

Anna Tokola & Niko Malvila

**“The Best Thing, Simply Great”**

**Male Pupils’ Experiences from the Finnish Schools on the Move Programme - Enhancing Wellbeing in Ahmo School**

Thesis

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Author(s) Malvila Niko & Tokola Anna	
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<p>The Research Centre for Sport and Health Sciences (LIKES) has researched the Finnish Schools on the Move programme and its positive influence on school atmosphere. In Ahmo School the students experienced that school atmosphere increased during the project. School wellbeing is an important issue which affects enjoyment and everyday life at school. Wellbeing includes physical, mental and social wellbeing, and if one of these declines, it has an effect on overall wellbeing.</p> <p>The subject of this thesis was to provide qualitative information about the Finnish Schools on the Move programme to the municipality of Siilinjärvi. The purpose of this thesis was to describe reasons why school wellbeing had changed in Ahmo School during the programme and to provide developmental proposals for the future.</p> <p>Because the research was qualitative, a focus group was chosen. The research group comprised five boys from grades 7-9 in Ahmo School. The focus group was interviewed in a focus group discussion and individual interviews. The data analysis was performed using the content analysis method.</p> <p>The interviewees felt that the Finnish Schools on the Move programme had increased school wellbeing. It was experienced that there had been positive changes in social relationships and that the school was a more comfortable place. According the interviewees, the sporty atmosphere was the main reason to make the school environment more enjoyable. However, in future focus should be on girls' and teachers' participation in physical activities and including group activities in the Finnish School on the Move programme.</p>	
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Finnish School on the Move is a national action programme with a goal to increase activity possibilities during the school days so that children and adolescents would be physically active at least an hour in a day (Tammelin, Laine & Turpeinen 2012). The programme has been running since 2010 and it is currently set to run until 2015. The programme is a part of the Government programme and it is funded by lottery funds and the Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland. It is realised by Board of Education, Regional State Administrative Agencies, LIKES –Foundation for Sport and Health Sciences and other associations. The target school of this research was Ahmo School and it has been participating to the programme from the very beginning. (Tammelin et al. 2012.)

Wellbeing includes social, mental and physical wellbeing. According Ingerttilä and Jokikokko (2012) physical activity has been noted to have a positive effect on school atmosphere, class spirit and school mate relationships. School wellbeing is an important issue that affects enjoyment and everyday life at school. Wellbeing includes physical, mental and social wellbeing and if one of these suffers it has an effect on overall wellbeing. LIKES has researched Finnish Schools on the Move –project and its influences on school atmosphere. Results have been positive. In Ahmo School the students experienced that school atmosphere increased during the project. (LIKES 2012.)

The purpose of this thesis was to describe reasons how school wellbeing has changed in Ahmo School during the Finnish School on the Move –programme and provide developmental proposals for the future. An aim of the thesis from KUAS point of view was a chance to learn more about connection between exercising and school wellbeing and adapt it to the teaching. Municipality of Siilinjärvi got valuable information about the reasons that have influenced to school wellbeing and proposals how to develop wellbeing in all schools of Siilinjärvi in the future.

We chose this particular subject, because we both are interested in adolescence's exercising habits and how exercising is influencing their wellbeing. In the future we both are interested in working in school environment or in a work connected to adolescence.

## 2 FINNISH SCHOOLS ON THE MOVE

Finnish Schools on the Move is a programme with a main goal to increase sports and other physical activities during a school day and immediately after a school day. More specific goals are at minimum of one hour of physical activity daily for everyone and provide habits of active lifestyle. This all aims to enhance overall wellbeing. (Tammelin, Laine & Turpeinen 2012.)

Finnish Schools on the Move –programme is part of the Government programme and it is funded by lottery funds and the Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland. It is realised by Board of Education, Regional State Administrative Agencies, LIKES –Foundation for Sport and Health Sciences and other associations. The project was started 2010, and there were 45 pilot schools which involved about 10 000 students during years 2010—2012. In 2012 there were 75 municipalities that participated the Finnish Schools on the Move –programme. The programme is currently set to run until 2015. (Tammelin et al. 2012.)

In participating schools different kinds of activities and changes in the structure of school days has been created. The aim is to have more active and fun breaks between lessons, the breaks are longer and include indoor and outdoor activities. The pupils are educated to be instructors in activity breaks. During the lessons there is gymnastic exercises which help students to focus on essential. More active lessons include also morning exercises to wake-up pupils, learning in the nature and in vicinity of the school. In the project schools there was started many activity clubs, which included wide variety of sports. These clubs are provided in co-operation with associations and local clubs. The programme has also brought more active school trips and theme days and events and converting the school facilities to encourage physical activity. There are differences between the schools; every school has their own procedure. (Tammelin et al. 2012.)

### 2.1 Ahmo School Participating the Programme

Siilinjärvi Secondary School, Ahmo School was one of the pilot schools. The programme started as a pilot in autumn 2010. Actual programme (state II) started in autumn 2012 and all the schools in Siilinjärvi municipality participated to the programme. From autumn 2013 the

state III started. Ahmo School did not get any more funding and the programme has been running by the schools own actions. (Perttinä, 2014.) Main goal of Finnish Schools on the Move in Siilinjärvi is to enhance positive activity culture, adolescents' possibility to effect on to their own daily life and strengthen wellbeing at school. This required changes in thinking models and school facilities. The most important factor in increasing physical activity was to rebuild the structure of school day. In Ahmo School one part of the school day is now 25-45 minutes long wellbeing break in the middle of the school day which allows activity break indoors and outdoors and clubs for example for the pupils that need transport. In addition Ahmo School renovated and built facilities for physical activity. (Tammelin et al. 2012, 93.)

## 2.2 Siilinjärvi Municipality as the Commissioner of the Thesis

Siilinjärvi is an active and growing municipality in Northern Savo. The population is over 21 500 of who one of four is under 15 years old (Siilinjärvi, 2014). The thesis is provided specifically to Siilinjärvi Secondary School named Ahmo School. The school provides education for over 500 13 to 16 years old adolescents.

Ahmo School is one of the pilot schools in Finnish Schools on the Move –programme. It have participated the programme since 2010 (Tammelin et al. 2012). The things that Finnish Schools on the Move –programme has changed in Ahmo School are changing the structure of the school day, active breaks, renovation of indoor and outdoor facilities to encourage to active lifestyle, co-operation with families, teachers exercise counselling and encouraging to start exercising (Perttinä, 2014).

Siilinjärvi municipality commissioned this thesis because they have results how Finnish Schools on the move –programme has influenced to the school wellbeing but they want to more specifically know what the reasons behind it are. This specific information can then be used to help other schools in Siilinjärvi municipality.

### 3 WELLBEING

“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 1946). Health includes three competences of wellbeing: physical, mental and social. If one of these competences suffers it affects overall wellbeing and health. In Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children study (HBSC) 1984-2002 adolescents thought that health means opposite of disease and lacking of symptoms as well as physical cope and shape. These definitions describe health as strength. Adolescents defined that health is relative and they did not think that it is stable state but instead it is changing and depended of the situation. (Välilä 2004, 19.)

According to Nupponen (2005, 48) experienced wellbeing does not mean happiness or experiencing life meaningful or worth to life when dealing with health habits and routines. Instead it is more a question about psychophysical state that people describe as words ‘good feeling’. Mood is quite positive neither worries nor annoying thoughts prevent a person to engross to matters that interests him/her. Even mood can vary during the day, feelings generally speaking changes quite slowly.

Wellbeing goes hand in hand with mental health. World Health Organization (WHO) states that “Mental health is not just the absence of mental disorder. It is defined as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.” (WHO 2007.)

Physical activity is an important strength in enhancing health and wellbeing. During childhood and adolescence exercising support growth and development, enhance wellbeing and health (Vuori, Kannas & Tynjälä 2004, 117). Although Nupponen (2005) points out that in wellbeing point of view benefits of exercising are very individual and positive effects appear and increase after individual gets used to exercising.

As WHO health definition states, social wellbeing is part of health (WHO 1946). According to Konu (2002, 68) social relationships are part of wellbeing. For school aged children and adolescent this mean learning atmosphere, relationships between peers, pupils and teacher. It also includes co-operation between school and home. Social wellbeing includes feeling of good and safety atmosphere and satisfaction of the relationships the person has.

### 3.1 School Wellbeing

There is no clear definition for school wellbeing but it can be examined from different point of views (Opetusministeriö, 2005). Wellbeing in school has previously been examined mainly from school health services and health education point of views. According to Konu (2002) school wellbeing is a combination of education and learning, but also pupils' homes and surrounding community effect on it. School wellbeing is divided into four categories: school conditions, social relationships, means for self-fulfilment and health status.

School conditions include for example physical surroundings, schedules and groupings, and services that are available for students. Social relationships means relationships between people in school environment. Self-fulfillment is possibilities for pupils to study according to their abilities and talents, feedback and encouragement are also necessary. Health status is examined through psychosomatic symptoms and common illnesses. (Konu, 2002.)

### 3.2 Finnish School on the Move and Wellbeing

During the pilot phase on the Finnish School on the Move –programme the students experienced that school atmosphere increased in Ahmo School. In the beginning of the project 7 % of the students felt that school atmosphere is bad, but in the end only 3 % felt in the same way (LIKES 2012). There were no changes in amount of the students who thought that the atmosphere is neutral or very good, but amount of the student who thought the atmosphere is quite good increased from 62 % to 66 %. Also atmosphere during the breaks was experienced to get better during the project. (LIKES 2012.)

In other pilot secondary schools results of the school atmosphere was slightly increased. In the beginning 63 % of the students experienced the atmosphere quite good and the amount increased to 65 % in the end of the pilot phase (LIKES 2012). According Ingerttilä & Jokikokko (2012) physical activity has noted to have a positive effect on school atmosphere, class spirit and school mate relationships. They point out that *Finnish Schools on the Move* is a unique and new way to develop school atmosphere with the help of physical activity.

#### 4 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Physical activity covers all voluntary muscle activity that requires energy (Vuori 1999, 16; Fogelholm 2005a, 20). Vuori adds that it refers to only physical and physiological happenings and does not involve any expectations to reasons of behaviour or social consequences. Physical activity is a main concept, which includes many sub-categories, for example physical exercises, chores, work, recreation and sport (Pawlaczek 2006, 24). In spite of this definition, physical activity is an often used term when talking about physical exercising.

During physical activity body changes and it has to adapt to a new physiological states. Body tries to reach homeostasis which is suitable for the level of the activity. Homeostasis is a chemical balance state which concern the whole body. (Ahonen & Sandström 2011.) Faultless working body needs good oxygen supply, well-working cardiorespiratory system, economical energy consumption, efficient metabolic system and functional regulatory system. This all requires efficient gas exchange, respiratory system, muscle activity and hormonal regulation. (Rehunen 1997, 11.) Health and functional body makes possible to manage daily routines without feeling overwhelmed and improves quality of life. Physical activity has been noticed to have many health effects. According to Vuori (2005, 11) people who do regular physical activity have decreased risk for over 20 diseases or pre-diseases. There are variety of different organ diseases including many of the most common long-term diseases. Vuori (2005) adds that there is also proof that exercising can be used to prevent and treat many diseases.

Research of National Activity 2009-2010 shows that 92 % of 3-18 years old Finnish children do physical activity regularly (Kansallinen Liikuntatutkimus 2010, 6). Fogelholm (2005b) points out that still fifth of the adolescents are physically passive and from health point of view a bit under half is exercising enough. This is a crucial point when thinking about national health and it should be taken into account when promoting and enhancing health and fitness. According to Research of National Activity (Kansallinen Liikuntatutkimus 2010) there are no differences between genders or between urban or rural areas. Instead Numminen and Välimäki (1999, 84) argue that before puberty boys are physically more active than girls and that is why there should be enough possibilities especially for the boys to exercise. Although it is important that everyone finds their own way to be physically active and express themselves. During school years school work and studying lead to time limitations

and amount of spontaneous exercising decreases. The crucial point is when getting to puberty. The biggest decreasing of activity is in 12-15 years old adolescents (Fogelholm 2005b, 160).

Youth's physical activity is regulated by many factors. Firstly there are individual factors which are divided into biological and psychological factors. Biological factors are gender, age and body composition. Some researches show that boys are exercising more and with harder load than girls, the exercising is decreasing when getting older, but obesity has not shown to have so big influence than it would be supposed (Fogelholm 2005b). Psychological factors are self-image and motivation. Experienced sportiness and need to success increase a person's physical activity, but mental problems like depression decreases a person's willing to exercise instead. In addition to individual factors also environment is affecting to the physical activity. These are physical environment like living area, season and social environment like family and friends. Good facilities to do sport is enhancing physical activity as well as encouraging atmosphere from family and friends. Contrary poor facilities and parents and friends that are not encouraging or doing sport have retardant effect on physical activity. Both individual and environmental factors affect adolescent physical activity, organised or not, how often and what amount, intensity and quality of the activity are. (Laakso, Nupponen, Koivusilta, Rimpelä & Telama 2008; Fogelholm 2005b.)

There are recommendations for physical activity in Finland. Recommendations are general for school aged children. It is made from health promoting physical activity's point of view to apply for all 7-18 years old children and adolescent - also for those who need special support. Recommendations are exercising at least two hours per day of physical activity for 7 years old children and at least one hour per day for 18 years old. These are the amounts of physical activity that can decrease the health risks of inactivity. Although to achieve optimal benefits children and adolescents should move even more. Physical activity is one qualification for healthy growth and development for school aged children, it is also important for children wellbeing. (Lasten ja nuorten liikunnan asiantuntijaryhmä 2008.)

## 5 ADOLESCENCE

In a big picture adolescence is almost impossible to define specifically, because starting and ending of this stage is individual for everyone. According Aaltonen, Ojanen, Vihunen & Vilen (1999) adolescence can be divided into physiological, cognitive, sociological and personality maturation. Also Gullotta, Adams, Gerald, Markstrom & Carol (1999) use these same definitions. Adolescence can be divided into three stages which are preadolescence (about 11-14 years), middle adolescence (about 15-18 years) and late adolescence (about 19-25 years) (Aaltonen et al. 1999).

Physiological definition of adolescence is when reproductive organs and secondary sex characteristics starts to mature in late childhood. Adulthood starts when reproductive system is fully matured. The period between these is counted as adolescence. (Gullotta et al. 1999.) Changes in hormonal action cause biological activation which leads to maturity. Maturation time can vary even years between individuals and the order of the physical changes can vary even between siblings. (Aaltonen et al. 1999.)

During cognitive maturation adolescent creates a picture of the world around him/her. He/she develops independent thinking processes and this includes strong criticism and questioning. In personality maturation adolescent's identity is formed and strengthened. Identity means finding own individuality. Adolescence is important face of building up self-image. Adolescent compares him-/herself in relation to how he/she success against developmental challenges that he/she has created to him-/herself. That is why it is important to get positive feedback. (Aaltonen et al. 1999.)

Social maturation includes development of social relationships, interaction skills and formal and informal learning. During social maturation adolescent becomes independent. (Aaltonen et al. 1999, 90-114.) A part of adolescence is roiling phase which is called crisis of human relations because there are big changes in adolescent's relationships (Himberg, Laakso, Näätänen, Peltola & Vidjeskog 2000, 95). Adolescent adopts socially acceptable behavior and adopt values, norms and behavior models of the society (Aaltonen et al. 1999, 90-114).

## 6 RESEARCH TASKS

The purpose of this thesis was to describe how school wellbeing has changed in Ahmo School during Finnish Schools on the Move –programme and to provide developmental proposals for the future. An aim of the thesis from KUAS point of view was a chance to learn more about connection between exercising and school wellbeing and adapt it to the teaching. Municipality of Siilinjärvi got valuable information about the reasons that have influenced to school wellbeing and proposals how to develop wellbeing in all schools in Siilinjärvi in the future.

The research tasks are:

- How has Finnish Schools on the Move –programme enhanced school wellbeing in Ahmo School?
- How has Finnish Schools on the Move influenced to the relationships in the school?
- How could teachers and students improve school wellbeing even more?

## 7 RESEARCH METHODS

In this thesis the used method was qualitative research. According to Veal (1997, 35) the qualitative approach to research is generally not concerned with numbers. The qualitative research is implemented with smaller amount of people with a great deal of information. The collected data is not usually presented as numbers. The aim of qualitative research is to describe real life (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 161). It includes the understanding of diversity of reality. In qualitative research the subject is examined as holistic as possible. However, it reflects the values of the researchers.

In this research qualitative method was suitable because there is already plenty of statistic information about *Finnish Schools on the Move* but in this research the aim was to deepen the understanding why the programme has been so successful. For finding those answers qualitative research offered the right tools.

The data was collected by a focus group discussion and individual interviews as theme interviews. First there were a focus group discussion and after that the participants were interviewed independently to deepen the information about the subject. Qualitative interviews are more like conversations than predetermined formal events. “The researcher explores a few general topics to help uncover the participant’s views but otherwise respects how the participant frames and structures to responses.” (Marshall & Rossman 1999, 108.) According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2002) the idea of interview is a really simple: When wanting to know what a person thinks or why she or he behaves like she/he does, it is meaningful to ask herself or himself. The interview is a flexible way to collect the data. The moderator has a possibility to repeat, define answers and correct the misunderstandings. It is important to remember that good sides of the interviews can also be problematic. For example designing the interviews is time consuming and situation in the interview must be safe and trustworthy for the subject to get reliable answers. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 206.)

In this thesis a focus group discussion means discussion taking place in a group and there was a moderator who is using a prearranged themes to lead the discussion. According to Pötsönen and Välimaa (1998) group interview can be executed in many ways. It can be structured when it is more like structured individual interview executed in a group. A focus group discussion reminds a theme interview happened in a group. Also group interview is seen as a flexible and fast way to collect information and usually it brings a lot of data

(Krueger 1994, as cited in Pötsönen & Pennanen 1998, 3). In this thesis focus group was formed from five boys from grades 7 to 9 who are active in *Finnish Schools on the Move* in Ahmo School. According to Pötsönen and Pennanen (1998) the ideal group size is from 4 to 10. It is important that the groups is small enough so everyone has chance to talk, but on the other hand it needs to be large enough to get variety of different point of views.

The group was chosen with a help of physical education teacher from Ahmo School. The aim was to reveal thoughts of those students who are active in the Finnish Schools on the Move. 12 pupils were asked to participate and 5 of them participated. The interviews were carried out during one day. First there were a focus group discussion. Because there were two researchers, the other was a moderator and the other worked as a bookkeeper. After that the individual interview times were agreed and the interviews were carried out during rest of the day. There were always one moderator and the interviewee in the interview. All the interviews were carried out in a small fitness studio. That was the facility that felt sporty and casual enough. All the participants and the moderator were sitting on floor in a circle and that made the event probably more relaxed.

The interviews were recorded. After interviews the recorded data was transcribed. Transcription is a method of writing recorded data in written words. Transcription can be written from word to word or it can be written selectively for example from specific themes. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000.) In this research the transcription was written from word to word and after that the data was analysed. Transcription was time consuming and lot of accuracy was needed. To save the time we divided the recorded data so that both of the authors were writing half of the interviews. If there were unclear records, the author was asking the other author to listen it as well, and together the right answers were found.

Content analysis is a basic method which can be used in all qualitative research (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2002). Qualitative analysis is often shared for inductive and deductive analysis. In this research the data was analysed by inductive content analysis. Inductive content analysis moves from the specific to the general. The analysis starts with preparation phase. First the authors selected the unit of analysis. In this research the unit was a sentence, which often included one theme. A sentence was clear unit and the authors thought it to be the most suitable way to analyse interviews. The researchers decided to analyse only the manifest content, so all the nonverbal signals were left out of the analysis. Otherwise the analysed data would have come too large to analyse. (Elo & Kyngäs 2007.)

After the preparation phase the authors moved to the organization phase. According to Elo and Kyngäs (2007) that includes open coding, creating categories and abstraction. Open coding means that the notes and headings are written in the text while reading it. In this research the authors read the data many times through and made notes and headings to it. After that the authors created the categories and grouped the list of categories. The purpose of the categorization is to describe the phenomenon, to increase understanding and generate knowledge. A focus group interview was categorized separate to individual interviews. The categories started to form in the preparation phase. The more categories were formed, the more units were moving under the categories until the right place were found for the units. Sometimes the unit would have been suitable for many categories and in those points the authors discussed and decided together what category would be the most suitable for it. The emphasis was in school wellbeing and overall wellbeing, which might influenced to the categorization. Finally abstraction was done which meant formulating categories. In this research the authors used sub-category, generic category and main category (see figure 1).

27. Parempi kunto 28. Jaksaa paremmin 42. Kunto kasvanut. 43. Ylimääräinen liikunta annos.	Kunnon kohottamista	JAKSAMINEN
107. Liika energia puretaan liikuntaan jotta jaksaa keskittyä tunneilla. 29. Liikkuvassa koulussa pääsee välitunnilla purkamaan energiaa liikkumalla. 35. Liikkuvassa koulussa saa purettua energiaa. 21. Saa kulutettua ylimääräistä energiaa.	Energian purkaminen	
38. Ilman liikkuvaa koulu häsläisin tunneilla paljon enemmän. 105. Oppilaiden täytyy parantaa työrauhaa. 22. Jaksaa olla tunneilla. 39. Ilman liikkuvaa koulua tulisi keksittyä kaikkea järjestöntä ja tyhmää. 36. Liikkuvan koulun avulla pystyy keskittymään paremmin oppitunneilla itse opiskeluun.	Työrauha	

Figure 1. Example of categorizing individual interviews

## 8 RESULTS

Focus group discussion and individual interviews were analysed separately. Finnish Schools on the Move was experienced to be an important part of school wellbeing. Even the Finnish Schools on the Move -programme started as a small project but it has increased to be a big part of school's everyday actions. The interviewees experienced that activity of the pupils and provided activities has stayed on a same level also after the funding has ended. It was wished that Finnish Schools on the Move would spread to the other schools in Finland as well. Mostly the interviewees were really satisfied to the programme and did not see so much shortages in it.

*“The best thing, simply great (Finnish Schools on the Move).”*

*“Participants of the Finnish Schools on the Move are often different but the amount of participants has stayed the same.”*

### 8.1 Finnish Schools on the Move –Programme Enhancing School Wellbeing in Ahmo School

Ahmo School was experienced to be a comfortable place. The interviewees felt that it is nice to come to school and some thought that Ahmo School was nicer than elementary school has been. The interviews felt that they do not need to be afraid when they are coming to school and they had not seen bullying that much in the school.

*“It is nice to wake up and come to school every morning.”*

*“It is safe to come to this school.”*

*“Ahmo School is a comfortable place.”*

In focus group discussion the interviewees were mainly very satisfied for the activities that *Finnish Schools on the Move* provided. Versatility was experienced as important part of the Finnish Schools on the Move -programme. Variety of sports were good and interviewees mentioned mainly ball sports like basketball, football, floorball and table tennis, but also they mentioned that for example playing games like tag and trampoline jumping are possible.

Club activities were experienced as a good addition and interviewees felt it is good to have also other clubs such as music and art clubs.

*“In the hall there are three parts, with possibility to play from floorball and basketball to football, and whatever equipment there are.”*

*“The thing that there is a lot of equipment purchased, Finnish Schools on the Move probably effect on it.”*

The interviewees were satisfied with facilities of Ahmo School and thought there is enough place. Interviewees felt that use of facilities is active and it has remain well also after the funding has ended. One suggestion was that the small fitness studio should be open during breaks for boxing and wrestling.

*“Many schools doesn’t have this kind of facilities. So now when we have this kind of sports facilities, I hope that they were used.”*

In addition individual interviews revealed that activities were meaningful and interviewees were satisfied that there were possibility to choose what to do during the breaks. Club activities were felt easy to participate because they run in the school building.

*“In Finnish Schools on the Move you can do what you like.”*

*“Everybody can exercise in the school.”*

*“Sports facilities make Ahmo School more unique than other schools.”*

In focus group discussion the interviewees felt that activity in the school has increased along *Finnish Schools on the Move*. However some of the pupils do not participate to the activities.

*“There are a lot of those who participates actively. In different days there is a different amount of people.”*

*“Then there are those who don’t participate at all but sit on the hallways.”*

In individual interviews it was discovered that interviewees themselves are active daily. Activity of interviewees is versatile, for example parkour, table tennis, floorball and gym training were mentioned. Some of the interviewees has found a new hobby among *Finnish Schools on the Move*.

The interviewees said that the programme has increased their fitness level. It was seen as additional exercising chance during the day. Exercising during school days has been felt to increase school wellbeing and the breaks were experienced as a highlight of the day.

*“Without Finnish Schools on the Move I would cause trouble much more during the lessons.”*

## 8.2 Finnish Schools on the Move Influencing to the Relationships in the School

*Finnish Schools on the Move* has helped interviewees to develop social skills. By participating to the activities they had met new people.

*“When you go to play something and there is somebody else you will find common activity that you can talk with.”*

*“It is a big thing here in the school that you have friends.”*

Interviewees mentioned that there are rather many friend groups that participates together. Interviewees felt that to some of the groups are easy to join and some are not.

*“It might not be easy to join if there is a tight friend group, unknown people don’t necessarily get into the group.”*

Individual interviews strongly emphasize importance of group activities with friends. It was also experienced that with a friend it is easier to approach a group. It seems that friends are important part of school wellbeing.

*“You can spend time and be active with friends.”*

*“With friend it is easier to go and ask if it is possible to join the group.”*

It was also experienced that with help of the Finnish Schools on the Move –programme it was easier to meet new people and get new friends. Mutual activity helped to talk with everyone.

*“With help of Finnish Schools on the Move I’ve got friends.”*

*“The friends I didn’t know that well before, I know better now.”*

In focus group discussion was emerged that teachers should participate more actively. Though some of the teachers are active but those are mostly physical education teachers. The interviewees felt that if teachers would participate more it would affect positively to the pupils. Activity of the teachers would help pupils to get to know the teachers better and thereby it would be easier for pupils to talk with familiar teachers.

*“It would be nice that teachers would get more active.”*

*“It brings more positive feeling that teachers participate, because there is so nice teachers.”*

*“Because of the common hobby, it is easier to go to talk (with teachers) if for example you have something important to say.”*

Similar results were seen in individual interviews. The interviewees felt that some of the teachers are more active than the others and they wish that the teachers would participate more. Especially the interviewees wished playful competitions between the teachers and the pupils.

*“The teachers would choose a sport that the pupils and the teachers would play together.”*

The interviewees felt that there are good teachers in Ahmo School. Along with *Finnish Schools on the Move* the interviewees have gotten to know some of the teachers better and they felt that is easier to go and talk even with unfamiliar teachers.

*“It is much easier to be with PE teachers.”*

*“Thanks to the Finnish Schools on the Move, I know few teachers better.”*

*“Thanks to the Finnish Schools on the Move, I have the courage to discuss with teachers.”*

Already in the very beginning of the focus group discussion the need for participation of the girls in the Finnish Schools on the Move –programme emerged. All of the interviewees were boys, but they felt that the girls are not participating enough. The girls were wished to participate more. It was suggested that the girls would have their own activities where boys are not participating but similarly it was wished to have united action between boys and girls.

*“There could be more things that girls are interested.”*

*“It probably should be asked from girls, what they like and try to arrange such an action.”*

*“The best would be that everyone are together regardless of gender.”*

According to the interviewees one reason for lack of girls in *Finnish Schools on the Move* was shyness. It was assumed that girls had not the courage to participate especially if they were alone and there were older boys. However with friends it is easier for girls to participate. It seems that activity of the girls' increases from grade 7 to grade 9.

*“No girl have the courage to participate alone, but with the friends.”*

*“Girls are shy because there is a lot of boys, especially older boys.”*

*“Girls in grade 9 have started to be more active towards Finnish Schools on the Move.”*

The individual interviews strengthened the views that emerged in the focus group discussion. It was seen that girls are active occasionally. The interviewed boys believed that girls would get enthusiastic about the Finnish Schools on the Move -programme. It was also mentioned that activity of girls has increased from grade 7 to grade 9 especially during grade 9.

In individual interviews some of the interviewees felt that class spirit has improved among their class by influence of the Finnish School on the Move -programme, but the others have not experienced any changes in the class spirit. However atmosphere in the whole school was experienced to improve. The interviewees experienced that *Finnish School on the Move* has been a good way to learn to be with pupils from different classes. They felt that even unfamiliar pupils can play together which helps to improve atmosphere in the school. As an example classes held by tutor pupils were mentioned. Those are classes which tutor pupils from grade 9 held for 7<sup>th</sup> grades to improve class spirit. These classes were considered as an important and it was suggested that there should be more tutor classes.

*“Our class spirit has improved because of Finnish Schools on the Move.”*

*“I believe that Finnish Schools on the Move has improved the school atmosphere.”*

In the focus group discussion, *Finnish School on the Move* has been experienced to significantly effect on energy level. Breaks were seen as important part of a school day. The breaks were seen as a way to release redundant energy, but on the other hand it was a way to increase energy levels. Those were considered to keep working peace during classes and help to focus on studying.

*“It keeps the working peace that during the breaks you can be active and release energy.”*

*“You can release energy instead of doing stupid things.”*

### 8.3 Teachers and Students Improving School Wellbeing in the Future

One important thing that came up in focus group discussion was encouragement. Encouragement was experienced important and it was also wished to increase. The interviewees thought that the teachers should encourage pupils more. Especially they thought that girls and 7<sup>th</sup> grade pupils’ need special encouragement.

*“Everyone should be encouraged to play, get involved to activities and do in a group.”*

Also in individual interviews the interviewees thought that encouragement is important part in increasing activity. The teachers could encourage more but the interviewees thought that the teacher should be encouraged as well. Shyness can be one reason why some of the pupils do not participate to the activities.

*“The teachers could encourage to do more.”*

Group activities and cooperation were experienced as an important part to increase school wellbeing and enjoyment. More group activities were wished. Playful competitions especially between the teachers and the pupils, activity days and group activities between classes were activities that the interviewees would like to have more. It was experienced that group activity and playing would increase class spirit.

*“More activities between classes.”*

*“Activity days could be three times in a year.”*

In individual interviews the same facts were noticed. It was assumed that different kind of events could increase activity. The interviewees suggested both group activities and sports events to increase schools atmosphere. The interviewees also suggested a day where the Finnish Schools on the Move –programme’s activities and facilities would be introduced because they assumed that everyone is not familiar with all of the activities.

The interviewees were mostly satisfied of their own possibilities to influence. They experienced that there are activities they like and do not necessary need changes or additional activities.

*“As a student it would be hard to influence more.”*

As an influencing channel they suggested “idea box” where pupils could write suggestions what they would like to have. They wished that those who do not participate would tell what they want to do, this could be a way to get more pupils involved in to the activities.

*“There could be a certain place where everyone could go and write suggestions of what they want to do.”*

Satisfaction to own influencing possibilities also strongly appeared in individual interviews. Specifically one PE teacher was seen as an important influencing channel. The interviewees felt that he takes suggestions under consideration. The interviewees understood that a pupil cannot influence on how much money school can use to *Finnish School on the Move*, but they wished that the ideas would be executed as well as possible.

*“Well stated ideas will always be under consideration.”*

*“New activities can be suggested through teachers.”*

## 9 DISCUSSION

In this chapter the authors describe the reliability and ethicality of the research and discuss the reasons behind the results. Also the authors describe their personal development in the thesis process.

### 9.1 Reasons behind the Results

The results about the school wellbeing were mainly positive. It was experienced that *Finnish Schools on the Move* is a good thing and it has increased school wellbeing. It was also seen that *Finnish Schools on the Move* made the school more comfortable and provided meaningful activities. However, developmental points were found by the pupils.

Ahmo School felt a safe and comfortable place, to where it is nice to come every day. Safe and comfortable school has a strong connection to wellbeing (Konu, 2002). *Finnish Schools on the Move* was seen as an important issue affecting school wellbeing and making school days more enjoyable. The programme provides meaningful activities, and for those, who participate to the activities, it was a highlight of the day. Activities were versatile, which was assumed to increase participation. However, it is still important to remember that the research deepens the views of those who are active in the programme. In the other students' point of view, the programme might not have that big influence to school wellbeing.

According to Konu (2002) learning atmosphere influences school wellbeing. Learning atmosphere can be increased by exercising, which has seen enhancing wellbeing (Vuori et al. 2004; Ingerttilä & Jokikokko 2012). In the research, activities were seen as moments where pupils can release redundant energy and help to keep working peace during the lessons. This is important for the whole class. Everyone has chance to focus on the class with help of the active breaks. This can have influence on studying results and on class spirit. It might also save the teachers energy, when they do not need to argue with over active pupils. The teachers' point of view would give valuable information about the peace during the lesson and if they have seen any changes after the programme has started.

It was experienced that atmosphere in the school has increased during *Finnish Schools on the Move*. This occurs from the fact that all classes, also from different grades, has blended in to

activity units. This bring classes more together and makes it easier for the pupils to create new relationships, which helps to increase school atmosphere. However, the class spirit was not seen changed strongly. Some of the interviewees felt that spirit has increased in their class, but the others felt there have not been changes. It seemed that class spirit has increased in those classes, where most of pupils are active in *Finnish Schools on the Move*. It might be that if the class is active in the programme, they are more together also during the breaks and that might enhance class spirit.

Group activities and events were the things that the interviewees wanted to have more. These things could increase school atmosphere and class spirit. It could also increase visibility of *Finnish Schools on the Move* and this way increase popularity of *Finnish Schools on the Move*.

*Finnish Schools on the Move* has helped the pupils to create new relationships with other pupils, but also with the teachers. Group activities were experienced as a tool to create connection between pupils. It also provided mutual, meaningful activities with the friends. The programme was seen as a channel to improve social skills, which can be seen in everyday life. For example socialising with the teachers was experienced easier, especially with the teachers that a pupil met in *Finnish Schools on the Move* –activities. However, most of the interviewees experienced that it is now easier to approach all the teachers. According to Konu (2002) social relationships are part of wellbeing. For school aged children and adolescents those are relationships between peers, pupils and teacher. Physical activity has been noted to have a positive effect on relationships to above-mentioned (Ingerttilä & Jokikokko 2012).

The encouragement was seen as one of the most important things to increase activity. The interviewees felt that the teachers are not encouraging enough. Especially the interviewees thought that all 7<sup>th</sup> graders and especially girls should be encouraged more. It might be that the teachers do not have the time or energy, in addition of their own teaching, to concentrate on encouraging the pupils to the other activities. According to Konu (2002) encouragement has a significant role of increasing school wellbeing.

Again and again the role of teachers came up from the answers. It was wished that teachers would participate more to the activities. It was felt that just a few teachers are participating to the activities that are provided. Main reason why teacher are not participating might be that they are subject teachers and their time is limited. Other reason might be the teacher's motivation. Is it so that most of the teachers do not want to spend their breaks with the pupils? Even if the project has generally been seen as a good thing, maybe teachers have not

adopted it. Could participating to the programme be a way for the teachers to co-operate with the pupils better? In our opinion the role of the teachers should be emphasized more. That would increase communality in the school and make it more comfortable place to be.

In addition to encouragement, the teachers were hoped to participate more to the activities. The interviewees felt that participation of the teachers would also encourage the pupils to get more active. At the moment it is mostly the PE teachers who are active. The interviewees wished competitions between the teachers and the pupils, this would also develop school atmosphere and social relationships.

According to Research of National Activity (Kansallinen liikuntatutkimus 2010) there are no differences between genders. Instead Numminen and Välimäki (1999, 84) argue that before puberty boys are physically more active than girls. In this research the activity of girls has experienced to be less than boys. It was wished that girls would get more active to *Finnish Schools on the Move*. The interviewees suggested that the girls should get more their own activities, but as well it was wished to get more group activities, where everyone could participate regardless of gender. For that the interviewed boys suggested more encouragement for the girls.

As it was seen from the interviews the programme involves more boys than girls. *Finnish Schools on the Move* has a lot of activities that are more popular among boys than girls. It is difficult to know if this is a reason why girls are not participating, or if this is the result because the girls are not that active. In the future it would be important to research girl opinion about the programme. One aspect of discussing are the behavioral culture differences. Is it so that boys behavioral culture allow more playing together when girls are not willing to play and get sweaty during the breaks? If this is a reason, what could be get done that behavior culture could change? In the future those are interesting points that could be researched more.

Authors sees that Finnish school system is nowadays strict and most of the classes are held in the classes where pupils are sitting most of the time. Breaks are mostly just for 15 minutes and that do not allow to use the sport facilities. Even Ahmo School has paid attention to that and they are having a longer activity break in the school, we assume that this is not general policy in all schools in Finland. Would it be too radical solution to break down the structure of the school day and build it up again to allow pupils to be more creative and physically active? For example Maarit Korhonen has written a pamphlet *Herää koulu!* where

she questions the structure of present school system (Heikkilä 2014). As it was seen in results of this research active school days have noted to have a positive influence to school wellbeing. Could this be a developmental point in the future? The researchers of this study suggest this subject should be studied more.

This research provided views and opinions from the pupils that are active in *Finnish Schools on the Move*. Interviewees experienced the programme enhancing school wellbeing. The research deepened inside views among those boys who are active in the programme and has experienced it as a good tool of making school days more enjoyable. In the future it would be good to research more girls and reasons why some are not active. *Finnish Schools on the Move* has been researched quantitatively, so this kind of qualitative research provided deeper information about the programme.

## 9.2 Reliability and Ethicality

In any kind of research errors are tried to be avoided but still there are differences between validity and reliability. In qualitative research reliability and validity differ from quantitative research and those have gotten different interpretation. (Hirsjärvi et al.2009, 231.) According to Hirsjärvi et al. (2009) it is nevertheless important that those issues are discussed somehow. Validity and reliability is increased by specific report of implementation of the research. In qualitative research accuracy has to be considered during all faces of the research.

According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2013) criteria of reliability are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Credibility means that participants of the research have been described well enough and collected data is evaluated as honestly as possible. Credibility can be divided into truth value, applicable, permanent and neutral. Transferability means that results can be transferred to the other context with certain terms even generalisation are not possible. Dependability means that research has been executed by general principles of scientific research. The fourth criteria of reliability is confirmability. It means that results have been described as precisely that reader can follow the researcher's rationalization.

In this research confirmability has been taken into account so that all the phases of the research process have been tried to describe as accurately and honestly as possible. According to Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000) in the research the aim is to reveal examinees views and their world as well as possible. The critical point is when moving on from data analysis to inter-

pretation (Pötsönen & Pennanen 1998). In this research dialog between two researchers increased the reliability and validity. Also cooperation with teacher coordinator who has lot of experience from qualitative research and inductive content analysis strengthened the reliability and validity.

Ethical behaviour is important in research, as in any other field of human activity. Certain ethical considerations, concerned with such matters as plagiarism and honesty in reporting of results, arise in all research, but additional issues arise when the research involves human subject, in both the biological and social sciences. The principles underlying research ethics are universal: they concern things like honesty and respect for the rights of individuals. (Veal 1997, 198.)

Ethicality has to be considered when doing the research. Babbie (1994, 448-455) points out the general agreements that are shared by researchers. First, all subject's participation must be voluntary and the research should never cause harm to the participants. It is important that anonymity and confidentiality must be considered and discussed with the participants. Furthermore when analysing and reporting the results are discussed truthfully and negative findings should be pointed out honestly. All in all honesty and openness serve science and can help fellow researchers. (Babbie 1994, 448-455.) This all are part of dependability.

Participating to the research was voluntary. The participants were chosen with help of the working life supervisor. He chose 12 active pupils who are active in *Finnish Schools on the Move* and five of them volunteered. The participants filled consent form; because they were underage parents had to give them permission to participate. The data was collected anonymously and the participants cannot be identified from the answers. Interviews were recorded and only the researchers handled the answers and after analysing the data, records and all written material were disposed of.

The interviews were made to be as comfortable and relaxed as possible. The working life supervisor has informed the participants beforehand, and before the interviews started the moderator told the meaning of the research and reminded about the anonymity of the participants. The participant had possibility to ask questions about the research and the interviews before the actual interviews started. It probably made the interviews easier for the interviewees that the researchers were not so much older than the pupils, and the other researcher was from the same school than the research was done. Also we found out that a

focus group discussion were good introduction for the subject before going to the deeper in independent interviewees.

Because this was the first research for the researchers, the transcription and especially reduction and abstraction were found difficult. Also the interviews were first for the researchers and because there was no possibility to pre-test the themes, it brought uncertainty to the interviews. One issue to contemplate is the timing of the interviews. All the interview were executed during one day; after the focus group discussion the independent interviews took place. Independent interviews did not probably deepen the views as much as the researchers wished.

One matter to discuss the credibility of the research is the honesty of the answers. The interviewees might tried to please the researchers to make the Finnish Schools on the Move – programme look better. Also giving a positive image of themselves might influenced to the answers of the interviewees. Because the subject of the research was *Finnish Schools on the Move* effecting on school wellbeing, the views of the interviewees was mostly related to the physical activities. According the interviewees, school wellbeing is equal to physical activity. It is obvious that the research provided generally good results about wellbeing, because the interviewees were highly involved to the programme. However the aim of the research was to deepen the information among those how are active in the programme.

Transferability means that results can be transferred to the other context with certain terms. Because the sample of the research was small the results cannot be generalized. However, the results are similar to previous researches about *Finnish Schools on the Move* and wellbeing. For example research of LIKES (2012) pointed out similar results.

### 9.3 Professional Development

We chose this particular subject, because we both are interested in adolescence's exercising habits and how exercising is influencing wellbeing. In the future we both are interested in working at school environment or in a work that are connected to adolescence.

Writing the thesis was a long and educating process. Neither of us has experience in executing research. The starting required a lot of reviewing literature and orientating ourselves to the process. Especially understanding qualitative research was challenging for us, but interest

of the topic gave us motivation. Finding appropriate references was challenging and time consuming. For example definition of school wellbeing was very challenging to find and there were no strict definition of it.

Developing the interviewing questions and executing the interviews was challenging, but it went better than expected. We experienced our first surprises in transcription because of it was time consuming and required accuracy. All in all inductive content analyzing process was very challenging for first-timers, but because of its versatility, it was the best option of process the subject.

However the thesis process gave us a lot of experience. It taught us that research process requires lots of time and resources from the researchers. We learnt the basics of the executing the research especially in qualitative research. Because of time limitations and doing other studies at the same time, we learnt to control our time better and get the results when it was needed. Even we needed to make some changes in our timetable, we got everything done in a time.

We saw the pair working as a strength and as a weakness. The strength of it was discussion between the authors. Discussions opened new views and provided needed material. Also the authors were encouraging and pushing each other forward in the process. However, pair work had its' weaknesses. Sometimes opinions of authors did not meet, and we needed to make compromises. Also the scheduling was sometimes challenging. Nevertheless we saw pair work more as a strength than weakness. It taught us beneficial tool for future.

The results of the research strengthened our views in *Finnish Schools on the Move's* positive influence on school wellbeing. We learnt that encouragement is one of the most important part of healthy school environment. This is one thing we are taking to a working life with us. Our knowledge about adolescence's attitude toward active lifestyle became deeper and we believe that we use this knowledge in the future.

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## LIST OF APPENDICES

- Consent form 1
- Consent form 2

## **HYVÄ TUTKIMUKSEEN OSALLISTUJA,**

Olemme liikunnanohjaajaopiskelijoita Kajaanin ammattikorkeakoulusta ja teemme opinnäytetyötä Liikkuva koulu hankkeen vaikutuksesta kouluhyvinvointiin.

### **Mitä ja miten tutkitaan?**

Opinnäytetyömme tarkoituksena on tutkia, miten Liikkuva koulu – hanke on vaikuttanut Ahmon koulun ilmapiiriin ja kouluhyvinvointiin. Tutkimustieto kerätään ryhmä- sekä yksilöhaastatteluin, joihin valitut opiskelijat osallistuvat. Hävitämme tutkimusmateriaalin opinnäytetyön valmistuttua.

### **Tietosuoja**

Kaikki tutkimukseen liittyvä tapahtuu luottamuksellisesti, tutkimukseen osallistujia ei mainita nimillä tutkimuksessa ja tutkimusaineistoa säilytetään huolella. Opinnäytetyöntekijöinä meitä sitoo vaitiolovelvollisuus, ja antamanne vastaukset jäävät ainoastaan meidän käyttöömmme. Käsittelemme keräämämme tiedot laadullisin menetelmin. Tulokset raportoidaan siten, etteivät yksittäisen henkilön tiedot ole niistä tunnistettavissa. Tutkimukseen osallistuminen on vapaaehtoista kirjallisen suostumuksen perusteella. Pyydämme suostumustanne oheisella lomakkeella. Teillä on oikeus kysyä lisätietoja ja vastaamme mielellämme kysymyksiinne.

*Ystävällisin terveisin,*

Anna Tokola  
Kajaanin ammattikorkeakoulu  
Liikunnanohjaajaopiskelija

Niko Malvila  
Kajaanin ammattikorkeakoulu  
Liikunnanohjaajaopiskelija

Yhteyshenkilö Ahmon koululla:

Mikko Perttinä

**SUOSTUMUSLOMAKE HAASTATTELUUN OSALLISTUMISEKSI**

Olen saanut riittävästi tietoa opinnäytetyöstä, ja sitä varten kerättävästä aineistosta, joka tutkii Liikkuva koulu hankkeen vaikutuksia Ahmon koulun ilmapiiriin ja kouluhyvinvointiin. Olen tietoinen siitä, että osallistumiseni on vapaaehtoista, ja että voin keskeyttää osallistumiseni milloin tahansa ilman, että se vaikuttaa mitenkään kohteluuni nyt tai vastaisuudessa.

Olen tietoinen siitä, että antamani haastattelu nauhoitetaan. Ymmärrän, että antamiani vastauksia käsitellään ehdottomasti luottamuksellisesti. Tulokset raportoidaan siten, ettei henkilötietoni ole niistä tunnistettavissa. Osallistun vapaaehtoisesti tutkimukseen ymmärtäen, etteivät tutkimuksen tekijät luovuta henkilökohtaisia vastauksiani kenellekään ulkopuoliselle. Luotan siihen, että haastattelija hävittää nauhoitetun haastattelun opinnäytetyön valmistuttua.

Osallistun haastatteluun \_\_\_\_

Paikka ja aika \_\_\_\_\_

Osallistujan allekirjoitus \_\_\_\_\_

Nimenselvennös \_\_\_\_\_

Huoltajan allekirjoitus \_\_\_\_\_

Nimenselvennös \_\_\_\_\_