**Ministerial consent: Form A**

Investigators Details

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| Name of principal investigator: |  |
| Title of research protocol:  |  |
| Institutional Affiliation: |  |
| Postal Address: |  |
| Physical Address: |  |
| E-mail: |  |
| Phone: |  |
| Fax: |  |
| Date of application: |  |
| Signature of applicant: |  |

**APPLICATION:**

1. **Condition 1: The research objectives cannot be achieved except by the participation of minors**

The research is on the promotion of the cognitive functioning of children in the late childhood. As children during the late childhood phase are in a specific development phase that poses certain challenges, their cognitive functioning will differ from those of adults and it will not be possible to do the study on adults and to generalize the results to children during the late childhood phase.

1. **Condition 2: The research is likely to lead to an improved scientific understanding of certain conditions, diseases or disorders affecting minors**

Once the research is finished there will be a better understanding of the social functioning of children in late childhood and factors that may possibly influence it positively and negatively. Information on how social functioning can be promoted amongst children in late childhood in order to obtain higher levels of wellbeing will also be created.

1. **Condition 3: Any consent given is in line with public policy**

Permission to conduct the study will be obtained from the North-West University’s Health Research Ethics Committee, after which permission from the Department of Education and Sport Development of the North West province (Kenneth Kaunda district) will be requested, and then parental permission will be obtained from the participating children’s parents to approach the children. Written assent will also be obtained from children before they will be allowed to participate. Furthermore, the assent and parental permission will be informed and it will be made known to the children and their parents that a child’s assent and/or a parent’s permission is entirely voluntary and that it may be withdrawn at any time without any negative consequences or having to explain the reasons for the withdrawal. The above‑mentioned is in line with policies on how children should be treated as research participants and also on how research should be conducted in order to be ethically sound.

1. **Condition 4: The research does not pose a significant risk to minors, but the benefits of the research outweighs the risks**

The risks of participation for the children can be seen as moderate (medium) and are as follows:

* Learners are in a sensitive developmental phase, namely late childhood. The risks of participation will be possible vulnerabilities associated with this life stage, such as lack of competence and self-confidence.
* Learners may find the completion of quantitative measures as strange, since this is not an ordinary daily activity for children in late childhood.
* Emotions may be experienced in reaction to one/more items of the measuring instrument or measures/scales that need to be completed. However, this risk is comparable to the risk of events in everyday life, for example, something said to a learner by a peer being annoyed by his/her behaviour or something that the learner heard on television or read in a magazine.

The following precautions will be taken to manage and minimize the risks mentioned above:

* The developmental phase within which the learners are, will be taken into account and will guide the way in which they are treated.
* The basics of psychological measurement and measuring instruments will be explained to the learners and they will have the opportunity to ask question about it. Furthermore, psychological instruments will be used appropriately and all the ethical requirements usually associated with psychological assessment will be upheld, for instance confidentiality and professionalism.
* The school-based wellbeing programme will be presented by a clinical or educational psychologist. Furthermore, the above-mentioned psychologist will also do debriefing with the learners after the completion of the measuring instruments and after all the sessions in the school-based wellbeing program are completed.
* During the presentation of the school-based well-being programme, no learner will be allowed to exploit the vulnerabilities of another learner, should it surface. If the above happens, it will immediately be addressed in a way that is not humiliating but that will carry a strong message that it is not acceptable or to be repeated. If the clinical or educational psychologist became aware of a certain vulnerability that many learners experience, it may be discussed very briefly. Advice on how to improve it will also be provided briefly.

The benefits of the research are as follows for children:

* Learners will contribute to scientific knowledge (whether they only participate in pre-testing or also in the school-based wellbeing programme and post-testing by being part of either the experimental or control group);
* Learners who participate in pre-testing may be invited to take part in a school-based wellbeing programme;
* Learners who have been selected for further participation (school-based wellbeing programme and post-testing) by being part of either the experimental or control group, may learn more on or improve their social competencies. This may better their cognitive functioning and increase their well-being; and
* Learners who have been selected for further participation (school-based wellbeing programme and post-testing) by being part of either the experimental or control group, may develop a better understanding of their own cognitive abilities and the manner in which they can be improved.

The indirect benefits of the research are as follows:

* **To researchers:** Research provides the chance to expose and address existing vulnerabilities in learners.
* **To the school community:** Knowledge about cognitive functioning may assist schools in dealing more effectively with challenges related to this issue.
* **To the Department of Education:** The planned research will contribute to scientific knowledge that may affect learner-educator; learner-learner; parent-educator; educator‑learner; and, parent-learner relationships in the future. This knowledge may direct the pro-active implementation of school-based wellbeing programmes aimed at the intentional strengthening of learners versus the mere addressing of symptoms of ill‑being.