

Community Involvement in Halswell

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Research Question

Social media is not required for residents to find out about community

1.5 Limitations for the research

2. Introduction

2.1 Background of research area

Halswell is a suburb located in Christchurch approximately nine kilometres southwest of the Cathedral Square. The suburb used to be geographically separate from the rest of the city until recent developments in the Aidanfield and Oakland's subdivisions closed the gap between Halswell and the rest of the city. Halswell has a population of 14,680 according to the 2013 census (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). The population has almost tripled in size since the 2006 Census (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). This is because of its increasing popularity following the Canterbury Earthquakes in 2010 and 2011. The earthquakes caused people from the highly affected east side of Christchurch move to the less affected southwest of the city. Halswell has many resources available for everyone to use including a public swimming pool, library, churches, and a post office with a bank. The Halswell quarry park is also open for everyone to use, including walkers, mountain bikers, dog owners, and horse

To what extent are

residents in the Halswell

This question will help us better understand whether people are involved in a community and if they actually want one, as well as contributing to existing research. The wording of the question was also important, because it does not limit residents to being involved in one community. Community looks different to everyone, and cannot be limited by geography.

2.3 Our Research

This research is important in striving towards the understanding of a 'sense of community' in Halswell. This of p6nd-5-79(c)sta. elp Halswell. ommunity cetter 4-16(und-era(rsta)4(nd 4129(o89(-o)8()T

3. Literature review

The research by Kang and Kwak in 2003 was examining community involvement by measuring length of residence and media use. They found that the length of residence within a community has significant effects on participation, as does social media use. In relation to our research question, measuring the length of residence in the area can be used as a factor to estimate involvement. Including questions on this in our survey could help us estimate involvement within Halswell community as well as the influences of social media such as Facebook, Neighbourly and Newsletters via email.

Hampton and Wellman describe how the internet can increase greater community due to fast internet speeds, local discussion groups and through people that are always online (Hampton & Wellman, 2003). Following this, the internet is discussed to increase contact compared to non-wired residents, as residents can get to know and communicate more with the people in their area without actually being active. Subsequently, it will be important to understand if people are more involved due to the use of the Halswell community email newsletter and the Halswell community Facebook page. These are organised and maintained by the Halswell Community Project.

community can be observed as a social system where groups share common concerns (Edwards & Jones, 1976). The definition of community shows the linkage between informal and formal groups. This is important in understanding how people may be interacting and the

their communities listed time; a lack of knowledge; and a lack of events, activities and spaces as things that hinder their participation (Meares & Gilbertson, 2013).

McMillan and Chavis described four factors that define community. These include; the feeling of belonging to an area, the sense of mattering, common needs enhancing involvement and that shared emotional experiences enhance connections within the area (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). These aspects are directly associated with involvement where our research can further benefit from this understanding of community. These characteristics could be directly used to measure belonging and wants and needs within a community, contributing to the aims of this project.

Based on our research, we defined community as groups of people who care about each other, feel as if they belong, and have unity in attitudes or behaviours.

4.3 Administration of the survey

The way a survey is conducted can often be vital in achieving a representative sample.

Figure two shows that the majority of Halswell residents contact others in their street at least once a month, or two to six times a week. The least common frequency of contact is every day. 13 percent of survey respondents contact their neighbours, or others in their street every day. 17 percent of people never contact others in their street. Informal contact such as knowing and contacting others in your street has been shown to increase community (Edward & Jones, 1976). Based on the respondents who do contact others in their street, community is formed. It seems that the majority of those surveyed do contact others in their street. However, the survey did not establish whether or not this contact was positive. Given the results shown in Table one, it is possible that those who want more activities for children are has been shown to be beneficial for developing community (Meares & Gilbertson, 2013).

Figure 2: Halswell residents' responses to how often they contact their neighbours

In Figure B1 (see appendices), it can be seen that 30-39 year olds are the largest age group that have moved to Halswell since the earthquakes. A Chi-squared test revealed that age groups and having moved since the earthquakes were statistically significant

community (Kang & Kwak, 2003). Perhaps it is possible that the 30-39 year olds who have moved to Halswell since the earthquakes experience less community involvement. This age group may be more likely to have small children, and therefore list activities for children as something they would like to see happen in Halswell. This could lead to greater community involvement.

5.2 Halswell residents opinions on community

The last two questions of the survey required participants to list activities they would like to see happen in Halswell (question 16), and also what they already appreciate about Halswell (question 17). Not everyone answered these questions, however people seemed more inclined to list what they appreciated about Halswell. 47 percent of respondents answered question 16, while 65 percent of respondents answered question 17. Table one shows the most common answers for this part of the survey. Many people would appreciate more sports opportunities in Halswell, and the most commonly listed assets were the community feel and the quiet, scenic nature of the area.

Table 1: Qualitative survey results of residents 'wants and needs' and items of appreciation about Halswell

Activities residents would like to see happen in Halswell	Things residents appreciate about Halswell
More sports and fitness options (18 comments)	Friendly community atmosphere (36 comments)
More markets and fairs (13 comments)	Peaceful and scenic area (31 comments)
Activities for children and youth (13 comments)	Green space (22 comments)

know how to find out about what is happening in Halswell without necessarily being connected to social media or online resources offered by the Halswell Community Project. This could be due to the large amount of signage in the area advertising the Halswell Community Project activities, which was observed on data collection. Hampton and Wellman (2003) conducted research into the effects of social media on community, as it was feared that the internet could be destroying, rather than aiding local communities. However, Hampton and Wellman found this was not the case in Toronto, their area of study. Our findings suggest that in Halswell, residents do not need to be connected to online resources in order to have community. There seems to be a group of people who are more connected on social media, with the majority of them agreeing that they know how to find out about community in Halswell. Many Halswell residents wanted to be informed of those living near them, and also wanted to meet new people, as seen in Figure B4 in Appendix B. This seems to indicate that at least some of the residents in Halswell value community and want to be involved.

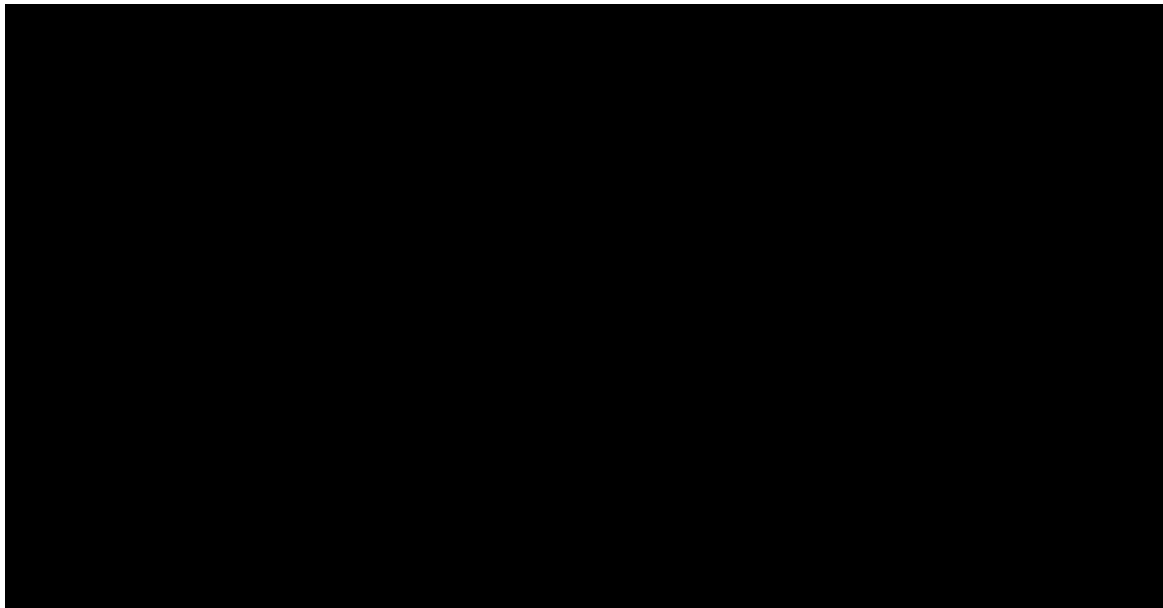


Figure 5: Residents awareness of the Halswell Facebook page and whether or not they know how to find out about what is going on in their community

From our results, we can begin to form a picture of the community in Halswell, how involved residents are, and if they actually want community or not. While opinions on community in Halswell seem mixed, generally, residents seem to be in favour of community in Halswell, and indicate that they would appreciate more opportunities to be involved in community. The

online data has been analysed and has similar findings to the survey data we collected. Our results show that factors such as wants and needs being met and involvement in social media appear to be associated with how involved in community Halswell residents are. Originally,

this. It would appear that in Halswell, community does exist without all residents feeling as if they belong. Community can be seen in the results showing how often residents contact each other, and their wants and needs being met.

6. Limitations

Like any project there was a series of limitations that hindered the research. During our surveying week a combination of unfortunate events and members away on holiday resulted in only 3 people surveying each day for 4-5 hours, resulting in a total of 63 hours in the field. As a result we were only able to obtain 144 paper surveys and 35 online surveys (total of 179), which was significantly fewer than our aim of 300. We only managed to sample 1.2% of the population, which may not be entirely representative of

the target population (Mcguirk & O'Neill, 2010). Thus, it is difficult to know if our results are truly accurate. Our lack of experience also resulted in no response rate being recorded. This gives us no indication of the willingness to be involved or if residents want to change their community in certain areas. During piloting we were able to ensure questions were not discriminating or confusing. However, one question did provide issues in the field, where many participants were confused by the layout of the table. Subsequently, the data for this question was not included in our data (Parfitt, 2005). Finally, in collection, only 10 surveys were collected per area, which may not be representative of that specific sample area.

7. Conclusions

In conclusion, the aim of our research was to find out to what extent residents in Halswell area are actively involved in a community. This included how residents felt about Halswell, to develop an understanding of what the residents want and how people are connected to a community. Using our literature reviews, a research question was formulated. To obtain our data, we used a simplified random sampling technique. The survey was administered through a paper survey and an online survey, obtaining 179 responses. Findings show that many Halswell residents are not involved in clubs or groups. There were only a few residents who are and they are more likely to be involved with sports clubs. Most of the residents contact their neighbours once a month or two times to six times a week which showed how involved they are in wanting to know their neighbours. Most of the people who have moved to Halswell since the earthquakes are in the 30-39 age group, and want activities for children. Many residents appreciate the community in Halswell and would like more fitness options and markets. They know how to find out about what is happening in their area however they disagree about feeling a sense of community in Halswell. We can then recommend Halswell Community Project to have regular events involving face to face contact. This could lead to a stronger sense of feeling valued. Perhaps more advertising of the Halswell Community Project would help the residents and also develop a stronger sense of community.

It is recommended that future research should involve independence of questions in terms of creating fewer questions with the same scale. Also, formulating a shorter survey with more direct and predictive questions would be useful. More demographic questions could also be asked, such as gender, ethnicity, religion and income. Using the Census data more would also be useful in gaining an understanding of the demographic in Halswell. It would be beneficial to survey over a wider time frame, and to include the more rural areas of Halswell.

8. Acknowledgements

We would like to express our deepest appreciation to all of those who provided our group the possibility to complete our project. A special gratitude is given to our course coordinator, Eric Pawson and our academic advisor, David Conradson, for their continuous help, advice and guidance throughout this project. We would especially like to thank our community partner Chrys Horn at the Halswell Community Project for her generous help in sharing ideas towards our project. Also, thank you to the Halswell residents that took part in this study by completing the survey, whether it was online, or in person.

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Appendix B: Results and Discussion

Figure B1 displays the results about those who have moved to Halswell since the earthquakes, split by age. This was a significant result from the Chi-squared test. Age groups 30-39 show the highest levels of increase, while the group that has stayed in Halswell the longest is the 40-49 year olds. The 30-59 year olds show the highest levels of increase, while the group that has stayed in Halswell the longest is the 40-49 year olds.

Table B1: Results from Chi-squared tests, all of which show a statistically significant relationship between variables A and B

Significant Chi-squared results		
Variable A	Variable B	P.Value
Importance of knowing others in the neighbourhood	Interested in meeting new people	1.14E-12
Knowledge of how to find out about activities within Halswell	Feeling well connected in Halswell	1.83E-12
Knowledge of how to find out about activities within Halswell	Sense of community in Halswell	1.39E-12
Knowledge of how to find out about activities within Halswell	Halswell email newsletter	3.54E-03
Feeling well connected in Halswell	Day Markets	3.66E-04
Feeling well connected in Halswell	Business Network	1.97E-02
Feeling well connected in Halswell	Community Gardens	2.72E-02
Feeling well connected in Halswell	Halswell email newsletter	1.28E-03
Feeling well connected in Halswell	Facebook	6.57E-03
Sense of community in Halswell	Day Markets	0.03286
Sense of community in Halswell	Business Network	0.02708

Figure B2 shows residents awareness of the Halswell community email newsletter, and their level of agreement as to whether or not they know how to find out about what is happening in their community. Residents tend to agree that they can find out about what is happening

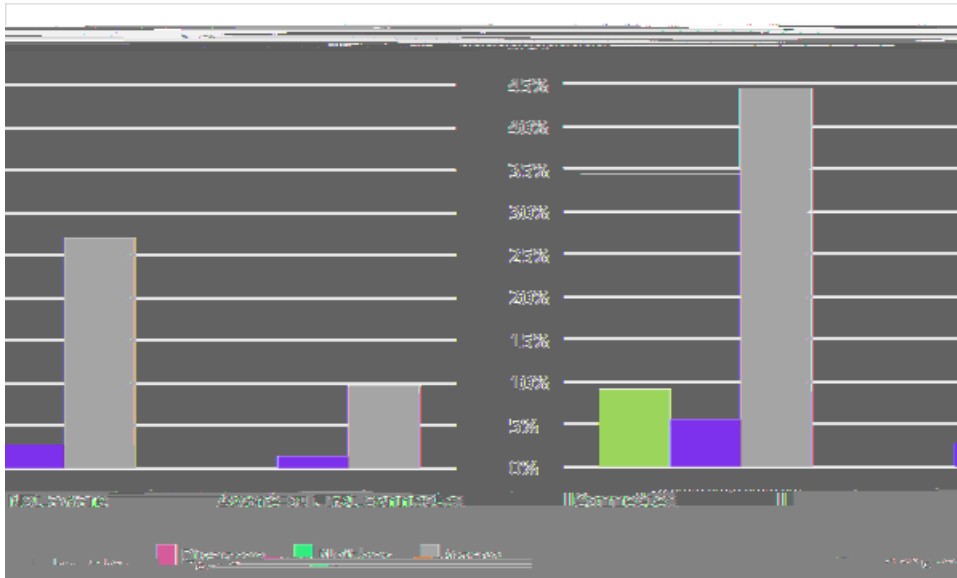


Figure B3: Residents awareness of the Neighbourly website, which connects local residents, and whether or not they know how to find out about what is going on in their community

In figure B4, we see that residents who would like to meet new people also consider it important to know about those living near them. This works in reverse too, as those who are not interested in meeting new people also do not see the importance of knowing about those near them.

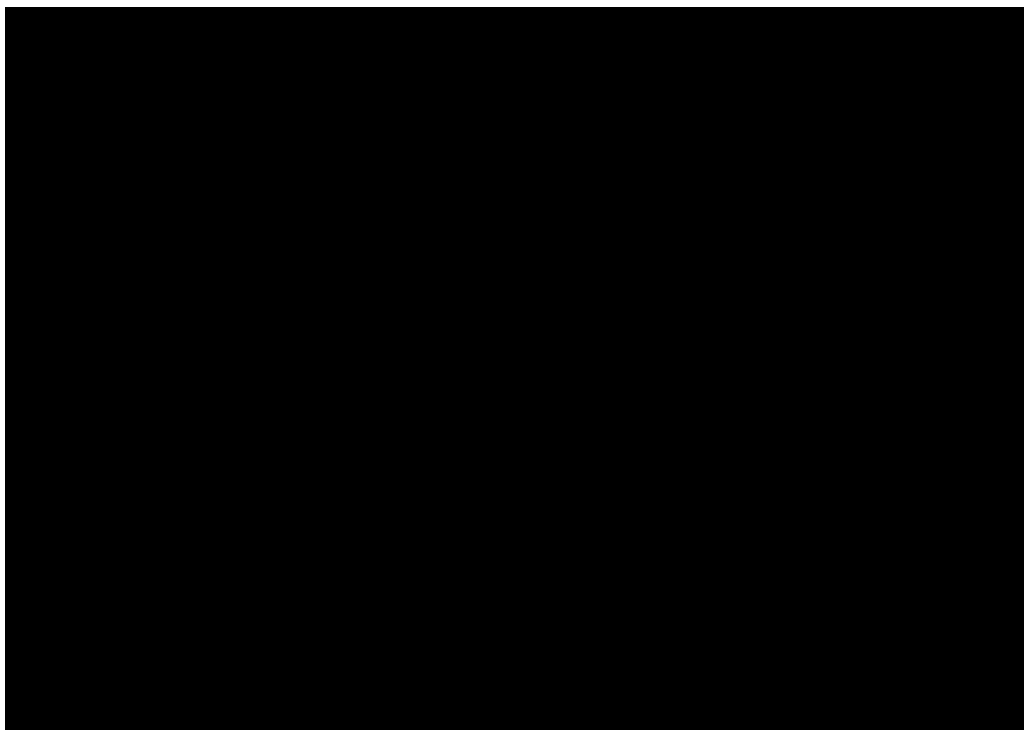


Figure B4: Halswell residents that want to know about those living near them and also are interested in meeting new people