS! (no. 996, 6th grade, female).

A general view of the things which make a good life is represented by the preceding sentences. The big picture is broken down into its components after the content analysis and with the simplifications. Of course it is also a question of the reporting technique, how the categories are named and how the contents are represented. The majority of all the mentions (N=6835) of the open question (f=1622, 45%) belonged to the category "close people around" which refers to a

social network. The significance of the parents was brought up in more than 1000 answers and that of the home in nearly 500 answers. The treatment of the child was mentioned in 670 answers, and matters related to the school in nearly 240 answers. In this article, the examination is limited to the topics the children connected to social interaction, which is important from the point of view of well-being: atmosphere at home and at school and relations with friends. Other topics have been reported elsewhere (Marjanen and Poikolainen 2012).

Home atmosphere

The home atmosphere includes parenting styles. The children often brought up the family and the value of the parents when specifying matters which belong to a good life: "If a child did not have a family who would take care of him/her, then the child would be quite lonely and would not have anything" (no. 206, 6th grade, female). About 70% of the children who answered the question defined the atmosphere of their home as positive (N=2879, scale 0-1, mean=0,60, s=0.33) and nearly 60% reported their parents using an authoritative parenting style (mean=0,57, s=0.34) which is a surprisingly low score. On the other hand, only 2.4% felt the parents being neglectful. Whether the parents are kind according to the child's experience also describes the home atmosphere. Around 92.8% of the children (N=1516) expressed the opinion that their parents were kind (on a 1-5 scale, mean=4,60, s=0,75). Kindness as a concept is not a synonym to a positive home atmosphere or to an authoritative parenting style, but describes the attitudes of parents towards the children.

Open and scaled questions generate different kinds of information for different purposes. The quantitative study can produce information to be generalized and the information can be utilized when planning the need for social support for children, parents and schools. From the background variables, for example, the school correlates with the authoritative parenting style (r=071**), which means there are differences among the schools according to how children experience authoritative parenting (ANOVA F (12, 2082)=2,792, p<.001), post hoc test: Bonferroni). The pupils almost always attend the local school, which is determined by the place of residence in the city of Lahti in Päijät-Häme region, even though it is possible to make choices too. Thus, cautious conclusions can be made regarding the schools and the place of residence without knowing the pupils' home addresses. For example, the parenting style reported by the children in school A was least authoritative. Differences between schools A and B (p=.019) and A and C (p=.001) were significant. The inhabitants' backgrounds differed according to the living districts of school A, compared with those of B and C. The parents' socioeconomic status, for example, is lower in the districts of schools B and C than in school A's location. Parenting styles differ according to their SES (e.g. Irwin and Elley 2011). These research results can be used to focus and enhance the collaboration between home and school. All participants benefit from the collaborative practices of care and education (e.g., Kristoffersson, Gu and Zhang 2013).

The dichotomy scale (0–1) does not necessarily give a sufficient picture of the home atmosphere and parenting style, the 5-step scale would be more accurate. The youngest respondents, the second graders, were able to estimate the scaled or classified statements, an example is disciplining. Corporal punishment is forbidden by the law in Finland, but

unfortunately some parents still use it. The majority of the children (N=2440) or 60.1% had never experienced corporal punishment (scolding, hitting). Nearly 25% of the respondents had experienced it two times during their lifetime, almost 10% reported getting it 1-2 times every year, around 3% monthly and almost as many daily. The youngest age group (14.8%), the second graders, (χ^2=81.16, df=20, p=.000) were punished every month and more often.

The dimensions of the parenting style were brought up by the children and studied in the research, which is also linked to the family research. The family researchers agree that the children feel well if the adults of the family are warm and robust, spend enough time with the children, guide the children's behaviour and discuss problematic issues with them. Repressive childrearing practices should never be used (Pereira et al. 2009, Poikolainen 2002). Often the normative belief is that the family structures affect the children's well-being and negatively so, especially in a non-traditional nuclear family (Bzostek 2008). For a problem-oriented approach, e.g., divorce is generally considered as an indicator which measures the children's ill-being. On the other hand, well-being is based on the strengths which can be used when facing unpleasant matters or events. An adult newly joining a family may increase negative feelings, but also positive ones as can be seen from the following quotations:

It is not fun because my father's girlfriend gives orders all the time (no. 2378, 3rd grade, male).

Wonderful, I can tell everything (or almost everything :D) to my stepmother (no. 93, 6th grade, female).

Nice, because the father's female friend is wonderful <3. The mother's male friend is also nice :) (no. 2569, 5th grade, female).

If you live in a blended family, it will not automatically indicate problems, and in the first place, what do we mean when talking about the family? The definition of the concept of family is considered problematic nowadays, its definition is the subject of a constant struggle. Castrén (2009) has stated that the present concept of the family has a multiform composition. According to the traditional nuclear family, the mother, father and child (biological) establish the family, but family has not always referred to a nuclear family at all (Yesilova 2009). A concept distinct from the normative definition of the family structure describes the present family, including those people whom the individuals themselves define as belonging to it (cf. Schmeeckle et al. 2006). A nuclear family has been considered as an ideal towards which citizens should reach. This has been justified in the present society, appealing to the children's well-being without paying attention to the multiform family types that have been stated as functional. The family lives in a social framework, thus, the so-called definition of a correct or suitable family cannot be avoided.

School atmosphere and peer relationships

The children spend a significant part of their life annually in school. For several years, the focus has been on the pupils' satisfaction in school, which is a part of their school well-being. The reason is that some percentage of the Finnish pupils are not as satisfied in school, compared with pupils of other countries (Harinen and Halme 2012). The years in the comprehensive school are significant

from the perspective of one's life course when thinking of the child's future. In the children's research workshops, the children proposed a questionnaire section which would ask if the school staff were kind to the pupils. The scores showed that fairly or extremely kind teachers were 76.5%, unfriendly 7.4% and 16% did not know how to answer the question (N=3322, mean=4,07, s=1,04). The school helpers were considered kind or unfriendly nearly as often as the teachers, while 17.6% did not know how to answer the question (N=3305, mean=4,05, s=1,03). Nearly 67% also stated that other staff members were kind, while 6.7% characterized them as unfriendly. By other staff, the evaluation caused confusion because 26.5% did not know how to answer (N=3281, mean=3,89, s=0,97). The lower grade was in question, the more positively the adults of the school were estimated contrary to sixth graders. The school as an institutional setting does not necessarily encourage that its personnel be evaluated from the point of view of kindness. Culturally, it is more accepted not to like the school and the adults working there. It is worth mentioning that in this section of the questionnaire, the evaluation of the teachers' kindness produced the least "I cannot say" answers. It seems the other adults' role is more invisible than those of the teachers.

The children's attitude to studying is mainly positive. A little over 75% think that the school is important from the learning point of view. Around 16.9% did not know how to evaluate it and only a little more than 2% of the pupils indicated that the school is not at all important (N=2596, mean=2,74, s=0,66). In the Finnish school culture, the pupils' critical attitude to the school (Harinen and Halme 2012) is typical. When the children were asked with an open question what they would like to change at their own

school, one of the most typical answers was: "I would like to have a little longer recess and that the homework would not need to be submitted the following day ever" (no. 435, 5th grade, female).

Relations with friends (N=2656) are formed and maintained also in other contexts than in the school. The results of this topic are shown in this section because it has been stated that the school is one of the most significant arenas for building social relations (e.g., Korkiamäki and Ellonen 2010). Friendly relationships seemed to be in order with most of the children (scale 1-5), the mean was 4.18. The question whether the child's social network is sufficient has been traditionally measured against the number of friends. The children were mostly satisfied with the number of their friends (N=2782, mean=4,48, s=0,94) and 68.4% (N=3352) indicated that their friends were also kind (mean=3,72, s=1,42) to them. About 70% of the respondents estimated experiences of loneliness to be rare (never, seldom) and 6% general (fairly often, often). The kinder the friends' attitude was for the children, the less they felt being lonely (χ^2=393 52 df=16, p=000). Measuring the number of friends does not tell enough about the quality of the relationships, friends' kindness brings added value.

What's new, borrowed and old?

This mixed-method research yielded results which arose from individual starting points to produce information. The questionnaire's design followed the children's definitions as closely as possible. The basic idea was that the children would ask other children the questions they saw as important in considering well-being. The aim was to respect the habit of asking which differs from those of the adults. Before the data acquisition, it

was already known that research on the child's views and experiences has often been regarded as challenging from the researcher's standpoint (see Fern and Kristinsdóttir 2011). The manifold nuances of the qualitative study were not caught in the questionnaire research as such, which was not a surprise. Many open questions were used to figure out the nuances. Surprisingly, the majority answered them, but the length of the responses varied from a few words to several sentences. Usually, the younger the child, the shorter the answers were.

When planning the research and questionnaire, the aim was to conduct a child-perspective research, as much as possible. On one hand, this was a well-functioning solution, on the other hand, it was problematic in some parts. The child's perspective should not exclude certain variables that have been drawn up as adult-centred. This study would have benefited from information about the children's home language, for example. Also, different age groups should be considered when formulating the variables. The group of informants was heterogeneous, for example there were children who had different cultural backgrounds. Well-being is multidimensional in various cultural contexts, and all matters and topics that the native-born Finns connect to well-being are not necessarily similar to those of people with different ethnic backgrounds. The designs of the questions should be sensitive, sometimes the questions chosen by the adults can function better than those drawn up by the children. For example, the attitude towards foreigners was asked on a scale of 1-5 using claims: "I do not like the fact that in Finland there are foreigners, I like it …" and "Foreigners do not frighten me, Foreigners frighten me." Moreover, the research constructs social reality and af-

fects attitudes. It is also worth thinking about what kind of meaning the school has as an information provider and as the child's social and cultural state. What subjects and issues would the children have brought up in a different environment: at home or in hobbies?

The critical question is whether the national samples of the children's well-being are necessary.

The use of open questions in the broad national inquiries is not possible because the classification of the answers takes a long time. When developing the indicators, such as in this study, the use of open questions is justified. The questionnaire is worth developing further so that when designing a future one, attention should be paid to the analysis methods. From this point of view, the form must be shortened, considering the structure of the sum variables and research themes.

Bradshaw and Richardson (2009) emphasize that when measuring the children's well-being, it is important to listen to the children's definitions of the subject, as has been done in this research. Some connections to earlier research were also found. When measuring the subjective well-being of children in the research mentioned above, the indicators included the children's experience of personal well-being (satisfaction with life), and well-being at school. The social relations of the children were measured under a separate theme, but these variables also fit in the subjective indicator: the quality of the family relations and the classmates' kindness (Bradshaw and Richardson 2009). From the variables of different types which measure social relations, satisfaction with the family and positive friendly relations

have proven to be very significant (Goswami 2012). In this study, the children emphatically brought out the meaning of parenthood, parental styles and childrearing for well-being. The new concept in Finnish research is kindness, which can also be used in the future. The children's definitions of good parenthood deviated from traditional psychological definitions in Valkonen's study (2006) as well, where the data came from fifth to sixth graders' written stories. According to Valkonen's and this research, a good parent considers the child as important and takes care of him/her, guides behaviour and manages the child's upbringing. The children emphasized that it is the parents' task to take care of the children's general psychic and physical well-being.

When developing the indicators of the questionnaire, it is valuable to use earlier research when the variables have been defined from the child-perspective research and the children's manner of asking is respected (e.g., James 2007, Lewis 2010, Rapeli and Mäkelä 2010). There is also a governmental need for this perspective. The working group of the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture (OKM 2011) has presented certain indicators for the follow-up study of the well-being of children and adolescents. The team's report (2011: 42–53) has proposed that the child-centred indicator information is needed next to the indicators which describe ill-being.

Newbury (2011) has presented an idea based on Bronfenbrenner's model (1979, 1995) that qualitative analysis and its focus could function when the well-being of the children and youth is studied. The idea is that factors which are related to all the systems of children, relations and ties to an individual's actions be clarified. Such relation maps, relational and ordered situational map of the practice scenario, can be made

from different points of view and systems, then analytically compared, bringing up the silenced dynamics of speech in the micro level to the changes needed in the macro level. The researchers should carefully listen to how the children define well-being and report the results so that the information can be used when developing, for example, the measures of support. This information is also valuable when designing social policy.

The discursive changes in the manners of speaking can be taken as the analysis target. The adult actors who have gained an institutional position can determine well-being by creating discursive practices and technologies which produce the ideal, further spread everyday ideas, and direct the forming of concepts and actions (Kainz and Aikens 2007, Popkewitz 2007, Popkewitz and Block 2001). In certain fields, for example, in psychology, certain kinds of statements have survived for decades (Foucault 2005). As an illustration appealing to developmental psychology, the child has to be of a certain age and at a certain 'mature stage' to be in a certain school grade – and to answer, for example, the questionnaires. This is how the social structure of the meaning of age is maintained (Salo 2010). In other words, it is important to evaluate critically who is the source of the well-being knowledge and how the information is formulated. In this research on well-being, it was stated that even the second graders were able to answer the questionnaire when the variables were defined by children.

The child-perspective qualitative research has not reached the social position which belongs to it. It is further asked how the children's well-being appears in the light of statistical research. The critical question is whether the national samples of the children's well-being are necessary. The

knowledge on well-being could be collected with qualitative methods, for example, from a few municipalities of different types, and these results could be compared and also generalized by certain prerequisites. Other research results can be parallel, in which case the qualitative analogous generalization of the results could be used: the results strengthen earlier ones. Of course, one can also end up with differing results. The precondition for relative generalizing or portability is the study's credibility, in other words, the possible contingency of results, among others, must be considered, although a singular case in a qualitative study can also be significant (Lewis 2010, Mayring 2000, Payne and Williams 2005).

When possible and reasonable, the possibility to answer should always be given to the children. The contents of questionnaires must be updated to correspond to the culture and society where the children's lives take place. The information is worth collecting for updating, first analyzing with qualitative methods, then testing the functionality of the new indicators with pilot questionnaires. The research about the positive subjective well-being produces information about which matters the children regard as important, from the perspective of their well-being. This information can be utilized along with other indicators.

The themes that have been defined as forming the child's perspective are partly congruent with the ones identified as adult-centred, however, the children see well-being as a broader whole than it has been typically examined. If one wanted to get the general view of the children's well-being, it would be worth studying in relation with the different growth environments: well-being at home, at school and on leisure time, such as in hobby environments. The next step for defining the indicators of positive well-being could be moving towards the concept of well-being learning. Children and youth learn well-being in different contexts, e.g., home, school and street, where they also learn ill-being (Rimpelä 2013). Combining subjective well-being into learning theories brings us closer to the constituent questions of what, where, when and how children's well-being should be researched.

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