



LEARNER HAPPINESS INDEX





Learner Happiness Index

ALL DATA GATHERED OVER MXIT SOCIAL NETWORK
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basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Learner Happiness Index

What it is...

- Taking the **pulse** of South African learners
- Intended to bring awareness to the **overall wellbeing** of learners
- Exploring both **direct & indirect** factors affecting learners
- Bringing **the voice of the learner** into the conversation about their education
- Aimed at highlighting **broad areas of interest / concern relevant to education**, with the ability to explore deeper if desired.

What it's not...

- A definitive study into all factors influencing the wellbeing of learners.



Structure of study



Wave	Date	Number of interviews	Topics covered
Wave 1	May 2013	1342 interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mood• Learner retention• Teachers• Textbooks• Bullying• Drugs & alcohol
Wave 2	August 2013	4093 interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mood• Support factors• Learner confidence
Wave 3	March 2014	3293 interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mood• School perceptions
Total learner interviews		8728 interviews	

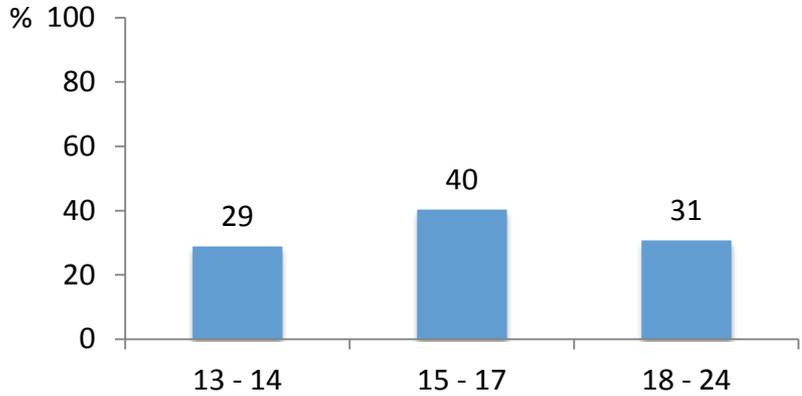
All data weighted to match SA learner proportions according to CENSUS
Data weighted in 3 dimensions (**age**, **gender** and **race**)

- Significant increase since wave 1
- Significant decrease since wave 1

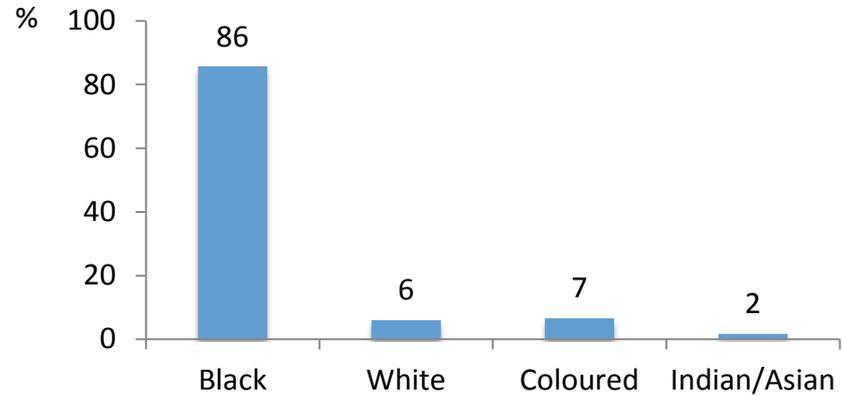


Sample Demographics

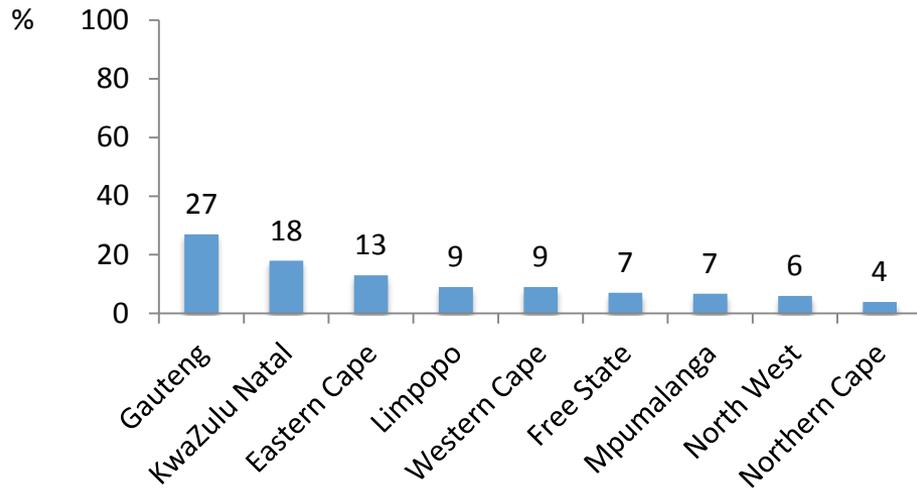
Age



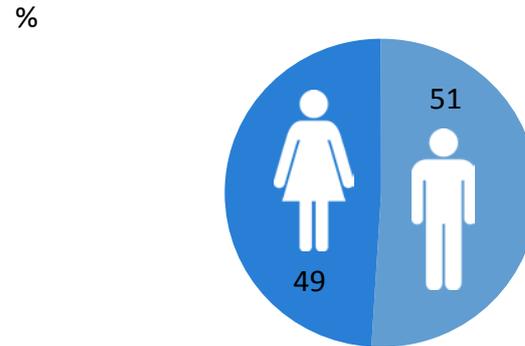
Race



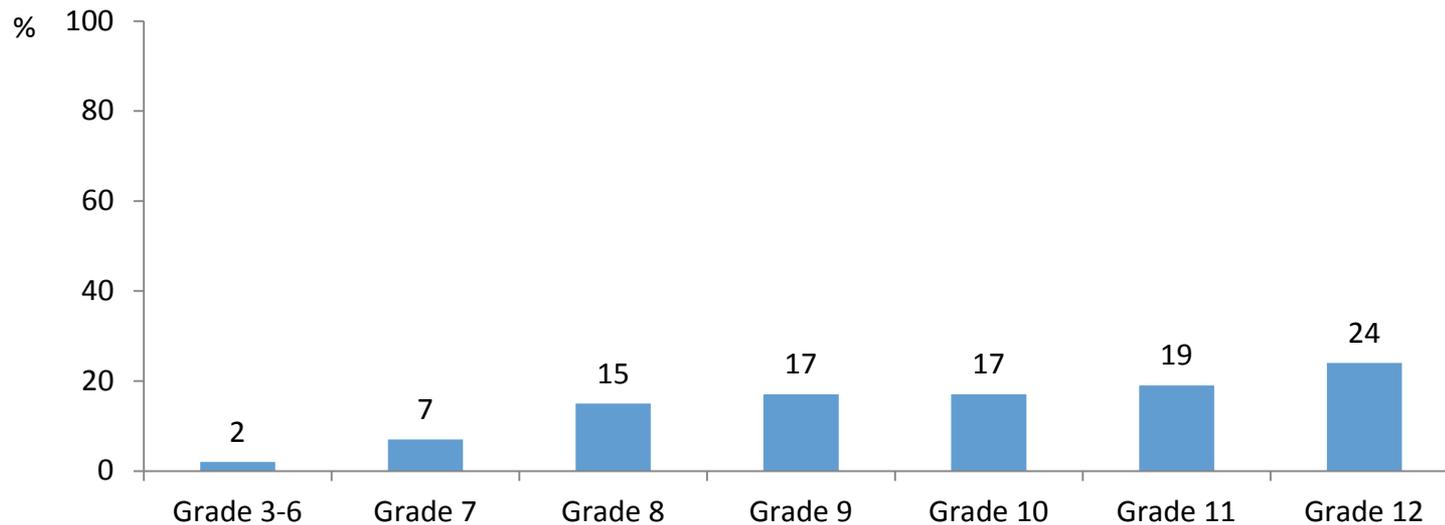
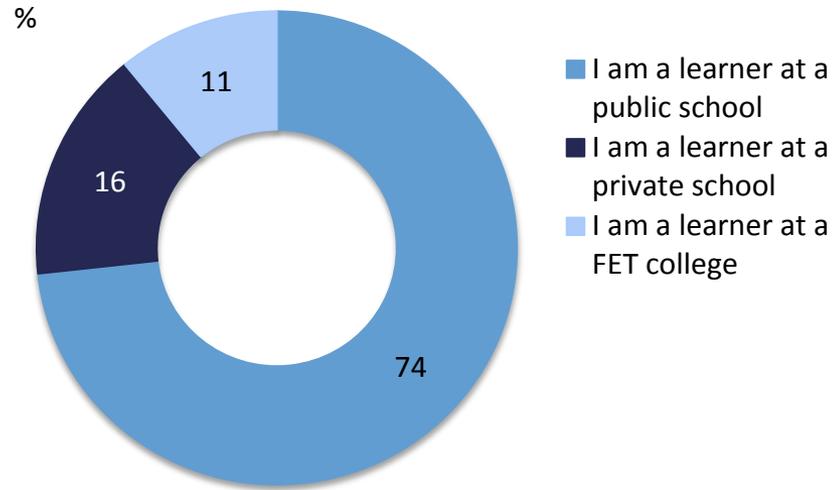
Province



Gender



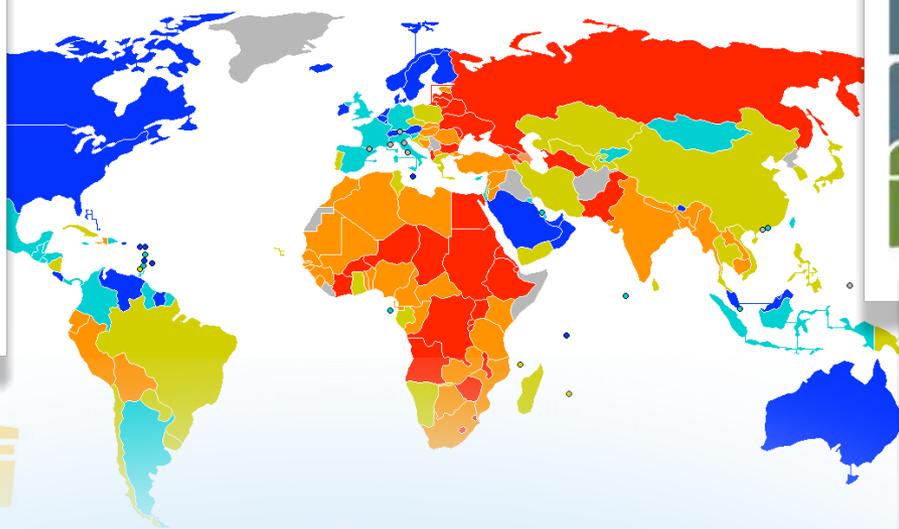
Type of educational institution & Grade





Mood

HAPPY PLANET INDEX



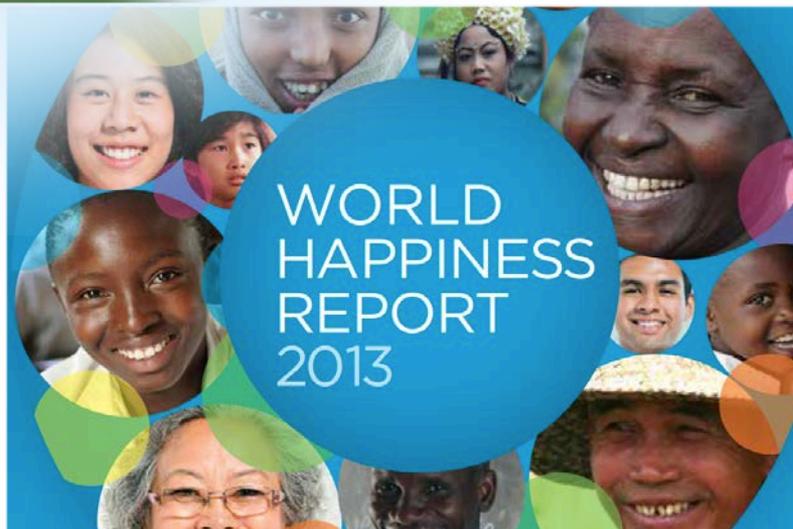
PROSPERITY INDEX



GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS

The HAPPINESS[®] Factor

Domains of Gross National Happiness



So why track Gross National Happiness (GNH)?

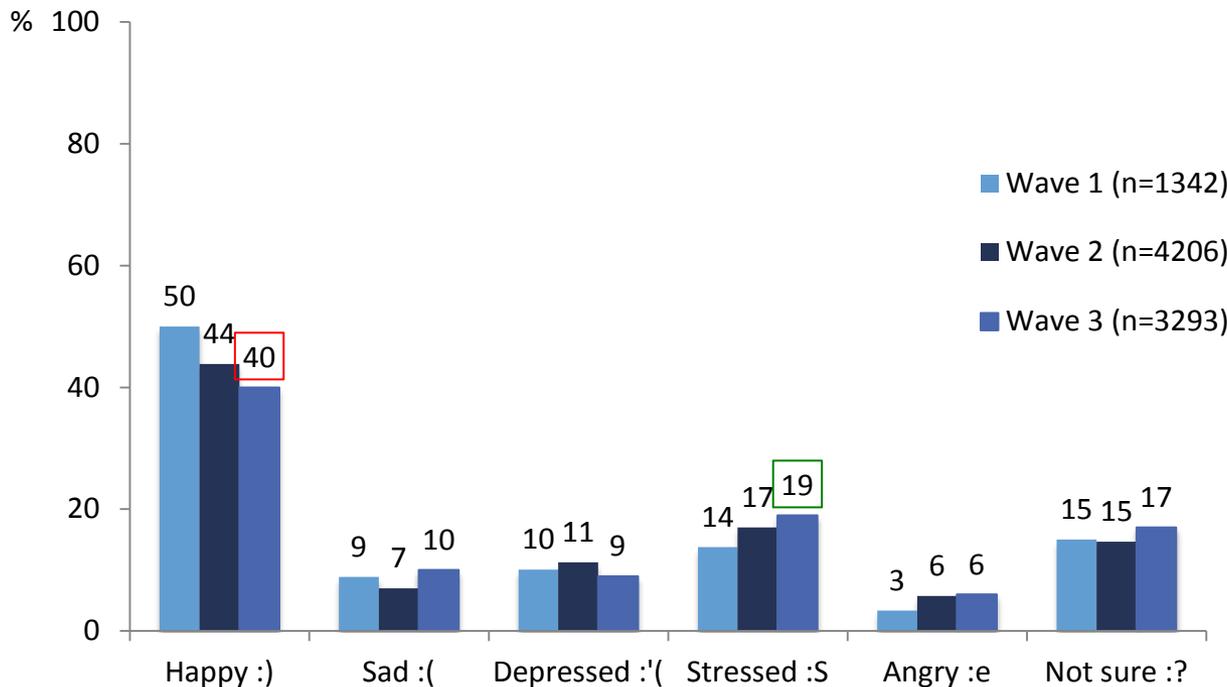
“Designed in an attempt to define an indicator and concept that measures quality of life or social progress in more holistic and psychological terms than only the economic indicators of gross domestic product (GDP)”



Mood comparison

On balance, happiness is the dominant mood amongst South African learners. Over the course of the LHI, stress levels were on the rise among learners, while the level of happiness decreased over time.

Total market



The decrease in happiness was evident across all school institution types.

In alignment with other race and gender groups, black female learners were more likely to rate themselves as happy than any other mood.

Q1 Which of the following best describes your mood in the last month or so?

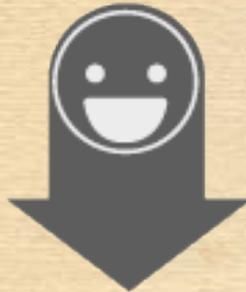


MOODS IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS



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Happiness & confidence for exams closely correlated with learners who:

- Rated their teachers more highly
- Had a quiet place to study
- Had someone to help them with their homework

STRESS INCREASES AND

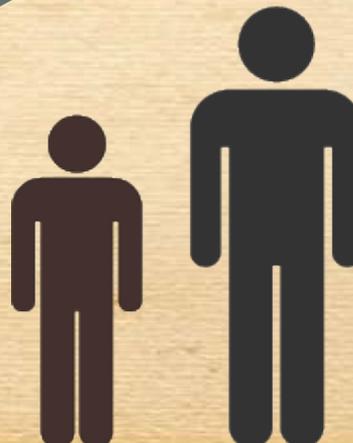
HAPPINESS DECREASES

AS CONFIDENCE

LEVELS

DROP

HAPPINESS DECREASED & STRESS INCREASED
AS LEARNERS GOT OLDER.



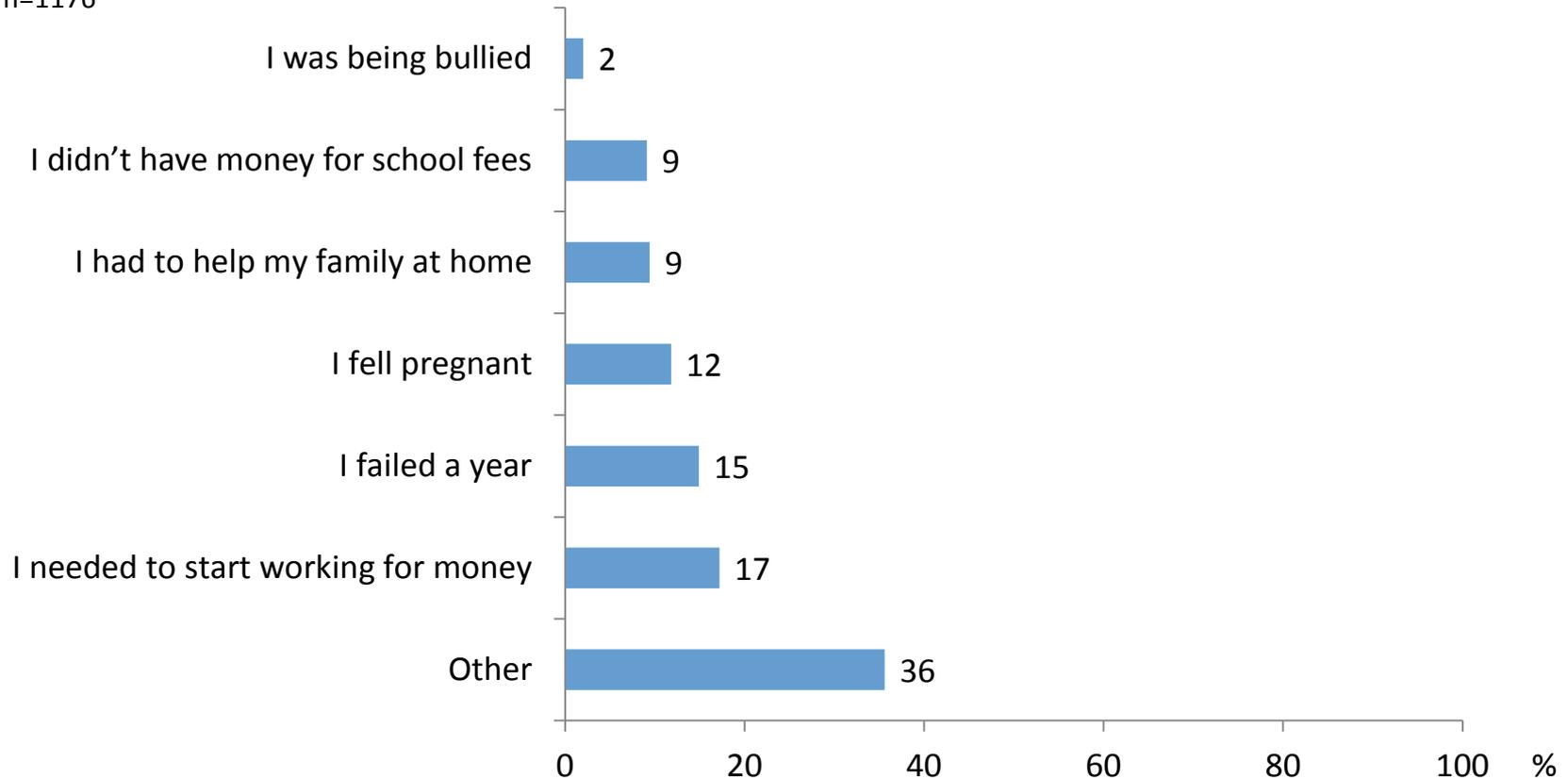


Learner opinions

Learner retention

For those respondents who dropped out of school in the last year or so, the primary reasons for doing so were the need to start working for money (17%), having failed a year (15%), pregnancy (12%), and not having sufficient funds to pay for school fees (9%).

Total market
n=1176



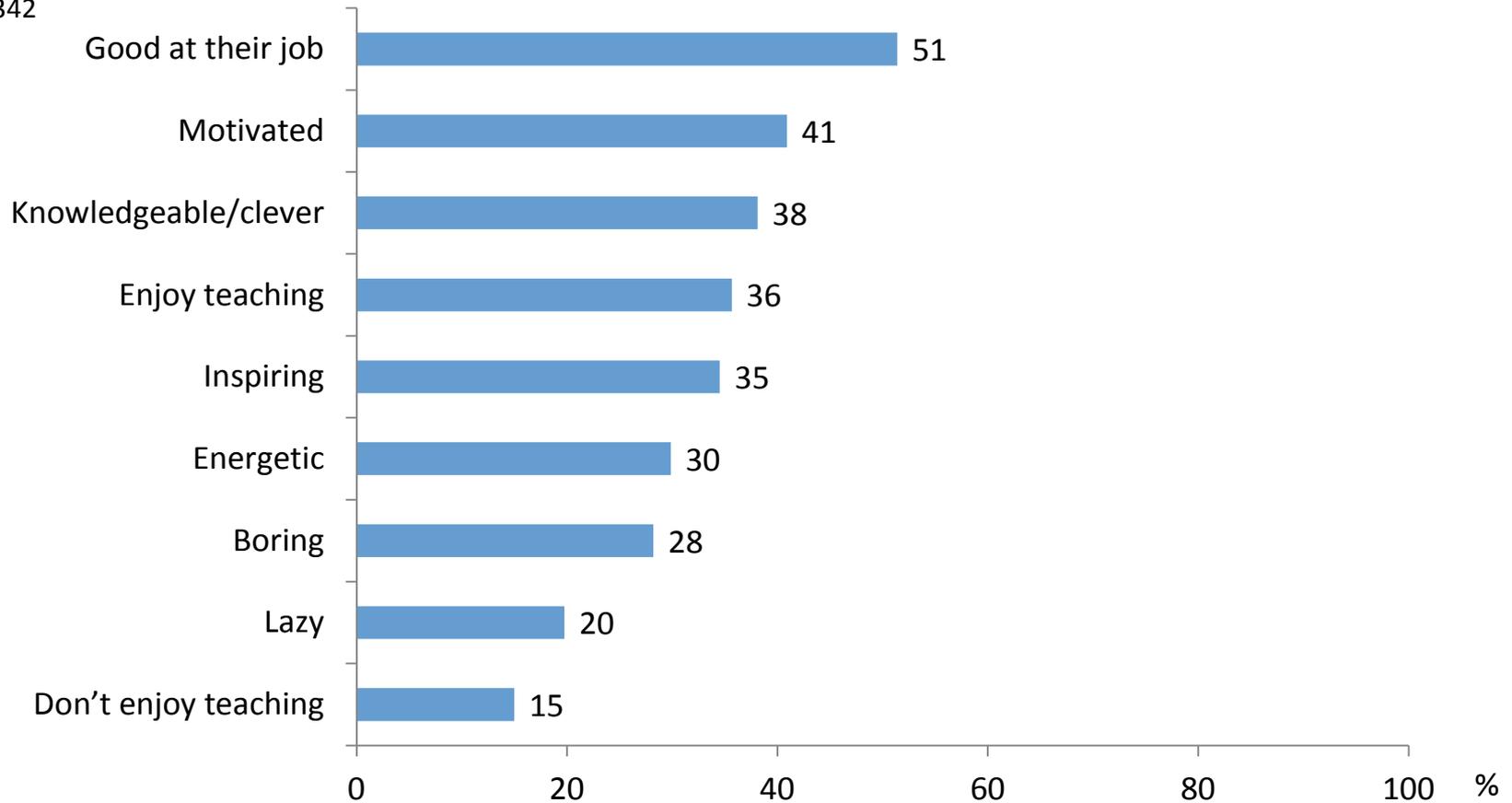
Q - Have you left or dropped out of school in the last year or so? If so, what was the reason for leaving?



Teacher Sentiment

Sentiment towards teachers was overwhelmingly positive across demographic groups.

Total market
n=1342



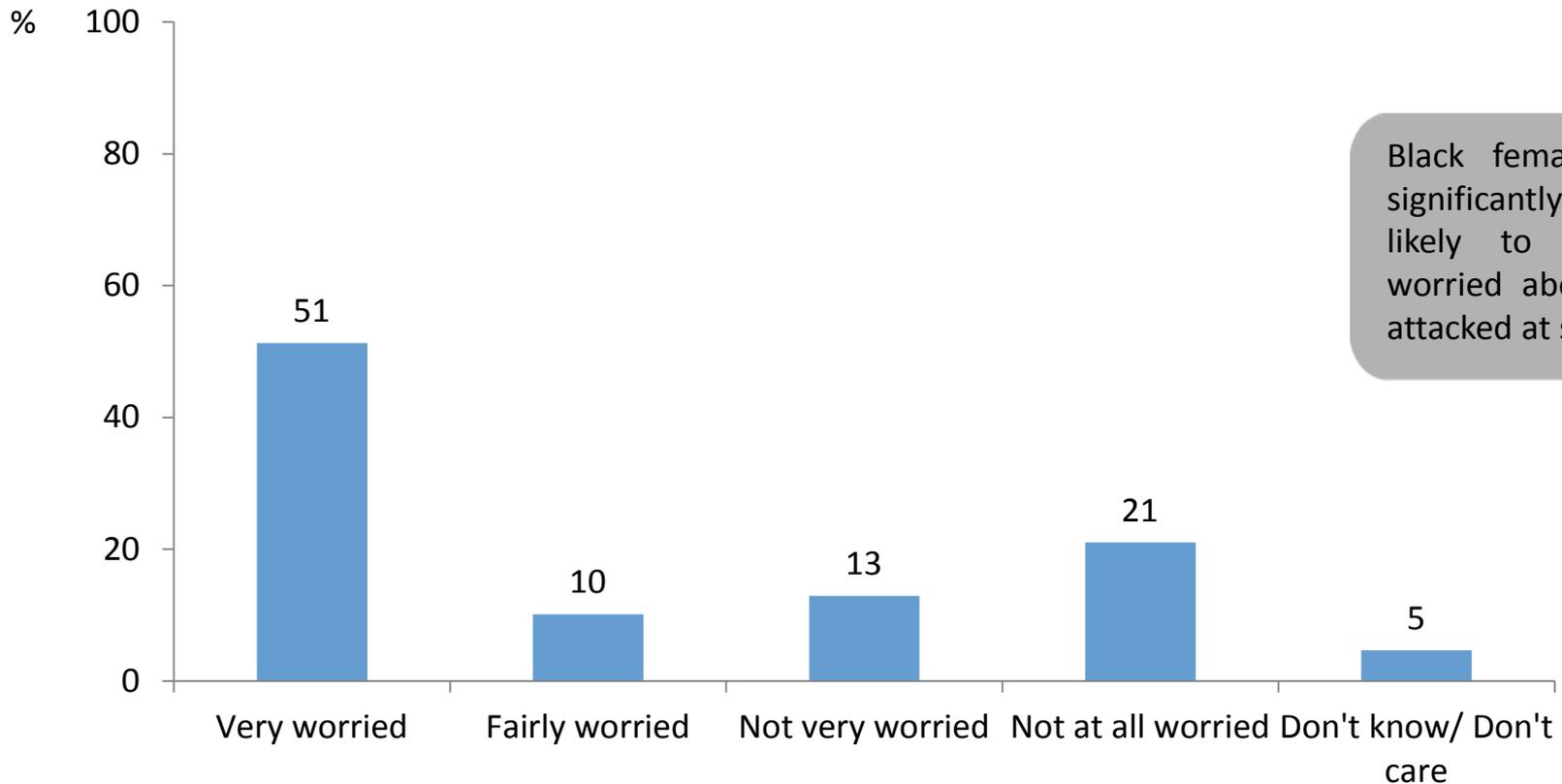
Q - Thinking about your teachers, which words best describe them?



Bullying

Almost 2 in 3 learners were afraid of being bullied in some way, compared to 21% who were not worried at all.

Total market
n=1342



Black females were significantly more likely to be very worried about being attacked at school.

Q - How worried are you about being attacked at school?

By that we mean being pushed, or hit, or punched? Or even threatened with a knife or gun?



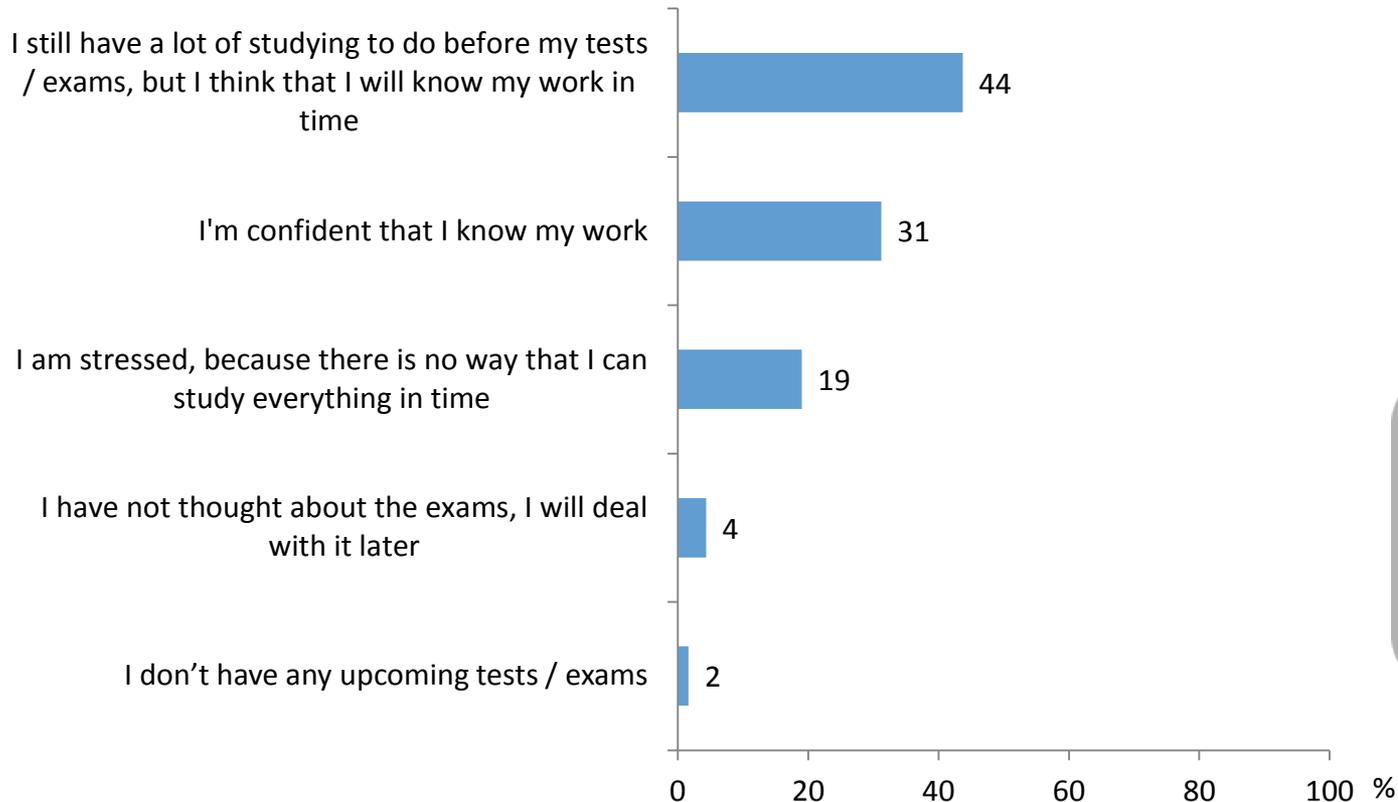


Contributing support factors &
learner confidence

Learner confidence - Feeling in the run-up to the exams

A large proportion of learners still had a lot of studying to do, but thought that they would know their work in time. About a fifth of respondents felt stressed because they didn't think that they would be able to study everything in time

Total market excluding "Don't know / Don't care"
n=4023



Black female learners were more confident in their ability to get through all the necessary work prior to exams

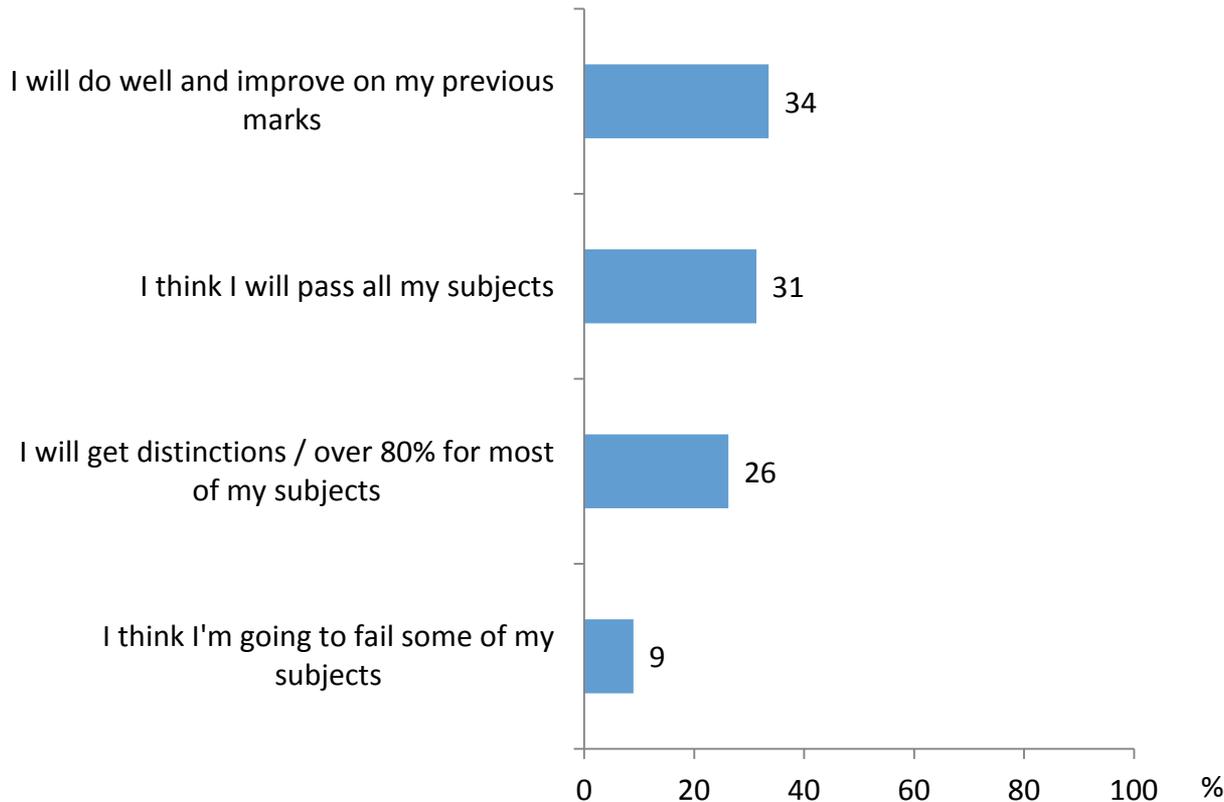
Q - Thinking only about your upcoming tests or exams, which option best describes how you feel?



Learner confidence - Expected results

1 in 3 learners believed that they would do well and improve on their previous marks. A quarter of the sample hoped that they would get distinctions, and 1 in 10 felt that they might fail some subjects

Total market excluding "Don't know / Don't care"
n=3927



Black females were significantly more likely to believe that they would do well and improve on their marks.

A slightly higher proportion of females believed that they would do well and improve on their previous marks, and males were slightly more likely to believe that they would fail some of their subjects.

Q - What results are you expecting after the exams?



Impact of contributing support factors and school learner type on exam confidence, stress levels & expected results

- As access to teachers that did their best, a quiet study environment and someone to help with studying / homework after school increased, confidence levels during the run-up to the exams increased, exam-related stress decreased, and better results were expected.
- Private and FET school learners felt more confident about the upcoming exams, than public school learners. They were also more supported than public school learners in terms of access to a quiet study environment and someone to assist them with studying / homework.
- A higher proportion of private and FET school learners, compared to public school learners said they were expecting distinctions for most subjects.
- Black females claimed to have a good support network of friends and family that they could turn to for help with their homework and studying, and although some also felt they had no one to help them, it was less likely compared to other learners. This is a potential contributing factor for their relative confidence in their exams.



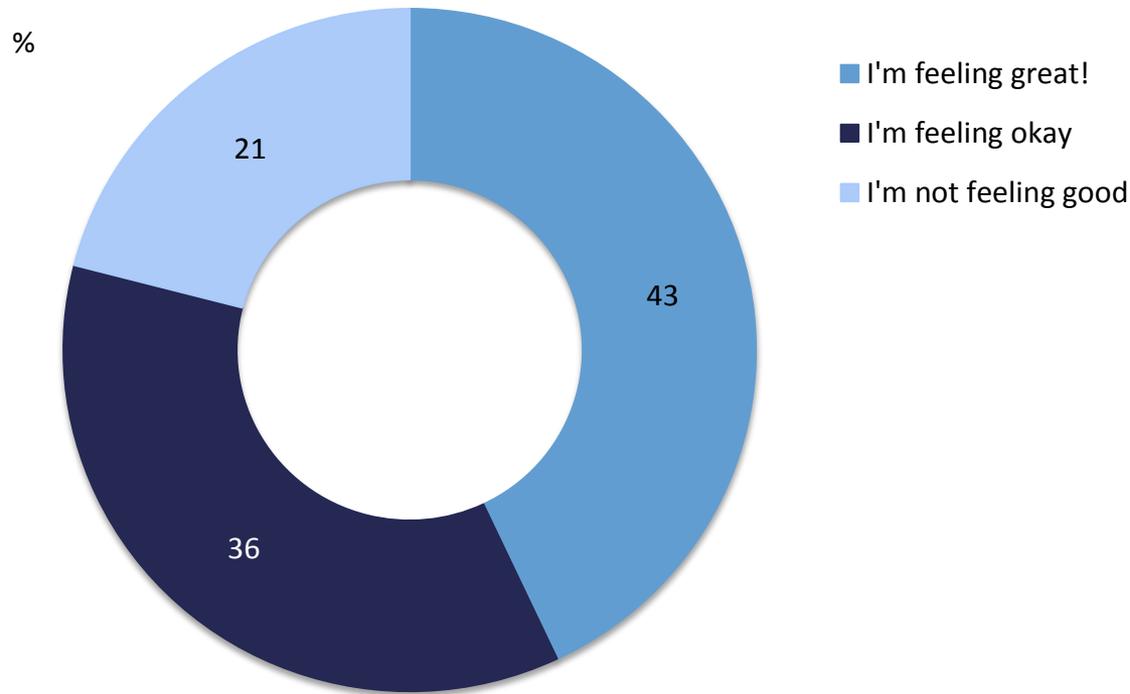


Opinions of schools

Level of optimism about school year

General learner mood levels had a direct impact on learners' optimism about their school. Private school learners felt a higher degree of optimism about the school year ahead than did public school learners.

Total market excluding "Don't know / Don't care"
n=3227



There was a clear correlation between the level of optimism learners had about their school and their general mood.

Those who felt great about the school year ahead of them were more likely to be private school learners.

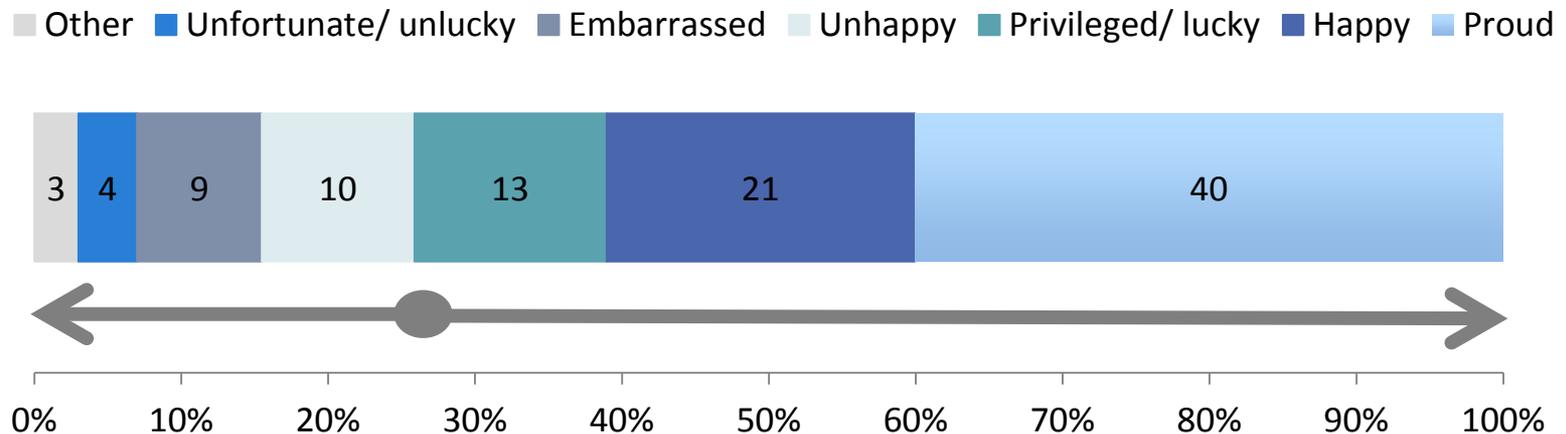
Q - Now that you are almost at the end of the first school term, how are you feeling about the school year ahead of you?



General attitude towards school

The majority of learners felt positive about their school and many felt a sense of pride. School for most was a positive contributor in their lives.

Total market excluding "Don't know / Don't care"
n=3242



More private school learners felt privileged/lucky about their schools than did public school learners.

There were no significant differences among demographic groups and the way they felt about their school.

Positive associations with one's school were most prevalent among those who were generally happy in life.

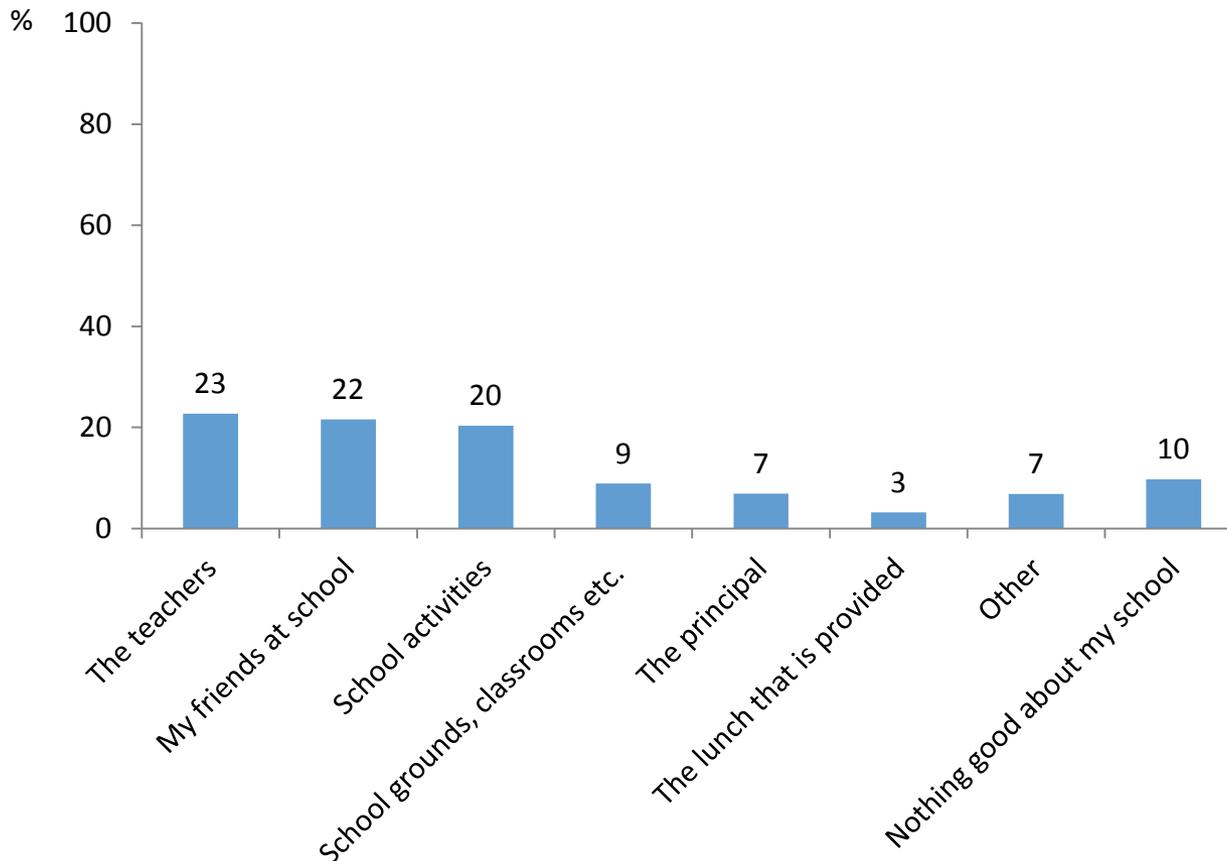
Q - Thinking about your school, which ONE of these best describes how you feel about your school?



Best things about school

Older learners were less likely to say that their friends at school, or the school activities were the best thing about their school, and were more likely to nominate their teachers as the best thing about their school, suggesting a growing sense of responsibility as one gets older.

Total market excluding “Don’t know / Don’t care”
n=3254



Those who had a generally negative attitude towards their school were far more likely to say that there was nothing good about their school.

School activities were the best thing about school for private school learners. Friends were the best thing about school for those in Grades 3 to 7.

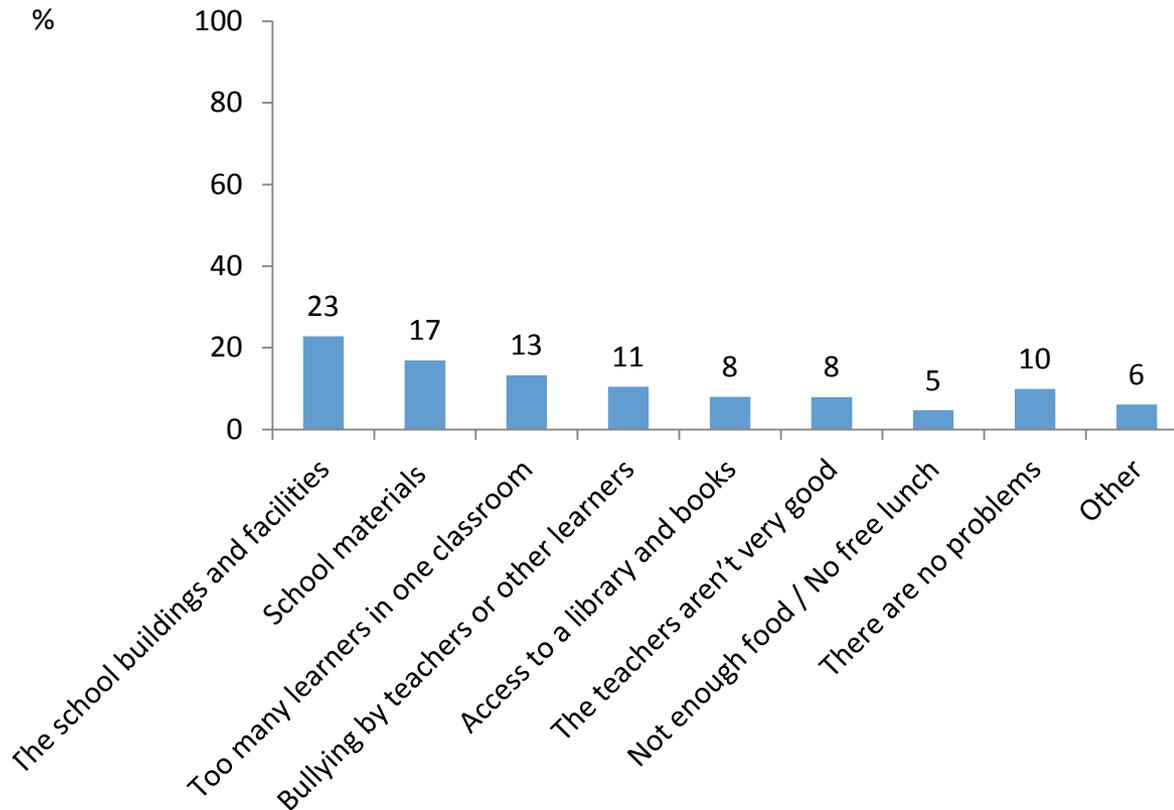
Q - What is the BEST thing about your school?



Biggest challenges at school

The school buildings and facilities was the biggest problem at schools overall, especially at public schools. Age had a significant impact on the perceived biggest challenges. Bullying was seen as a more significant issue among 13-14 year olds, while for older learners, things like the school buildings and facilities, access to a library and books, as well as crowded classrooms, were bigger challenges.

Total market excluding "Don't know / Don't care"
n=3263



Black females were more likely to say that the school buildings and facilities was the biggest problem at school.

Learners in Limpopo province were significantly more likely to say that the school buildings and facilities was the biggest problem, as were learners at public schools.

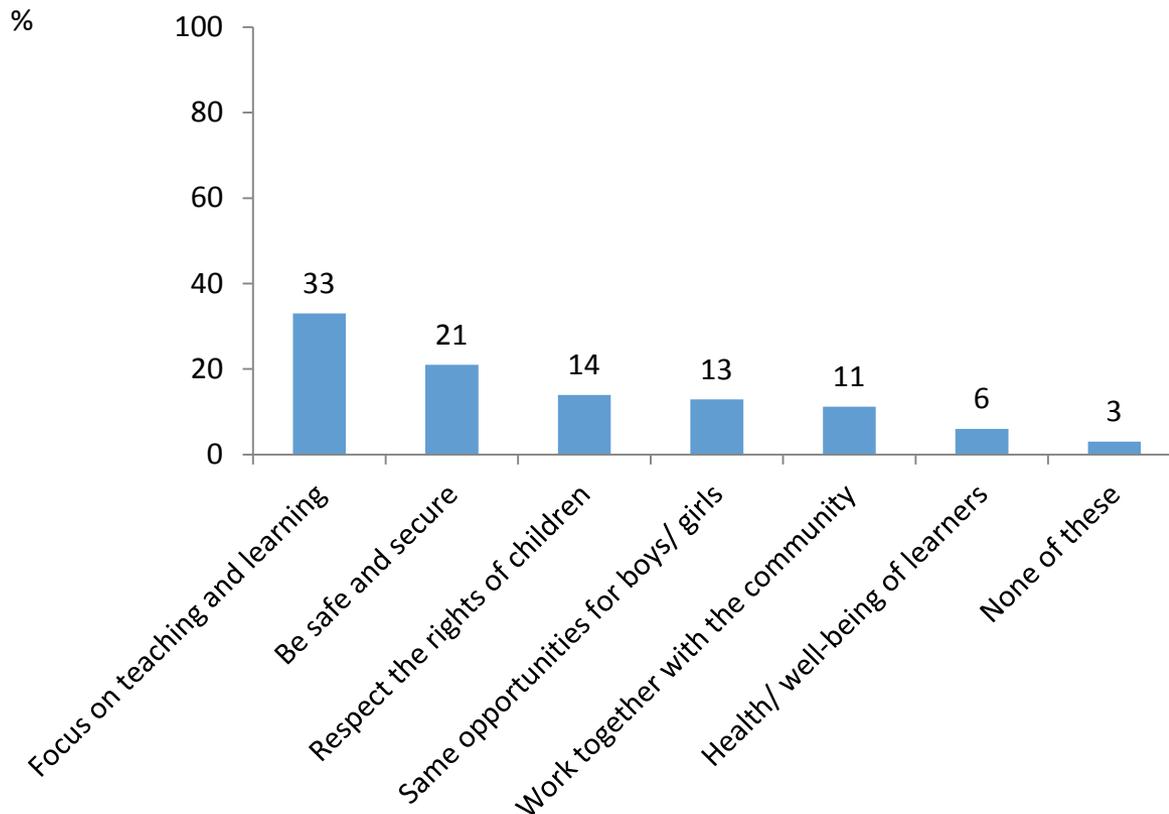
Q - Thinking now about some of the things that are going wrong at your school...what would you say is the BIGGEST problem?



School essentials:

There was consensus among the different demographic groups that a focus on teaching and learning was the most important aspect to school. 1 in 3 learners felt this way. Safety and security was also important, particularly among females, public school learners and FET college learners.

Total market excluding "Don't know / Don't care"
n=3249



Females, public school learners and FET college learners were most concerned about safety and security at schools.

The younger respondents were, the more they wanted the rights of children to be respected as an essential aspect of school.

Black females were significantly more likely to say that a school should be safe and secure. They were less likely to think that the provision of equal opportunities for boys and girls was most important.

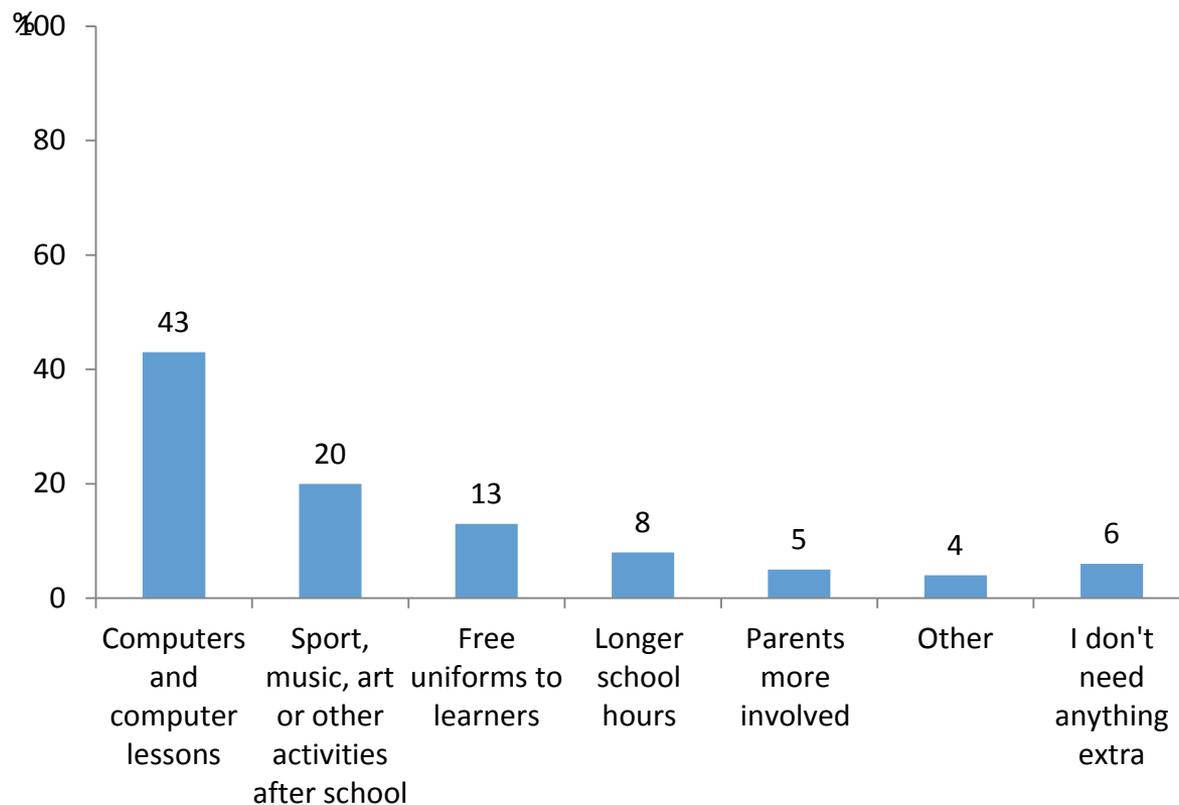
Q - Which ONE of the following things is MOST important to you as a school learner? A school should...



Additional support in schools:

'More computers and computer lessons' was the 'extra' that learners would most like to have at schools. This choice became more prevalent among older learners, public school learners and those living in the Eastern Cape and North West provinces.

Total market excluding "Don't know / Don't care"
n=3246



Those who wanted computers and computer lessons as an 'extra' skewed towards public and FET school learners. Free uniforms for learners was an 'extra' liked more by public school learners than others.

Private school learners wanted more sport, music, art or other activities at their schools, more so than public or FET school learners.

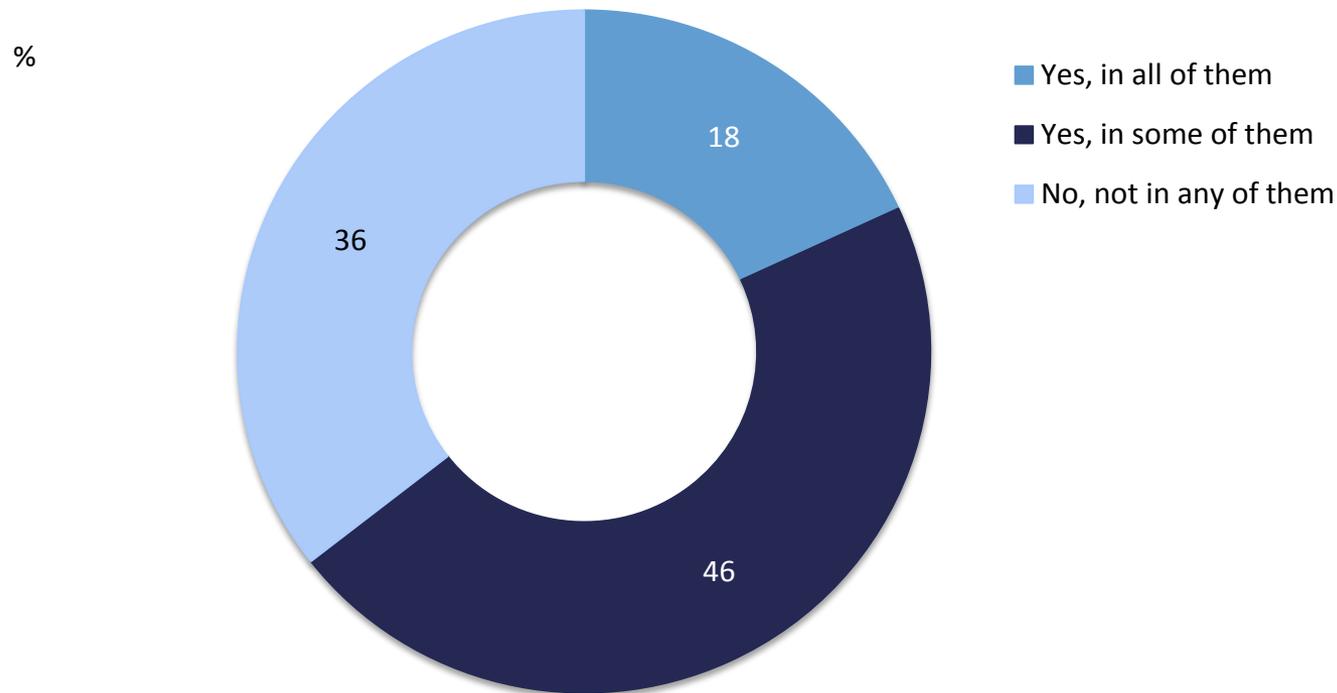
Q - So now, think about some EXTRA things that the government could do so that you could enjoy school much more... Government should...?



Availability of textbooks:

Almost 2 out of 3 learners claimed to have to share textbooks with other learners in all or some of their classes. Textbook sharing is most prevalent in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and North West provinces, as well as among public school learners and FET college learners. Textbook sharing is least prevalent in the Western Cape province.

Total market excluding "Don't know / Don't care"
n=3233



Q - Do you currently have to share textbooks with other learners in any of your subjects because you haven't yet received your textbook(s)?





Key Insights

LHI - Overarching observations

Big picture:

- On balance, the picture painted by learners in SA is somewhat more positive than reports in the media.
- Please do take this sentiment from whence it comes, bearing in mind that learners are not typically aware of opportunities outside of their current environment, or what their own circumstances may be lacking, so sentiment may tend to skew positive.

School sentiment:

- Learners felt mostly positive about their schools and a relatively high proportion felt proud of their school.

Optimism levels:

- On the whole, learners' level of optimism about the school year ahead was relatively good.



LHI - Overarching observations

Challenges:

- School buildings and facilities, such as toilets, classrooms and sports fields, were the biggest concern for learners, requiring urgent intervention.
- Other necessities like school materials, including textbooks and stationery, were the second biggest concern.

Textbooks:

- Textbook sharing is common practice, with 2 out of 3 learners having to share textbooks.

Wish list:

- Computers and computer lessons would be a nice 'extra', specifically for public school learners and FET college learners.

Bullying:

- Concerns around bullying are significant for learners across all demographics.



LHI - Overarching observations

Drugs & Alcohol:

- Accessibility of drugs and alcohol is high, both in schools, and surrounding areas.

Quiet environment:

- Having access to a quiet study environment appeared to be a problem. Only about half of respondents had access to a quiet place to study and do homework.

Out of school assistance:

- Assistance with studying / homework after school was a problem, in particular among public school learners and black respondents.

Level of support:

- Those who felt supported (i.e. had access to a quiet study environment, had assistance with homework or studying, and who had teachers who did their best) were more confident, and were less stressed, compared to those who felt less supported.



LHI - Overarching observations

Teachers:

- Perceived teacher performance was good. Learners had a relatively high regard for their teachers. There was no difference in opinion of teachers among private and public school learners.

Hunger for learning:

- Learners are more likely to be hungry for education, than not, illustrated by their expressed interest in longer school hours, if provided with the opportunity to learn a 3rd African language, or improve their Maths & Science.

Essential focuses:

- Above all, learners felt it was essential for a school to focus on teaching and learning, but safety and security was also seen as important.





Thank you!